

God's Love and Justice

Love and Justice: The Two Greatest Commandments

Lesson #12 for March 22, 2025

Scriptures: Matthew 22:34-40; 23:23-30; Zechariah 7:9-12; Psalm 82; Micah 6:8; Luke 10:25-37; 1 John 4:20.

1. When the term *the greatest commandment* is mentioned, do you think of the Ten Commandments? Which one? Or, all ten? Or, do you think of something else? Most of us immediately think of the encounter of Jesus with the Pharisee who was trying to trap Him.

Matthew 22:34-40: ³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, ³⁵ and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. ³⁶ "Teacher," he asked, "**which is the greatest commandment in the Law?**" [They thought they knew all the answers to this.] ³⁷ Jesus answered, " **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'** ³⁸ This is the greatest and the most important commandment. ³⁹ The second most important commandment is like it: **'Love your neighbour [sic-Br] as you love yourself.'** ⁴⁰ The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend [literally, *hang*] on these two commandments."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Matthew 22:34-40). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[†]

2. Where did Jesus get that? Or, those? Did He make it up? Did He summarize the Ten Commandments? Jesus was quoting Himself as told to Moses and Israel in the wilderness!

Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Leviticus 19:18: "Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him, but love your neighbour [sic-Br] as you love yourself. I am the LORD."—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Jesus emphasizes in a dialogue with a lawyer, as recorded in Matthew 22:35–40, that to love God and one's neighbors are "two hangers" that hold all the biblical teachings (the law and the prophets). **While many translations of Matthew 22:40 render the Greek verb *kremánnymi* as "depending" ("On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" [ESV]; see also NASB 1995, NET, RSV), the more literal meaning of hanging is employed in other translations (" 'On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets' " [NKJV]; see also NRSV).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.^{††Ω§}**

3. How are we supposed to develop love for God? Where do we learn about such a thing? How could it be that if we cannot love our brothers and sisters, then we will not be able to love God? Is that true? If so, why?

[BSG:] Though we have confidence that God will make all things right in the end, it still matters what we, as Christians, do in the here and now. Though there may be many injustices and evils that God will not now eradicate (because of the parameters of the cosmic conflict [that is, the great controversy over God's character and government]), this doesn't mean that we can't be

used to help alleviate whatever suffering and evil we come across, at least to whatever degree possible. In fact, we are obligated, as Christians, to do just that....

When others are oppressed, we should not turn a blind eye. Instead, we should ask ourselves what we can do, individually and corporately, to advance God's love and justice in a way that reflects to our broken world our Lord's perfect character of righteousness and love.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, March 15.^{†‡}

4. Living in a comfortable Western society, do we often see people oppressed? Would that be the homeless? What other groups today might be considered “oppressed”?
5. The two main ideas in this lesson are: 1) Loving God, and 2) Loving others.

[BSG:] [The first main idea in this lesson regards] **The unbreakable link of loving God and loving others (justice). In Scripture, to love a fellow believer involves concrete loving actions by sharing material goods with a brother or sister in need.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 158.^{†‡} [Does that include sharing our goods with Africans? Southern Asians? Immigrants? The poor everywhere, including our neighbors?][‡]

6. The lesson suggests that “loving others” according to the “second” great commandment is what we should call *justice*. Does that sound like what you think of when *justice* is mentioned?

1 John 2:9-11: ⁹ Those who say that they are in the light, yet hate their brothers and sisters, are in the darkness to this very hour. ¹⁰Those who love their brothers and sisters live in the light, and so there is nothing in them that will cause someone else to sin. ¹¹But those who hate their brothers and sisters are in the darkness; they walk in it and do not know where they are going, because the darkness has made them blind.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] In 1 John 2:9–11, John associates the attitudes of loving and not loving/hating fellow believers with the opposing images of light and darkness....

Likewise, in 1 John 3:10, 11, the distinction is between the children of God and the children of the devil.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159.^{†‡§}

1 John 3:9-11: ⁹ None of those who are children of God continue to sin, for God's very nature is in them; and because God is their Father, they cannot continue to sin. ¹⁰This is the clear difference between God's children and the Devil's children: all who do not do what is right or do not love others are not God's children. [God's children do right and love others!]

