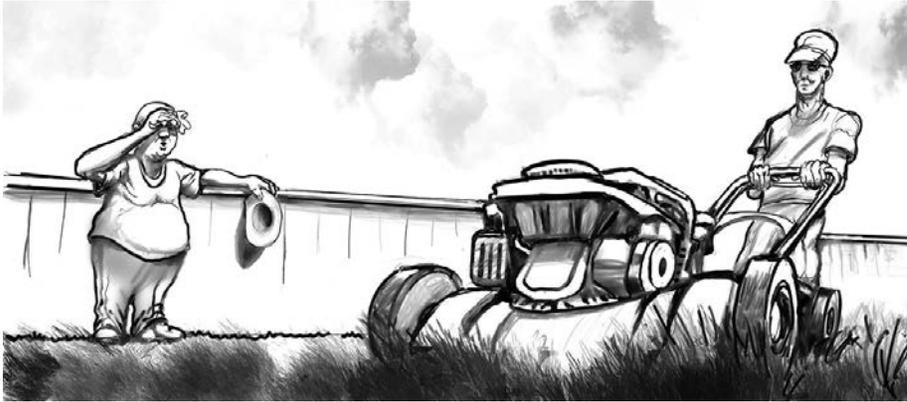


Helping People in Need



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 18

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Luke 5:17–26; John 5:1–9; Deuteronomy 10:19; Luke 4:18; John 15:13.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then the king will answer, ‘The truth is, anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me’ ” (Matthew 25:40, ERV).

God asks us to be His helpers. He wants us to help people in need, whoever they are.

LUKE 5:17–26 shows us how God helps people who are in need. Sometimes God uses other people to help us. Or He uses us to help other people. Helping people may be hard work at times. But God rewards us for our efforts. When we help people in need, we show them the work that Jesus did. Sometimes we know who needs our help. Other times, we don't know who to help. God asks us to be His helpers. He wants us to help everyone in need, whoever they are.

The Bible encourages us to be nice to strangers and to make new friends. When people trust us, we can learn better ways of helping them find Jesus.

The topic for this week's lesson is “Helping People in Need.” This topic shows us that God has a plan for people in need. God's plan shows us the many ways we can help people in need. These people may need help with their budget or health. Or maybe they feel lonely or are suffering. Maybe their family or their community no longer accepts them. Whatever their needs, we must be ready to do what we can to help. When we help other people, we show everyone an important part of God's work. We also show them what it means to be a Christian.

THE FAITH OF FRIENDS (Luke 5:17–26)

A powerful Bible story shows what some men did to help a sick friend. These men carried their friend to Jesus to be healed. This story teaches us an important lesson. Sometimes we must work hard to help people in need.

Read the story in Luke 5:17–26 (also read the same story in Matthew 9:1–8; Mark 2:3–12). What lessons do we learn from the four men in this story about doing God’s work and helping people in need?

The four men brought their friend to Jesus. They were responsible for taking care of their friend. God asks us to be the same as this man’s friends. We must lead people to Jesus. We need faith to do this work. We also need to be patient and willing to do whatever God asks. The men came to Jesus. But they couldn’t bring their helpless friend to Jesus because the crowd blocked the way. The men didn’t give up. They found another way to bring their friend to Jesus. The men broke open the roof and lowered their friend down the hole and into the house! Luke shows us that Jesus didn’t scold them for what they did (read Luke 5:20). Jesus rewarded their faith.

Jesus wants us to bring our helpless friends to Him. The Bible says that Jesus is the Most Powerful Doctor. Dr. Jesus wants to forgive and heal suffering people, whoever they are.

Ellen G. White tells us to help people who are helpless: “Don’t wait for someone to tell you to help people. Open your eyes and look around. Get to know the people around you who are helpless, suffering, and in need. . . . Do any of you show in your life the religion that James talks about? Are you free from selfishness and sin? Who wants to do everything they can to help God save people?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 2, page 29, adapted.

