

The background is a light blue gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

# THE GOD IMPULSE II

LUKE 6:36 BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS  
YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL. NIV

- **BARNA RESEARCH - THE CHURCH IS STRUGGLING TO FORGIVE, UNDERSTAND AND EMBODY MERCY TODAY. CONSIDER THESE FINDINGS:**

- [ONE-QUARTER OF PRACTICING CHRISTIANS SAYS THERE IS A PERSON WHO THEY CANNOT FORGIVE.](#)
- **ALMOST HALF OF PRACTICING CHRISTIANS SAY MERCY DOESN'T INFLUENCE THEIR THOUGHTS OR ACTIONS OR THEY HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT WHETHER IT DOES.**
- **ONE IN FIVE PRACTICING CHRISTIANS REPORTS STRUGGLING TO RECEIVE FORGIVENESS FOR SOMETHING THEY HAVE PERSONALLY DONE.**
- **CHRISTIANS GRAPPLE WITH WHETHER CERTAIN PEOPLE DESERVE COMPASSION OR FORGIVENESS, AND THEY ARE NOT ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM NON-CHRISTIANS WHEN IT COMES TO EMBODYING MERCIFUL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS.**

**17%**  
*of Christians...*

A recent Barna study revealed that only 17% of Christians believe it's their job to show mercy. Most thought the work should fall to churches, nonprofits, and government programs. Yet, when surveyed, the pastors of churches overwhelmingly thought that the **recipients of mercy should be the poor and victims in distress rather than people who have hurt us or society**. By a factor of more than 5:1, pastors and Christians thought that those who are incarcerated and those who have wronged us personally were less deserving of their compassion.

- **MATTHEW 9:10-13** AND AS JESUS RECLINED AT TABLE IN THE HOUSE, BEHOLD, MANY TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS CAME AND WERE RECLINING WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES. 11 AND WHEN THE PHARISEES SAW THIS, THEY SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "WHY DOES YOUR TEACHER EAT WITH TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS?" 12 BUT WHEN HE HEARD IT, HE SAID, "THOSE WHO ARE WELL HAVE NO NEED OF A PHYSICIAN, BUT THOSE WHO ARE SICK. **13 GO AND LEARN WHAT THIS MEANS, 'I DESIRE MERCY, AND NOT SACRIFICE.'** FOR I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS." ESV

- WHAT IS MY IMPULSE?

- WHAT IS YOUR IMPULSE?

- OUR IMPULSE TOWARDS OTHERS OFTEN MIRRORS WHAT WE THINK GOD'S IMPULSE IS TOWARDS US.

- MATTHEW 5:7 "BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY. ESV

- MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE A GRID OF TRUTH THROUGH WHICH THEY SEE THE WORLD; OFTEN IT LEADS TO BEING JUDGMENTAL AND HARSH.

# MERCY?

## DO WE UNDERSTAND IT ?

- ACCUSED CRIMINALS THROW THEMSELVES ON THE MERCY OF THE COURT!
- CONQUERING ARMIES MIGHT SHOW MERCY ON THE CONQUERED.
- IN CHRISTIANITY, WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IN FORGIVING OUR SINS, SHOWS US MERCY. WE DESERVE DEATH BUT WE RECEIVE FORGIVENESS.
- "NOT GETTING THE PUNISHMENT I DESERVE IS PART OF MERCY! MERCY IS MUCH MORE THAN THAT!"