¹¹ The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

7. The epistle then gives more details of John's warning.

1 John 3:14-18: ¹⁴ We know that we have left death and come over into life; we know it because we love our brothers and sisters. Whoever does not love is still under the power of death.... ¹⁸My children, our love should not be just words and talk; **it must be true love, which shows itself in action.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [What kind of “life” or “death” is this talking about?][‡]

8. Consider these two starkly contrasting types of beings: Living in the light (the children of God) versus living in the darkness (the children of the Devil), (1 John 3:9-11 as quoted above) even life versus death! Does loving God and loving our fellow human beings really impact us that much? Have we moved from death to life? Are we ready to share even our earthly possessions with those in need?

[BSG:] **Two significant details are observed in this passage. First, to love a fellow believer is spelled out in terms of sharing material goods with a brother or sister who is in need.** This concrete loving action is an important form of justice, inasmuch as the furtherance of justice or societal welfare is positively understood as the promotion of the well-being of others, which implies the alleviation of suffering in the world. Suffering is seen here as a tangible form of injustice. **Second, the love that stands for justice, in the sense of supplying the needs of others, is Christologically grounded in 1 John 3:16** (“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” [NKJV]). **That is, Christ’s self-sacrificial love for us is the basis for our knowledge and practice of love.** [Are we expected to actually “lay down our lives”?]

Therefore, if we read 1 John 4:20 (“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” [NKJV]) in light of 1 John 2:9–11, 1 John 3:10, 11, and especially 1 John 3:14–17, [all as quoted above] it is possible to draw the following conclusions: **First, the failure to love fellow believers is particularly expressed in the neglect to supply the material needs of brothers and sisters.** According to the theological deduction of 1 John 4:20, this failure is an evidence that the professed believer does not love God. **Theological anthropology could be the basis for this deduction, as God created human beings in His own image (Gen. 1:27).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159-160.†‡§ [Does love mean to “like”?]‡

9. Where does the Bible suggest we should look for our pattern of a loving and just Example?

1 John 4:9-12: ⁹And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. ¹⁰This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven. [How does this actually work?]

¹¹ Dear friends, **if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another.** ¹²No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us.—*Good News Bible*.*††

10. What are the best ways for us to reflect God’s love through us to others? Should we pray daily for the Holy Spirit’s help in doing this?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] It would be well for us to **spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.** We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.—Ellen G. White,

*The Desire of Ages** 83.4.^{††} [Also see Ellen White's comments about Jesus's last thoughts as spelled out in *The Desire of Ages* 752-753.][‡]

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11. **Would it be easier for us to do the other things suggested in this lesson if we did spend an hour each day contemplating the life of Christ? Is the Holy Spirit ready to guide us? If so, what are we waiting for?**

[BSG:] The idea that Christ is the visible manifestation of God's love, who is not visible to us (*1 John 4:12*), is reinforced by John's own testimony as an eyewitness of Jesus: "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" (*1 John 4:14, NKJV; see also John 1:14, 18*). Hence, ... "a failure to love others means that a person has failed to see the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ and therefore is unable to love God at all."—1, 2, and 3 *John, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 207.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 160.^{††§}

12. The second main idea in this lesson is that "failings of love" or times when love and justice are disconnected occurs when we do not have concern for the well-being of others.

[BSG:] The connection between loving God and others, particularly in the form of justice (**promoting their well-being and alleviating their suffering**), provides the necessary articulation in life for all the commandments we find in Scripture. **To put it another way, the disconnection between loving God and doing justice to others (loving them) means that there is no real harmony in our lives, as we attempt to keep God's commandments.** An example of this principle is the **rich young ruler** (*Matt. 19:16–22*), **who presumed to obey the commandments but failed to show love to the poor with his material possessions and then, ultimately, failed to follow Jesus.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 160.^{††§}

Matthew 19:16-22: ¹⁶ Once a man came to Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "**what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?**" [Was that salvation by works?]

¹⁷ "Why do you ask me concerning what is good?" answered Jesus. "There is only One who is good. Keep the commandments if you want to enter life."

¹⁸ "What commandments?" he asked.

Jesus answered, "Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; ¹⁹respect your father and your mother; and love your neighbour [*sic-Br*] as you love yourself."