Jesus shows us how to help people who are helpless. Jesus wants us to do this same work. First, we must become friends with people in need. Then we learn about their needs. Finally, we lead them to Jesus. Jesus is the only One who can help them. The four men in this story did these things. We need to do these things, too, wherever we are.

Help lead people to the only One who can save them: Jesus.

Who are the people around you that need help? What will you do for them?



The men broke open the roof and lowered their friend down the hole and into the house!

JESUS' PLAN FOR HELPING PEOPLE (John 5:1–9)

What do the stories below teach us about helping people in need?

John 5:1–9 _____

Mark 1:23–28 _____



“Jesus showed people
He understood
their suffering.”

Ellen G. White explains Jesus' plan for how to help people in need. Jesus' plan has five parts: “Only Jesus' plan will give you real success in leading people to Him. The Savior spent time with people. He showed them that He wanted the best for them. Jesus showed people He understood their suffering. Jesus gave them the things they needed. He won their trust. Then Jesus told them, ‘Follow me.’ ”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 143, adapted.

Let's look at each part of Jesus' plan.

Part 1: Spend time with people who are in need. Get to know them. Learn what their needs are and try to help them. Look at what Jesus did with the man lying by the pool. Jesus was there, ready to help him (John 5:1–9).

Part 2: Show people that you care. Some people may have trouble trusting us, because they were hurt in the past. These people may have a hard time believing we really care about them. God asks us to show them pity and to be understanding. We must show them that we don't expect anything back from them when we are nice to them.

Part 3: Give people what they need. We must do more than say nice words to people in need. We must do something about their needs. We must follow Jesus' example with the man who couldn't move his arms or legs. After the man's four friends lowered Him to Jesus, Jesus asked the sick man what he wanted. Then Jesus healed the man. In the story about the man who is filled with a demon, Jesus takes complete control. Jesus does for the helpless man what the man can't do for himself.

Part 4: Win people's trust. When we help people, they will learn to trust us. Then they will pay attention to what we say about Jesus. Jesus didn't want to heal only people's bodies. He wanted to heal their hearts. He wanted to give them everlasting life in Him (read John 10:10).

Part 5: Lead people to Jesus. Both you and the person you help must have faith in Jesus. Then you can lead people to Him.

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND (Deuteronomy 10:19)

Today's news is filled with many reports about strangers and foreigners who left their countries to escape war, natural disasters, or food shortages. Or maybe these people left home because they wanted hope for a better future. Millions of people all over the earth have left their homes to go live in foreign lands. Now they need help to start a new life.

In Matthew 2:13, 14, Jesus was one of these people. His parents, Joseph and Mary, had to leave Bethlehem at night. They ran away because Herod wanted to kill Jesus. The Bible doesn't tell us anything about their experience in Egypt. But we can imagine in our minds that Jesus and His family had some of the same experiences that strangers and foreigners have today when they come to a new land. Jesus' experience helps us to have understanding and pity for the many people today who leave their countries because they were attacked or hurt for their religious beliefs.

Of course, it's easy for us to make friends with people who are the same as us. We may speak the same language or belong to the same race groups. So, we are a lot alike. But we often have a hard time being friends with people who look different from us and don't speak our language. We don't share the same religious beliefs and don't eat the same food. The Good News about Jesus commands us to break the "walls" that separate us from other people. We must get to know people in need, whoever they are, even if they are different than we are.

Read Deuteronomy 10:19; Psalm 146:9; Romans 12:13; and Leviticus 23:22. What important idea do these verses teach us?

How can we help strangers and foreigners? Sometimes this work can be very hard. In some countries you aren't allowed to spend time with foreigners or help them. We must do the best we can anyway. We must help people whenever we can and wherever we can. Remember, some people have suffered terrible things. So, they need our help.

Start with prayer. Then learn about the foreigners and strangers from other countries who have moved to your area. Many places have shelters for them. You can start working for one of these centers. Or maybe your local church Sabbath School can start a special center for these groups.



Jesus' experience helps us to have understanding and pity for the many people today who leave their countries because they were attacked or hurt for their religious beliefs.

