

WALKING AS A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Scripture: Leviticus 19:11-18

February 26, 2020

As I write this devotional, I am preparing for a trip to Israel. My preparations include a study of Israeli customs and social norms. There are two reasons for this. First, I want to immerse myself in the culture. With this knowledge, I hope to gain a more profound experience. The second reason is more important. I desire to be a good neighbor.

Around the world, customs and social norms become manifest in a variety of ways. However, if we look closely, the underlining purpose of these practices is the same – to foster and maintain peace by extending respect and dignity within the community.

Today's verses, Leviticus 19:11-18, contain instructions for how we are to treat each other. "You shall not steal....you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice, you shall judge your neighbor.... you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor...." Verse 18 provides the essence for these moral codes; "you shall love your neighbor as yourself...." In the Talmud, Rabbi Akiva says: "This is a fundamental principle of the Torah." - [*Torath Kohanim* 19:45] Jesus tells us that this is the second greatest commandment. – [Mark 12:31].

We cannot know all the customs and social norms of the world. So, how do we love our neighbor when our neighbor is foreign to us? The *HaKsau V'HaKabbalah* offers this advice:

"Your affection must be real, not feigned. Always treat others with respect. Always seek the best for them. Join in their pain. Greet them with friendliness. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Assist them physically. Do not consider yourself better than them." ¹

Prayer: Gracious Father, thank you for never forsaking me. I pray that you will make me a blessing to everyone that I meet, and that they will be a blessing to me and others. Amen.

Edward J. Corbitt, Past WV Conference Evangelism Team Chairman
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¹ Scherman, Nosson, et al. *The Chumash: the Torah, Haftaros and Five Megillos = Hamishah humshe Torah: 'im Targum Onkelos, Pe. Rashi, Haftarot ye-Hamesh Megilot, 'im Kol Tefilot Shabat nusah Sefarad*. Mesorah Publications Ltd., 2008.