²⁰ "I have obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "**What else do I need to do?**"

²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, **go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor**, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me." [Going from being rich to poor was like going from being good to bad!]

²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was very rich.—*Good News Bible*.^{*††} [Being rich was thought to be a sign that God was blessing that person because s/he was righteous; being poor was thought to

be a sign that God was cursing that person because s/he was evil or wicked.]†

13. What do you think was going on in this story? Doesn't Jesus's answer seem harsh?
14. Clearly, this young man's possessions and the status which that gave him in society was more important to him than obeying the two great commandments!

[EGW:] Christ made the only terms which could place the ruler where he would perfect a Christian character. His words were words of wisdom, though they appeared severe and exacting. In accepting and obeying them was the ruler's only hope of salvation. **His exalted position and his possessions were exerting a subtle influence for evil upon his character. If cherished, they would supplant God in his affections. To keep back little or much from God was to retain that which would lessen his moral strength and efficiency; for if the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 520.2.††

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15. We have not individually been called to sell all that we have, but what is it that God wants us to do? Are we clinging to things that we are not willing to give to God?
16. ***How well are we doing at living up to the notion that loving God involves caring about the needs of others? How much is that involved in our daily lives?***
17. If the two greatest commandments are love for God and love for others, **what are the two greatest sins?** Would it be **not loving God** and **not loving our neighbor**? Would you agree that calling these the greatest sins is correct? Are there other sins that you think are greater?

Zechariah 7:9-12: ⁹ “Long ago I [the LORD] gave these commands to my people: ‘**You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another.** ¹⁰**Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners who live among you, or anyone else in need.** [In 2025, does this include immigrants?] **And do not plan ways of harming one another.**’

¹¹ “But my people stubbornly refused to listen. They closed their minds ¹²and made their hearts as hard as rock. Because they would not listen to the teaching which I sent through the prophets who lived long ago, I became very angry.”—*Good News Bible*.*††

[BSG:] It is not just idolatry to which God responds with the anger of love but the mistreatment of His people, whether individually or corporately. **God becomes angry at injustice** because God is love.

The two great sins emphasized throughout the Old Testament are failings relative to the two great commandments: to love God and to love one another. **The two greatest sins are failings of love.** In short, then, **you cannot keep the commandments if you do not love God and if you do not love others.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, March 17.††

18. Does it seem correct to you that **love for God cannot be separated from love for others**? Why are these two so closely linked?

[BSG:] Scripture declares that **God loves justice and hates evil** (*for example, Ps. 33:5, Isa. 61:8*), and He is deeply concerned about injustice, which evokes righteous indignation on behalf of all those who are the victims of injustice.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God is consistently passionate in favor of the downtrodden and oppressed while expressing righteous anger against the victimizers and oppressors.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 18.†§

Psalm 33:5: The LORD loves what is righteous and just; his constant love fills the earth.—*Good News Bible.**

Isaiah 61:8: The LORD says,

“I love justice and I hate oppression and crime.

I will faithfully reward my people

And make an eternal covenant with them.”—*Good News Bible.*†*

19. Psalm 82 spells out in some detail how God wants to rule His entire universe. It includes such things as defending the rights of the poor and the orphans, being fair to the needy and helpless, and rescuing the poor from the power of the wicked.

20. God recognized that the judges in Israel exercised almost life-and-death rule over the poor widows and orphans. Thus, in Psalm 82:6, He said about them, “You are gods.”

[BSG:] As many commentators understand it, this passage decries both the earthly rulers responsible for the injustice in society and is also a reference to when God judges the celestial rulers (the “gods”) behind corrupt earthly judges and rulers (demonic forces, obviously). Specifically, the rulers are asked, “How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?” (*Ps. 82:2, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 18.†§

21. This call for justice (that is, love for our neighbors) is almost a central call of the Old Testament. It is spelled out very clearly in Micah 6.

