

# DROPPING YOUR GUARD: THE VALUE OF OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

NEEDED: SHELTER FOR STORM VICTIMS

NUMBERS 35; JOSHUA 20; PSALM 31



## The Heart of the Matter

Although many Christians seem to have perfect lives, we know better! Believers are not only a long way from perfection; we struggle with the battles that plague all humans. Like everyone, we find ourselves in need of shelters — places of refuge where we can heal and be renewed. People without Christ often seek refuge in corner bars where they can meet with friends and forget life's troubles. But where can Christians turn when we've been pushed around, misunderstood, and bruised with adversity? The answer for us today is not unlike the answer for the ancient Hebrews. Following God's Law, they set up "cities of refuge" — pockets of security and protection, where healing could happen. Places of spiritual refuge are just as needed today.



## Discovering the Way

### 1. The Need for Places of Refuge (Psalm 31)

There are three primary times we need a place of refuge: when we are in distress and sorrow accompanies us, when we are sinful and guilt accuses us, and when adversity surrounds us and misunderstanding assaults us.

### 2. The Function of Cities of Refuge in Ancient Israel (Joshua 20; Numbers 35)

God commanded that cities of refuge be set up for people who had killed someone unintentionally and needed shelter from an avenger. He established the procedure for who could be admitted into these cities, and He commanded the Hebrews to be involved in the administration of these cities.



## Starting Your Journey

To provide refuge to others, we must have three things. First, we must have a willingness to go the distance for those in trouble (1 John 3:16). Second, we must have an attitude of loving compassion toward those in need (3:17). And, finally, we must have an availability to help in practical, tangible ways (3:18).



## Tools for Digging Deeper



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