



Pecking Order

What is a pecking order?

- a ranking of chickens: who gets to peck whom, and who gets more and better things

How do pecking orders show up in people?

- what determines our rank?

What does God think about our pecking orders?

- My (selfish, proud) hope: find out that God agrees with my rankings
- My humble prayer: please show us your ways and help us to accept them

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Pecking Order

Luke 10:25-37

bib.ly/Lu10.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

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Luke

The Good News is for all peoples

- Jewish and Gentile
- Men and women, children and adults
- Outcasts and the honored
- The high and the low

What it means to be God's people

- How God's people are to live their lives

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Jewish Pecking Order in the First Century

God

- Holy, unapproachable

**When 2 people met, judgment was clear
We all have a pecking orders too!**

Religious elite

- Pharisees, Sadducees, Law scholars (God's Law+human tradition), priests, Levites

“Good” Jewish people

- Followed the Law and the teachings of the elite

“Good” foreigners: converts to Judaism

- By fully adopting the Law (God's Law+human tradition), as if Jewish

“Pretty good” foreigners: God fearers

- By mostly adopting the Law (God's Law+human tradition), almost Jewish

“Bad” Jewish people plus foreigners (Samaritans)

- Broke key rules of the Law and tradition, or they worshiped other gods
- Samaritans: more problematic since they claimed Yahweh (the Jewish God)

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Luke 10:25-28

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “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, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

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*Luke 10:25-37***25-28: How God’s people are to live**

- **Love God with the whole of your being**
 - Recognizes the dignity of the whole human: spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, ...
- **Love your neighbor as yourself**
 - Includes the whole human...not just their souls!
 - **Neighbor:** literally, someone close to you
 - Geographically: “neighborhood”
 - Socially: friends, similar “circles”
 - Societally: similar place in the pecking order
 - Politically: overlap of policies and perspectives and celebrities
 - Cooperatively: Shared problems and enemies
 - “Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.” *Psalm 139:21-22*

29:

30-35:

36-37:

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*Luke 10:25-37***25-28: How God's people are to live**

- **Love God with the whole of your being**
 - Recognizes the dignity of the whole human: spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, ...
 - **Love your neighbor as yourself**
 - **Everyone agrees: Love your neighbors**
 - =“a person who lives **close beside** others and who thus by implication is part of a so-called **‘in-group’**, that is, the group with which an individual identifies both ethnically and culturally”
- 29: • homophily: we naturally ‘love’ people who are like us
- 30-35: • The only debate is this: as the distance increases...
- 36-37: • When does a **neighbor** (whom we naturally love) become an **enemy** (whom we shouldn't love)

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Luke 10:29-37

But he [the expert in the law] wanted to **justify himself**, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said:

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*Luke 10:25-37***29: The law expert wanted to prove his own goodness**

- This law expert didn't want to change
 - He wanted to show that he had drawn the line between neighbor and enemy in the right place
 - **We tend not to learn what we don't want to learn**
 - First step in discipleship: want to be more like God
 - Knowing I so often don't actually want to be more like God!
- Jesus had a reputation for drawing the line too far out
 - "A friend of tax collectors and sinners" [the bottom]
 - **Being a friend of people too low in the pecking order meant you were no longer a friend of the people higher in the pecking order**

30-35:

36-37:

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"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

A **priest** happened to be going down the same road, and when he **saw the man**, he **passed by on the other side**.

So too, a **Levite**, when he came to the place and **saw him**, **passed by on the other side**.

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But a **Samaritan**, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he **saw him**, he **took pity on him**.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

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Luke 10:25-37

30-35: Jesus’ story had an unexpected and unwanted hero!

- A **priest** and a **Levite** [highest] saw and passed by
 - Both seemingly did nothing wrong culturally
 - This half-dead, unclean person had no known ‘closeness’ with them, so ***he was not a neighbor***
 - To help him could lower their rank
 - Yet like the robbers, ***they departed and left him half dead!***
- **Samaritan** [lowest rank] saw and took pity
 - Shocking surprise in the story
 - “Did mercy”: Jesus gave great emphasis to actions!

36-37:

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“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

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Luke 10:25-37

36-37: Jesus' definition of 'neighbor' to be loved

- **Love whoever needs a neighbor**
 - No pecking order
 - Mercy is an action, not only an attitude
 - “Go and do likewise”
 - Meeting human need:
 - spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, ...
- The expert in the law (highest human category) is to follow the Samaritan (lowest human category)

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The Big Idea

**An essential part of loving God
is doing mercy for and with the whole of people
without human ranking**

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Application #1

Genuinely desire to follow God's ways

- **Don't expect God to reveal His ways if we don't intend to follow what He reveals**
 - **Neither of this law experts' 2 questions was focused on realigning himself with God.**
 - **First: test Jesus**
 - **Second: show I don't need to change**
- **This calls for repentance**
 - **Genuine confession includes sorrow over my sin**
 - **When we fail to be fully like God...**
 - **We dishonor the God who made the people we belittle**
 - **We dishonor and hurt the people who are made in His image**

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But what about grace and forgiveness?

Salvation by grace through faith
does not change God's design
for what it is to truly live

- Love God with all that we are
- Love people as ourselves, especially those in need
 - in every social category and level

**There is no excuse for Christians who are not growing
in these things!**

grace = God's love and forgiveness that we cannot earn or deserve

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What is OUR pecking order? What is YOUR pecking order?

Both explicit and implicit (hidden from myself)

What do I use to justify **not being merciful or patient or kind**
to people, or to justify **judging or slandering** people?



- politics or perspectives
- “woke” or not “woke”
- LGBTQIA
- religion
- race / ethnicity / nationality
- weight or disability or (mental) illness
- life choices
- how they treat me

God has a design and standard, **yet I am not the judge!**

When people judge me, I tend to return the favor...

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Our role in the pecking order...

Some of us regularly find ourselves in the **upper part** of society's pecking order

Some of us regularly find ourselves in the **lower part** of society's pecking order

Most of us are a mixture...

Our peers (people at our level in the pecking order, as well as the media we follow) tend to justify us for not being merciful, patient or kind to others, whether above or below us in the pecking order

> Sometimes they even judge us if we do show mercy

Jesus commands us to be merciful, patient, and kind without consideration of rank!

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Application #2

Do not judge! Do not condemn!

- "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned." *Luke 6:37*
- I justify not being merciful, or being judgmental, or assuming the worst, or slandering people, or ..., when...
 - The person is 'far' from me in any of number of ways
 - The person is not being very neighborly to me
- "You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do."
- "Love **always** protects, **always** trusts, **always** hopes, **always** perseveres" *1 Corinthians 13:7*

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Application #3

Do mercy without human ranking

= Compassion in action with honor

- For the whole of people: the Gospel includes...
 - **Heart:** relational, social, psychological well-being
 - **Soul:** identity, hope, courage
 - **Mind:** knowledge and understanding
 - **Strength:** health and safety, ability to provide; as the Samaritan did
- In a way that sees the image of God in people, and honors and empowers them
- In a way that fosters their growth as whole people in Christ
- **What are the needs for mercy around you today?**

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The Big Idea

**An essential part of loving God
is doing mercy for and with the whole of people
without human ranking**

What human ranking are you working to dismantle...

- in you?
- in society?

This involves confession to God and people,

as well as the intentional work of changing our hearts and actions

Where is God calling you to do "compassion in action with honor"?

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