Micah 6:6-8: ⁶ What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my firstborn child to pay for my sins? ⁸ No, **the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.**—*Good News Bible.*†*

22. So, what does the New Testament suggest? Notice these incredible words from Jesus.

John 13:35: “If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”—*Good News Bible.**

23. If we were truly loving, as Jesus was requesting, would we stand out from the crowds?

[BSG:] What would our families and churches look like if we focused on Micah 6:8 and intentionally put it into practice in both word and deed? In whatever context you are in, how could the application of these principles be made manifest better?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 18.†

[BSG:] The prophets in Scripture continually highlight God’s call for justice in society. Again and again, Scripture does not shrink back from highlighting issues of injustice and oppression. Indeed, **the call for God to bring judgment was itself the call for God to establish justice.**

For example, the prophet **Isaiah** does not mince words about the injustice in Israel at the time. His words and call for justice should ring loud and clear in our ears today. “ ‘Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow’ ” (*Isa. 1:17, NKJV*). Further, he proclaims “ ‘woe’ ” against those who “ ‘decree unrighteous decrees’ ” and “ ‘rob the needy of justice’ ” (*Isa. 10:1, 2, NKJV*), warning: “ ‘What will you do in the day of punishment, and in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?’ ” (*Isa. 10:3, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, March 19.^{†§}

Isaiah 1:17: “Learn to do right. See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.”—*Good News Bible.**

Isaiah 10:1-3: ¹ You are doomed! You make unjust laws that oppress my people. ² That is how you prevent the poor from having their rights and from getting justice. That is how you take the property that belongs to widows and orphans. ³ What will you do when God punishes you? What will you do when he brings disaster on you from a distant country? Where will you run to find help? Where will you hide your wealth?—*Good News Bible.**

24. Isaiah 1 spells out the problems that Isaiah was very clearly facing. Jeremiah faced many of the same problems in his day.

Jeremiah 22:13-16: ¹³ Doomed is the man who builds his house by injustice and enlarges it by dishonesty;

who makes his countrymen work for nothing and does not pay their wages.

¹⁴ Doomed is the one who says, “I will build myself a mansion with spacious rooms upstairs.”...

^{15b} He [your father] was always just and fair, and he prospered in everything he did.

¹⁶ He gave the poor a fair trial, and all went well with him.

That is what it means to know the LORD.—*Good News Bible.*†‡*

25. Near the very end of His ministry on this earth, Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees and the teachers of the law in very blunt words, saying:

Matthew 23:23-30: ²³ “How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! **You hypocrites!** You give to God a tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, **but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty.** These you should practice, without neglecting the others. ²⁴ Blind guides! You strain a fly out of your drink, but swallow a camel!

²⁵ “How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! **You hypocrites!** You clean the outside of your cup and plate, while the inside is full of what you have obtained by violence and selfishness. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! Clean what is inside the cup first, and then the outside will be clean too!

²⁷ “How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! **You hypocrites!**

You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but are full of bones and decaying corpses on the inside. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you appear good to everybody, **but inside you are full of hypocrisy and sins.**

²⁹ “How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! **You hypocrites!** You make fine tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of those who lived good lives; ³⁰and you claim that if you had lived during the time of your ancestors, you would not have done what they did and killed the prophets.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

26. Luke paralleled that idea.

Luke 11:42: “How terrible for you Pharisees! **You give God a tenth of the seasoning herbs, such as mint and rue and all the other herbs, but you neglect justice and love for God.** These you should practice, without neglecting the others.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

27. If we were to focus on the “**weightier matters**” (Matthew 23:23, *NKJV**†§ and the parallel passage of Luke 11:42) today, what would that look like? Of course, the question that was raised when Jesus brought up this idea is one that we might want to focus on in our day: “Who is my neighbor?”

28. An example of the disconnection between love and justice was given by Jesus in the parable of **the good Samaritan**. In their own minds, the Levite and priest (also a Levite) claimed to be following rules of ritual purification for the temple but ignored the needs of another (who was a Levite) who had been the victim of robbers. Read the story in Luke 10:25-37.

Luke 10:25-37: ²⁵ A teacher of the Law came up and tried to trap Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “**what must I do to receive eternal life?**”

²⁶ Jesus answered him, “What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?”

²⁷ **The man answered, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind’; and ‘Love your neighbour [sic-Br] as you love yourself.’ ”**

²⁸ “You are right,” Jesus replied; “do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But the teacher of the Law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “**Who is my neighbour [sic-Br]?**”

³⁰ Jesus answered, “There was once a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half dead. ³¹It so happened that a priest [a Levite] was going down that road; but when he saw the man, he walked on by, on the other side.