TO HELP THE HURTING (Luke 4:18)



People in rich countries spend lots of money on pills to help them not to feel sad or low.

We've all had an experience that has shown how painful life really can be, right? Maybe you live in a land of plenty where people worship money. Or maybe you live in a country where most people are very poor and have very little. Wherever you live, people are suffering. If you've read or watched the news, you know that people in rich countries spend lots of money on pills to help them not to feel sad or low. All those expensive pills show us that money doesn't buy us happiness or peace.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor. He sent me to tell prisoners that they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent me to free [make free] those [people] who have been treated [hurt] badly’ ” (Luke 4:18, ERV). What does this verse teach us about the work Jesus did and the work we must do for the people around us?

God wants us to help people all around us. We don't know if or when they will accept Jesus. The most important work we can do is to lead people to Jesus. At the same time, we must help people in need because they need help. We help them because we accept Jesus as our Lord. So, helping other people is part of the work God asks us to do.

We must follow Jesus' example to help people in need. This Bible rule is important. We don't know if everyone we help will accept Jesus. We must help them anyway.

If we really want to help other people, we need to learn what they need. Every people group has its way of showing friendship. In India, you serve food or a drink to your guests. For sure, it's easy to write a check and give an offering to help a stranger we don't know. It's harder to comfort a friend who lost a loved one. Both of these people have needs. What your friend may need may be more than money or nice things. Often the loving support you give to someone in a time of loss can be much more helpful.

Remember this important rule: you are Jesus' helper. Helping our friends starts first with showing unselfish love to them. Try to understand their needs first before trying to offer them help. Give them the help they need, even if you know they aren't ready to follow Jesus.

What's the message for us in Matthew 25:34–40?

THE STRONGEST LOVE (John 15:13)

There will always be many people who need your help: close friends, strangers far away, and foreigners who left their country looking for hope and a new life. We should do what we can do to help them whenever we can. During Jesus' time on this earth, He helped people. Sometimes, Jesus went to the people who needed Him. Other times, people came to Jesus, or their friends brought them to Jesus.

Jesus said, “ ‘The greatest [strongest] love people can show is to die for their friends’ ” (John 15:13, ERV). How can we show this important rule in our work for God?

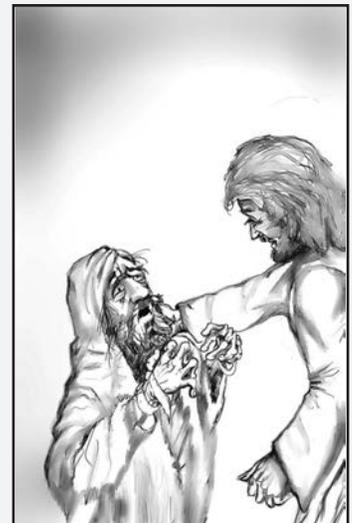
A family went to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean Sea. They served God there for six years. For the first three years, the family lived in a mostly Hindu and Muslim community. Many Hindus complained because in the past Christians refused to come to their Thanksgiving celebration each year. Soon, the Christian family became friends with a Hindu. Their new Hindu friend invited them to attend a Thanksgiving celebration. The Christian family followed Jesus' example. Jesus visited His friends when they invited Him to their special celebrations. So, the family accepted the invitation. Did you know that Hindus believe that visitors or friends bring blessings to the home of the person who invited them?

Make a new friend this week. First, think about where you live. Do you know anyone in your area who came to your town from another country? How about the people who live on your street? Do you know all of them? Of course, making friends with a stranger is not an easy task. Ask God for help. He knows everyone and knows the stranger that you can become friends with. Remember, the plan is to be friends with people so that you can lead them to God for help.

Task #1: Learn about foreigners or non-Christians in your area. Visit www.Joshuaproject.net to learn more.

