

imperfect, we are called upon to love our neighbor as ourselves.

(ii) What does it mean specifically to "love our neighbor as ourselves?"

The command itself gives us a simple pattern for the development of this section. First, we must consider what it means to love our neighbor in an active way. Second, we must ask what it means to love our neighbor. And third, we must ask what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves.

### What is involved in becoming a neighbor?

Loving our neighbor in an active way means becoming a neighbor to those who are in need. There are at least six steps in becoming a neighbor.

First, becoming a neighbor involves contact. We must be in contact with one who is in need. This contact may be nearness or proximity in space, or it may be awareness through some means of communication. Any mode by which we become aware of another's need is contact; any mode by which another's need touches our lives is contact.

Second, becoming a neighbor involves perception. Perception is not simple seeing. Sherlock Holmes said to Dr. Watson, "You see, but you do not observe." Perception is seeing with understanding. It is grasping the situation. It is realizing the meaning and significance of the need of the person whose life we contact.

Third, becoming a neighbor means involvement. Involvement in another's need comes about through contact and perception. When we become aware of and grasp the situation of another human being in need, we become participants in that person's neediness. By virtue of contact and perception, we are included in and have become sharers in the neediness of that fellow human being. It is not the result of a choice that we make. We are already involved.

Fourth, becoming a neighbor involves responsibility. Contact, perception, and involvement lead inevitably to an inescapable responsibility. What are we going to do about the need of which we have become aware, have grasped, and are involved in? This is a conscious choice that must be made. Whatever we do with our responsibility, we make a choice, because choosing not to face or fulfill a responsibility is also a choice. And we are responsible before God for our choices.

Fifth, becoming a neighbor involves compassion. Compassion is sorrow for the trouble or sufferings of another; sympathy for and pity toward another,