

From theory to practice



It is always interesting to contemplate how Jesus would answer the *rich young men* of today who ask either how they could inherit eternal life or who their neighbor is. I imagine with the latter question that Christ would find a modern version of the parable of the *Good Samaritan* in *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* and in the telethons that solicit our support and generosity. These examples demonstrate the possibility of creating a chain of positive actions, like the *Good Samaritan* who rescued the victim of a robbery and paid the innkeeper to continue providing care. The Jews considered the Samaritans inferior and this parable demonstrated that love for our neighbor knows no boundaries. Jesus emphasized this inclusiveness by telling the *rich young man*, who already carefully observed the Lord's precepts, the parable of the *Good Samaritan*, a term which describes someone who does not hesitate to come to the aid of another.

This story about unconditional charity began when the *rich young man* asked how he could inherit the fullness of life. Christ's response was that he should faithfully observe the precepts of the Law. The young man already did this but wasn't satisfied. He still wanted to know who his neighbor was. Jesus' response was to relate the parable of the *Good Samaritan* which brought the young man out of his comfort zone. Instead of looking for the ideal neighbor, he was challenged to become another person's neighbor without any preconditions. This new focus required a huge commitment of love for God and one's neighbor. Jesus invited the rich young man to detach himself from his worldly goods and follow him. This invitation is extended to us today and we know what Jesus would say about attaining the fullness of life.

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