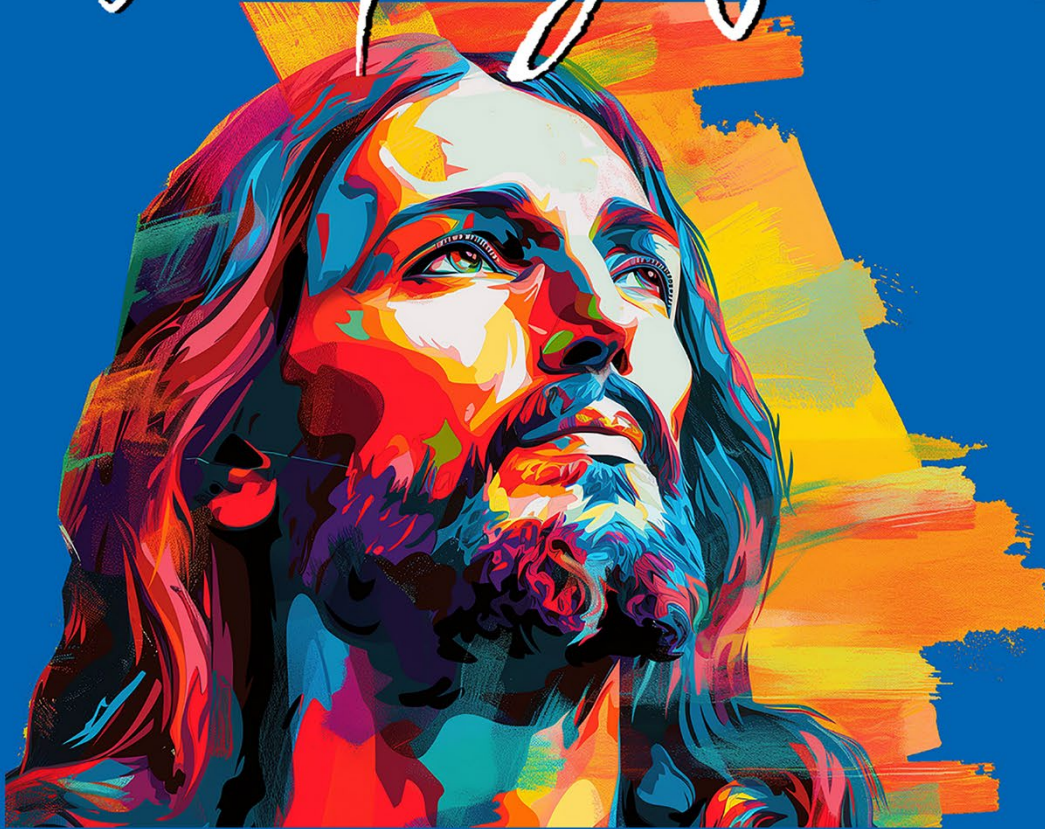


Finding Jesus



Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Study Guide

CHARLES S. STUART

Let's Just Imagine!

Let's just imagine what might happen in our family, community, church, nation, and world if all believers **KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH!** helped usher in the

When people embrace their role in the Kingdom of God here on earth, their **EYES, EARS, MIND, HANDS, FEET & VOICE** will be used to reflect their faith.

They will use their **EYES** to look for needs that are unmet, and to watch over those in positions of authority.

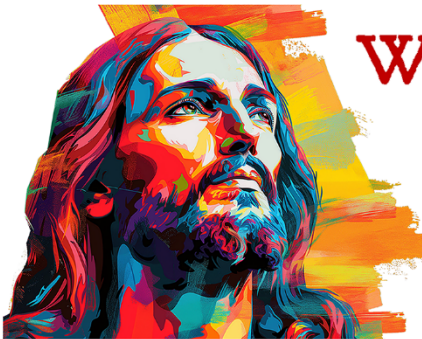
They will use their **EARS** to listen for the cries of those in pain, and to hear and address comments that demean those in need.

They will use their **MIND** to think of ways to get involved and to question for themselves what God would have them do for Him.

They will use their **HANDS** to do what is needed, remembering that it is through their hands that Jesus touches the "least of these."

They will use their **FEET** to go where needed...overseas, across the street or into the voting booth...to bring the Kingdom of God to those in need.

They will use their **VOICE** to speak up and out for those without a voice, and to hold those with power accountable to remember "the least of these" when making decisions.



**Wouldn't it be lovely to live
in a world like that!?!**

Charles Stuart

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About the Author.

Charlie Stuart was raised in the church by faithful, loving parents whose lives of service to “the others” inspired Charlie and his five siblings to purpose their lives to serve others, particularly the “least of these.”



Charlie has been active in the local church all his life serving as: Deacon, adult Bible study leader (20+ years), member of a pastor search committee and all the other committees in the local church.

Charlie graduated from the University of Florida in 1973 with an undergraduate degree in Marketing, with a focus on Economics. He worked in the family's office products company for 16 years and spent the following 20 years as a professional speaker, author, and consultant.