# TENDER MERCIES

- PSALM 25:6 REMEMBER, O LORD, THY TENDER MERCIES AND THY LOVING KINDNESSES; FOR THEY HAVE BEEN EVER OF OLD. KJV
- PSALM 40:11 WITHHOLD NOT THOU THY TENDER MERCIES FROM ME, O LORD: LET THY LOVINGKINDNESS AND THY TRUTH CONTINUALLY PRESERVE ME. KJV
- PSALM 51:1 HAVE MERCY UPON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO THY LOVINGKINDNESS: ACCORDING UNTO THE MULTITUDE OF THY TENDER MERCIES BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS. KJV
- PSALM 69:16 HEAR ME, O LORD; FOR THY LOVINGKINDNESS IS GOOD: TURN UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF THY TENDER MERCIES. KJV
- PSALM 77:9 HATH GOD FORGOTTEN TO BE GRACIOUS? HATH HE IN ANGER SHUT UP HIS TENDER MERCIES? SELAH. KJV

- PSALM 79:8 O REMEMBER NOT AGAINST US FORMER INIQUITIES: LET THY **TENDER MERCIES** SPEEDILY PREVENT US: FOR WE ARE BROUGHT VERY LOW. KJV
- PSALM 103:4 WHO REDEEMETH THY LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION; WHO CROWNETH THEE WITH **LOVINGKINDNESS AND TENDER MERCIES**; KJV
- PSALM 119:77 LET THY **TENDER MERCIES** COME UNTO ME, THAT I MAY LIVE: FOR THY LAW IS MY DELIGHT. KJV
- PSALM 119:156 GREAT ARE THY **TENDER MERCIES**, O LORD: QUICKEN ME ACCORDING TO THY JUDGMENTS. KJV
- PS 145:9 THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL: AND HIS **TENDER MERCIES** ARE OVER ALL HIS WORKS. KJV
- **LOOK AT OTHER TRANSLATIONS - STEADFAST LOVE, FAITHFULNESS, ABUNDANT MERCY, COMPASSION!**

- **MERCY** - THE ASPECT OF GOD'S LOVE THAT CAUSES HIM TO HELP THE MISERABLE, JUST AS GRACE IS THE ASPECT OF HIS LOVE THAT MOVES HIM TO FORGIVE THE GUILTY. THOSE WHO ARE MISERABLE MAY BE SO EITHER BECAUSE OF BREAKING GOD'S LAW OR BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL.
- GOD SHOWS MERCY UPON THOSE WHO HAVE BROKEN HIS LAW (DAN 9:9; 1 TIM 1:13,16), ALTHOUGH SUCH MERCY IS SELECTIVE, DEMONSTRATING THAT IT IS NOT DESERVED (ROM 9:14-18). GOD'S MERCY ON THE MISERABLE EXTENDS BEYOND PUNISHMENT THAT IS WITHHELD (EPH 2:4-6). WITHHELD PUNISHMENT KEEPS US FROM HELL, BUT IT DOES NOT GET US INTO HEAVEN. GOD'S MERCY IS GREATER THAN THIS.



- GOD ALSO SHOWS MERCY BY ACTIVELY HELPING THOSE WHO ARE MISERABLE DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL. WE SEE THIS ASPECT OF MERCY ESPECIALLY IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS. HE HEALED BLIND MEN (MATT 9:27-31; 20:29-34) AND LEPERS (LUKE 17:11-19). THESE ACTS OF HEALING GREW OUT OF HIS ATTITUDE OF COMPASSION AND MERCY.
- FINALLY, BECAUSE GOD IS MERCIFUL, HE EXPECTS HIS CHILDREN TO BE MERCIFUL (MATT 5:7; JAMES 1:27). (FROM NELSON'S ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY, COPYRIGHT © 1986, THOMAS NELSON PUBLISHERS)
- GOD'S MERCY IS ABOUT GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE. HE'S NOT JUST WITHHOLDING THE PUNISHMENT WE DESERVE. HE'S GIVING US THE LOVE WE SO DESPERATELY NEED.
- IN HIS OUTSTANDING BOOK MINISTRIES OF MERCY, TIM KELLER WRITES, "GRACE HAS TO DO WITH MAN'S MERITS, BUT MERCY HAS TO DO WITH MAN'S MISERY. THEOLOGIAN'S HAVE DISCERNED THAT GOD'S MERCY . . . IS THAT ASPECT OF HIS NATURE WHICH MOVES HIM TO RELIEVE SUFFERING AND MISERY."