³²In the same way a Levite also came along, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by, on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan who was travelling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity. ³⁴He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he told the innkeeper, ‘and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.’ ”

³⁶ And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a

neighbour [*sic*-Br] towards the man attacked by the robbers?”

³⁷ The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

[EGW:] In the story of the good Samaritan, Christ illustrates **the nature of true religion**. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the **performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others**, in genuine goodness.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*^{*} 497.1; *Welfare Ministry*^{*} 42.1.^{††} Compare *The Youth’s Instructor*, August 16, 1894, par. 2.

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[EGW:] This was no imaginary scene, but an actual occurrence, which was known to be exactly as represented. **The priest and the Levite who had passed by on the other side were in the company that listened to Christ’s words**.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*^{*} 499.1.^{††}

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[EGW:] **The Levite was of the same tribe as was the wounded, bruised sufferer**. All Heaven watched as the Levite passed down the road, to see if his heart would be touched with human woe. As he beheld the man, he was convicted of what he ought to do; but as it was not an agreeable duty, he wished he had not come that way, so that he need not have seen the man who was wounded and bruised, naked and perishing, and in want of help from his fellow-men.—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,^{*} January 1, 1895, par. 5; *Welfare Ministry*^{*†} 47.1.^{††} [So, all three Jews were Levites.][‡]

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29. ***Is it clear that Jesus expects us to exercise justice just as the good Samaritan did? What might that include in our day?***

30. Look at another example from earlier in the life of Jesus.

Luke 4:16-21: ¹⁶ Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures ¹⁷and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place [Isaiah 61:1-2] where it is written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind;
to set free the oppressed

¹⁹and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people.”

²⁰ Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, ²¹as he said to them, “This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Note that Jesus did not continue to their favorite part: “And defeat their enemies [the Romans].” (*GNB*^{*†})][‡]

31. Jesus had often been called upon even as a youth to stand up and read the Scriptures in the synagogue in Nazareth; and He was called upon as an adult.

[EGW:] Thus as He grew in wisdom and stature, Jesus increased in favor with God and man. He drew the sympathy of all hearts by showing Himself capable of sympathizing with all. The atmosphere of hope and courage that surrounded Him made Him a blessing in every home. And **often in the synagogue on the Sabbath day He was called upon to read the lesson from the prophets, and the hearts of the hearers thrilled as a new light shone out from the familiar words of the sacred text.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 74.2.†† [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.265&index=0>]‡

32. **Jesus did not just talk about justice, but also He practiced and displayed justice!**

[BSG:] In direct contrast to the enemy, who grasped for power and sought to usurp God’s throne, Jesus lowered Himself and identified with those under sin, injustice, and oppression (without being infected by sin), and He defeated the enemy by giving Himself in love in order to establish justice as the One who is just and the Justifier of all who believe. **How can we claim to be concerned about the law that Christ died to uphold if we are not concerned about what Christ calls the weightier matters of the law?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 20.††

Psalm 9:8-9: ⁸ He rules the world with righteousness;
he judges the nations with justice.

⁹The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a place of safety in times of trouble.—*Good News Bible*.*

33. **How much clearer could the Word of God be regarding how we should seek to minister to those around us who are in need and are hurting?**

34. What would Jesus do if He were here in our day? What can we learn from His example?

[EGW:] [After Jesus healed the man with the “withered hand” on the Sabbath:] The spies dared not answer Christ.... **Rather than violate their traditions, they would leave a man to suffer, while they would relieve a brute [animal; livestock] because of the loss to the owner if it were neglected.** Thus greater care was shown for a dumb animal than for man, who is made in the image of God. **This illustrates the working of all false religions. They originate in man’s desire to exalt himself above God, but they result in degrading man below the brute....**

When Jesus turned upon the Pharisees with the question whether it was lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill, He confronted them with their own wicked purposes. They were hunting His life with bitter hatred, while He was saving life and bringing happiness to multitudes.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 286.4-287.1.††

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1355&index=0>]‡

35. Has Jesus set up an impossible standard?

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