He also made time to volunteer for 25+ years with the YMCA as a local board member and on national task forces for the YMCA of the USA.

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SIXTH FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

Every. One. Matters.

Foundational Truth.

VI. Every. One. Matters.

To the Jews of Jesus's day Samaritans were anathema. They were religious as well as social outcasts. So much so that Jews would go the long way around Samaria rather than contaminate themselves with any contact. The Judeans thought less of Samaritans than they did of Romans.

We are familiar with segregation even among ourselves. In our own country's history, Protestant colonies fostered separation, if not elimination, of Catholics. The introduction of slavery to the colonies, and its brutal, inhuman application, existed on the assumption that slaves were not human, without soul or intelligence. This scourge was followed by other groups isolated because they threatened the original "founding fathers," groups like Native Americans, Irish, Italian, German, Scandinavians, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, former slaves, segregation, and more recently Muslims and "illegal immigrants."

But it doesn't stop at ethnic or national identity. In recent years large parts of our politics have found other groups not deserving of respect based on their beliefs, including a wide range of sexual identities symbolized by L.G.B.T.Q.+.



Part of the human makeup is the freedom to make choices, even those that are contrary to God's heart and His law. What humans have been doing since recorded history, even in the Bible, reflects our choices to selfishly care only for me and my kind based on a false ego belief of being "better" than others. And then to reject, even castigate, any who are not in my group. It can be said this way: "I am me, and you are you, and I am better than you."

We have justified such actions by applying excuses like "they take our jobs," or "they steal our land," or "they don't speak our language," or the catch-all, "they aren't like us."

VI. Every. One. Matters.

We're all guilty to some degree of this behavior, but that doesn't mean it has to be so. Jesus came to change the "I am me" statement to: "I am me, and you are you, and **YOU** are better."

He expects His followers to put "the other" first and me, and you, last... treating all with dignity, respect, and removing oppression. As John the Baptist proclaimed, paraphrasing Isaiah 40:5, *'the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth.'*

All this I write to validate a point that Jesus makes in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Here's the complete story told by Jesus.

10 ²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus, "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

Luke 10:25-28

The story starts with a 'lawyer' asking Jesus in verse 25, 'Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' An honest question.

The 'lawyer' was not a civil or even criminal lawyer, and he was not recognized by the Romans for participating in Roman courts. His law was the laws of Moses and the prophets as well as commentaries of the day from learned rabbis, like Nicodemus.

This is why Jesus asked him to explain what he thought the answer is to his own question. The 'lawyer' answered in verse 27, *'Love your God... and your neighbor as yourself.'*

This is the same definition Jesus gave in Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34 and is referred to as the "Great Commandment."

Foundational Truth.

Jesus affirmed his answer in verse 28, *'You have given the right answer; do this and you will live (eternally).'* Looks like the 'lawyer' got it right.

But the 'lawyer' had a follow-up question that changed everything. In verse 29 he asked Jesus, *'And who is my neighbor?'*

Then Jesus started telling the parable. The Samaritan is the "hero" of the story, but there are "villains" introduced before he comes on the scene.

10 ²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:29-37

VI. Every. One. Matters.

I can imagine the crowd listened to Jesus intently even nodding with understanding when the 'priest' and 'Levite' crossed the road to avoid the 'left for dead' victim.

But what really got their attention was when Jesus said, '*But a Samaritan...came near him.*' Imagine what they thought. "He's going to finish him off," or "He will show no pity" as he passed by.

Jesus was challenging the prevailing cultural and spiritual prejudice. So, Jesus said the Samaritan '*was moved with pity.*' I wonder what the 'lawyer' thought when he heard this.

Years ago, I told this story in a chapel service at a Christian school to middle and high school students.

Reframing the characters, I made the victim one of them, and the priest a pastor, and the Levite a politician.

They listened politely, but were, at best, disinterested.

Then I replaced Samaritan with Muslim, and every face changed. Now they were very interested.

Then, concluding the story, I asked, 'Which of these three, do you think, would be a neighbor to you when you fell into the hands of the robbers?'

It took some prodding to get the answers, and when the first few students replied, "the Muslim," several more joined in. What followed was a deeper discussion about the neighbor we don't really know personally, and how prejudice can prevent even Christians from doing what Jesus expects.

I close now as I closed at the chapel service, quoting Jesus...

"Go and do likewise."

Foundational Truth.

CONCLUSION.



With this graphic example Jesus challenged the listeners to see beyond their biases and into the heart of the other. He showed the hypocrisy of the church leaders for ignoring the victim and the mercy shown by a stranger. Jesus was saying 'where mercy is needed, there you will be' when you live by the Gospel of Jesus.

Where do you stand?

What was the last time you faced a 'mercy is needed' situation, and what was your response?

Are there types of people in desperate need that you would hesitate to help? Please explain.