## **GOOD SAMARITAN (SEE LUKE 10: 25–37).**

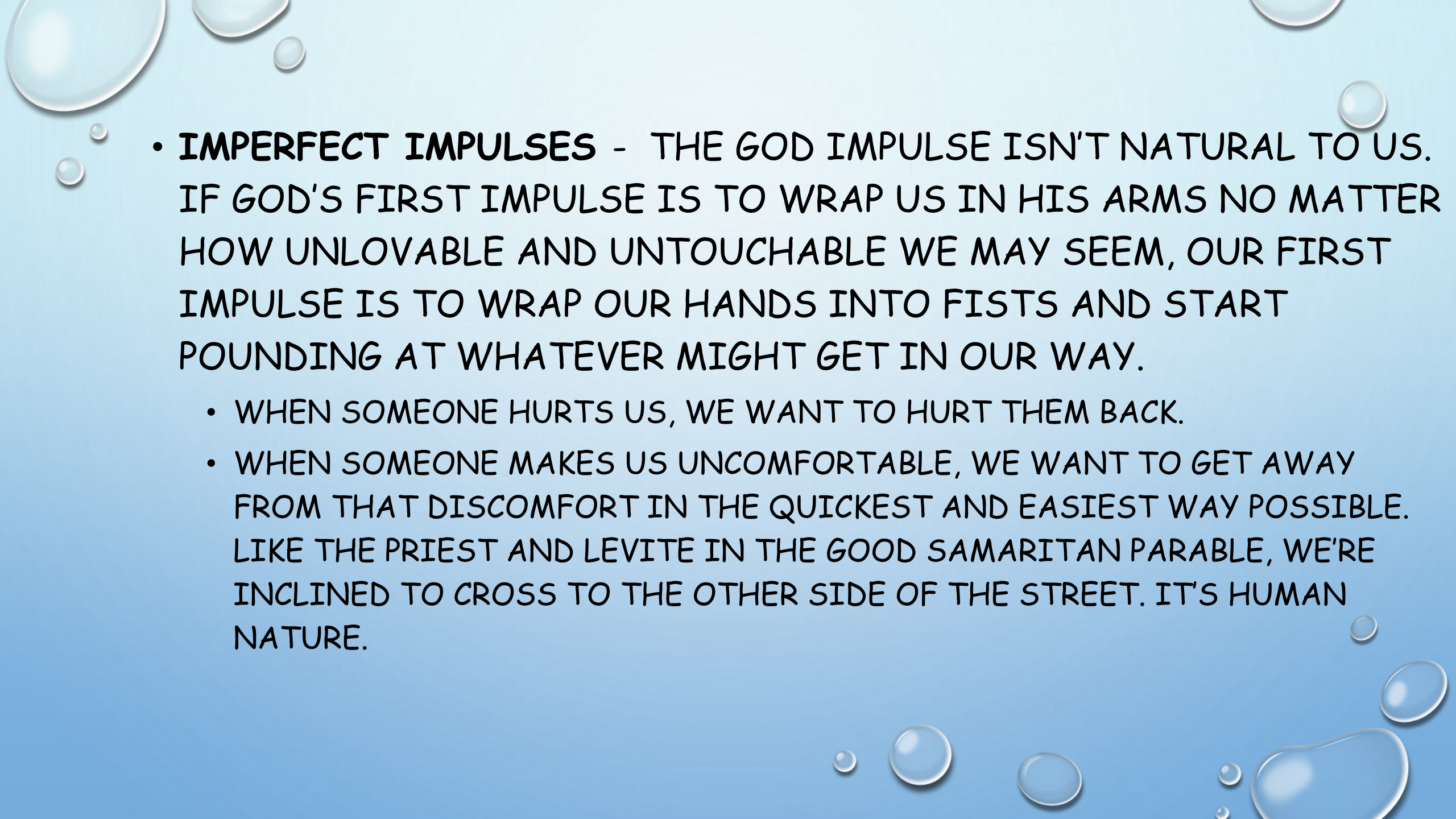
- LUKE 10:25-37 ONE DAY AN EXPERT IN RELIGIOUS LAW STOOD UP TO TEST JESUS BY ASKING HIM THIS QUESTION: "TEACHER, WHAT SHOULD I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?" 26 JESUS REPLIED, "WHAT DOES THE LAW OF MOSES SAY? HOW DO YOU READ IT?" 27 THE MAN ANSWERED, "'YOU MUST LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, ALL YOUR SOUL, ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND ALL YOUR MIND.' AND, 'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'" 28 "RIGHT!" JESUS TOLD HIM. "DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE!"
- 29 THE MAN WANTED TO JUSTIFY HIS ACTIONS, SO HE ASKED JESUS, "AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

# PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

- 30 JESUS REPLIED WITH A STORY: "A JEWISH MAN WAS TRAVELING ON A TRIP FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO, AND HE WAS ATTACKED BY BANDITS. THEY STRIPPED HIM OF HIS CLOTHES, BEAT HIM UP, AND LEFT HIM HALF DEAD BESIDE THE ROAD.
- 31 "BY CHANCE A PRIEST CAME ALONG. BUT WHEN HE SAW THE MAN LYING THERE, HE CROSSED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD AND PASSED HIM BY. 32 A TEMPLE ASSISTANT WALKED OVER AND LOOKED AT HIM LYING THERE, BUT HE ALSO PASSED BY ON THE OTHER SIDE.
- 33 "THEN A DESPISED SAMARITAN CAME ALONG, AND WHEN HE SAW THE MAN, HE FELT COMPASSION FOR HIM. 34 GOING OVER TO HIM, THE SAMARITAN SOOTHED HIS WOUNDS WITH OLIVE OIL AND WINE AND BANDAGED THEM. THEN HE PUT THE MAN ON HIS OWN DONKEY AND TOOK HIM TO AN INN, WHERE HE TOOK CARE OF HIM. 35 THE NEXT DAY HE HANDED THE INNKEEPER TWO SILVER COINS, TELLING HIM, 'TAKE CARE OF THIS MAN. IF HIS BILL RUNS HIGHER THAN THIS, I'LL PAY YOU THE NEXT TIME I'M HERE.'
- 36 "NOW WHICH OF THESE THREE WOULD YOU SAY WAS A NEIGHBOR TO THE MAN WHO WAS ATTACKED BY BANDITS?" JESUS ASKED. 37 THE MAN REPLIED, "THE ONE WHO SHOWED HIM MERCY." THEN JESUS SAID, "YES, NOW GO AND DO THE SAME." NLT

- THE PLACE - "ASCENT OF BLOOD" OR "THE BLOODY WAY."
- THE PEOPLE - A JEWISH MAN, PRIEST, LEVITE AND A SAMARITAN
  - WHO SHOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO HELP?
  - SO WHY DIDN'T THEY?
- BY DEFINITION, A SAMARITAN WAS SIMPLY A PERSON WHO LIVED IN A REGION KNOWN AS SAMARIA, JUST NORTH OF JUDEA AND SOUTH OF GALILEE. BUT TO JESUS'S JEWISH AUDIENCE, THE WORD WAS FREIGHTED WITH PROVOCATIVE MEANING.
- JEWS AND SAMARITANS HATED EACH OTHER. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT THE TWO ETHNIC GROUPS HAD "NO DEALINGS" (JOHN 4: 9 NASB) WITH EACH OTHER, AND WHEN JEWS WANTED TO SLANDER JESUS, THEY ASKED HIM, "ARE WE NOT RIGHT IN SAYING THAT YOU ARE A SAMARITAN AND HAVE A DEMON?" (JOHN 8: 48). FOR THEM, BEING A SAMARITAN AND BEING DEMON-POSSESSED WAS PRACTICALLY THE SAME THING.