Task #2: Have you met someone new who lives near you? Pray for this person after answering these questions:

- **Am I friends with this person the same way Jesus was friends with people?**
- **Do I know this person's needs?**
- **How can I lead this person to Jesus for healing?**



During Jesus' time on this earth, He helped people. Sometimes, Jesus went to the people who needed Him. Other times, people came to Jesus.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Arthur White, “A Few Days at Long Point,” *Ellen G. White: The Australian Years: 1891–1900*, volume 4, pages 100–104.

Jesus was friendly to foreigners because He wanted to save them (Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20). God also asks us to make friends and help strangers and foreigners. We always must remember this Bible truth: Jesus died for everyone. Jesus “gave his life to pay for our sins. But he not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of the whole world [all people]” (1 John 2:2, NIV).

“We aren’t doing what God wants us to do when we show love only for our family members. . . .

“When the Lord tells us to help people who aren’t part of our family, He doesn’t want us to stop loving or caring for our family members or the people from our country. Jesus doesn’t want us to love them any less than we do. At the same time, Jesus wants us to love and help other people, too. God has blessed us. He wants us to share His blessings with other people.”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 15, 1895, adapted.

God asks us to be a blessing to people who are not part of our family. We may not enjoy his work, or this work may be very hard. We must remember that Jesus commands us to do this work (Acts 1:8; Mark 11:17). So, we must help the helpless people and strangers around us if we want to be Jesus’ followers.



God also asks us to make friends and help strangers and foreigners.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Jesus asks us to help people. What if the things you must do to help them are not always easy? Why must you be willing to help them anyway?
- 2 Some people accused Jesus of evil behavior while He did God’s work: “ ‘He eats too much and drinks too much. He is a friend of tax collectors and “sinners” ’ ” (Matthew 11:19, ICB). Why did people say these things about Jesus? What was Jesus doing? What does this story teach us about our work for God?
- 3 What if someone who isn’t a Christian asks you to join their celebration? Should you go? How can you accept their invitation and, at the same time, follow Bible truth?

THE ROAD TO SPAIN: PART 2

Only five families were in their homes when gunmen robbed the group of nine houses where Seventh-day Adventist pastors and their families lived. The robbers forced the five families into one of the houses. Then the robbers separated the men, women, and children. Police arrived and spread out around the house. At last, the trouble ended 10 hours later at 3 a.m. when one of the gunmen ran into the forest behind the house. The wives and children of the nine pastors moved away after the 2016 robbery. The pastors worked alone for several months while they waited for new jobs. Several pastors moved to other countries to serve as pastors there.

Luis Paiva had worked as a pastor for about ten years. He wasn't sure what to do now. Life was hard in Venezuela. He and his family didn't have much money. Food was hard to get. For three years, Luis tried hard to pay off a loan. But he couldn't pay the interest he owed. Interest is the money you pay the bank each month to borrow money. Now Luis owed the bank \$1,000.

The robbery upset Luis's wife so much. She and their three children weren't at home when the robbers attacked. But she didn't want to live in Venezuela anymore. Luis agreed that the country wasn't safe. But he wanted to pay his loan first before they moved to another country.

Luis asked God for a sign to show him what to do. Luis didn't often ask for signs. He believed God could lead His people without them. But Luis didn't know what else to do. So, he prayed, "Lord, please work a miracle to help me pay this loan. I will know the gift of money is a sign to leave here."

The gunmen stole things from all nine houses, including Luis' house. Luis' home had been robbed many times over the past year. But Luis hadn't reported his losses to the insurance company. That's because the things that the robbers took were not worth very much. But now church leaders offered to pay for everything that was stolen during the past year if Luis got proof from the police that said he was robbed. None of the other nine pastors got the report. But Luis had friends who were policemen. They helped him get the report.

Two months later, the insurance company gave Luis \$1,000 dollars. That was the exact amount Luis needed to pay his loan.

Today, Luis works for God in Spain. He says, "I didn't spend the insurance money on myself or my family. I understood that God sent the money so I could pay off the loan. I knew that God also blessed my plan to leave the country."

Thank you for your Sabbath School offering that helps support workers for God everywhere. Read next week about how Luis flew from Mexico to Spain.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Two months later, the insurance company gave Luis \$1,000.00 dollars.