- GIVING A SAMARITAN THE ROLE OF A HERO, AS JESUS DID, MUST'VE FELT TRULY SCANDALOUS TO HIS JEWISH QUESTIONER.
- PICTURE THIS IN A MODERN-DAY SCENARIO
- SO WHY DIDN'T THEY HELP?
  - HE TRIED TO "JUSTIFY HIMSELF"—TO PAT HIMSELF ON THE BACK FOR CARING FOR ALL THE GOOD, DECENT PEOPLE LIKE HIMSELF—AND ASKED, "AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"
  - 4 POSSIBILITIES - RELIGION, LACK OF COMPASSION, PREJUDICE, INCONVENIENCE.



- **IMPERFECT IMPULSES** - THE GOD IMPULSE ISN'T NATURAL TO US. IF GOD'S FIRST IMPULSE IS TO WRAP US IN HIS ARMS NO MATTER HOW UNLOVABLE AND UNTOUCHABLE WE MAY SEEM, OUR FIRST IMPULSE IS TO WRAP OUR HANDS INTO FISTS AND START POUNDING AT WHATEVER MIGHT GET IN OUR WAY.

- WHEN SOMEONE HURTS US, WE WANT TO HURT THEM BACK.
- WHEN SOMEONE MAKES US UNCOMFORTABLE, WE WANT TO GET AWAY FROM THAT DISCOMFORT IN THE QUICKEST AND EASIEST WAY POSSIBLE. LIKE THE PRIEST AND LEVITE IN THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE, WE'RE INCLINED TO CROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET. IT'S HUMAN NATURE.

- OUR WORLD TELLS US TO GET STUFF FOR OURSELVES, NOT GIVE OF OURSELVES. IN FACT, SHOWING MERCY IS OFTEN SEEN AS WEAKNESS.
  - FEED THE POOR? THEY SHOULD WORK FOR A LIVING, WE THINK.
  - CARE FOR THE WIDOWS? WHO HAS TIME FOR THAT?
  - WE'RE OBSESSED WITH GETTING AND KEEPING WHAT'S OURS. EVERYBODY ELSE CAN FEND FOR THEMSELVES.
  - INSTEAD OF SOLVING PROBLEMS IN A MERCIFUL, HEALING WAY, WE HANDLE OUR SLIGHTS WITH LAWSUITS.
    - MORE THAN 1.1 MILLION LAWYERS ARE KEPT AT WORK IN THE UNITED STATES— ONE ATTORNEY FOR EVERY THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE, THE MOST PER CAPITA ON EARTH.
  - ON ONE HAND WE'RE A SELFISH PEOPLE, AND IT SEEMS AS THOUGH WE'RE GETTING MORE SO ALL THE TIME.

- ON THE OTHER HAND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENTS OF OUR ECONOMY. THERE ARE 1.6 MILLION OF THEM NOW, AND TOGETHER THEY REPRESENT 9 PERCENT OF OUR ECONOMY. MANY OF THESE PROVIDE CRUCIAL, NON-DUPLICABLE SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES AND AROUND THE WORLD.
- WRITING A CHECK IS A GREAT START TO SHOWING MERCY! IT ALSO CAN BE A WAY OF KEEPING PEOPLE AT ARM'S LENGTH, NOT PERSONALLY INVOLVING OURSELVES!
- TO BE TRULY MERCIFUL, WE HAVE TO BE WILLING TO LOOK SOMEONE IN THE EYE. TO KNEEL DOWN BESIDE THEM. TO GET TO KNOW THEM. TO HOLD THEM. WE NEED TO HEAR THEIR STORY. WHEN WE'RE WILLING TO DO THAT, WE MAY DISCOVER (TO OUR SHOCK) THAT FOLKS SEEMINGLY "UNDESERVING" OF OUR MERCY DESERVE IT MUCH MORE THAN WE THINK.
  - FACE-TO-FACE. HAND-TO-HAND. LIFE-ON-LIFE. WHEN WE SHOW MERCY AND TRUTH IN A RELATIONAL CONTEXT, THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IS AMPLIFIED, HAVING GREATER VALUE, AND A GREATER IMPACT.



