

The Bystander Effect

Description

[RG AUDIO 102320](#)

Luke 10:25-32

A group conducted an experiment based on what is known as the Bystander Effect. They had actors pretend to be in distress along a busy sidewalk.* They filmed people's reaction to the person in need. They confirmed that people in a crowded area were less likely to help someone in distress than those in a one-to-one setting. No one is doing anything because they don't see anyone else doing anything. When someone does intervene they are quickly joined by others, but someone must take the initiative.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus describes a man stripped, beaten, and bloodied by robbers lying beside a busy road. Two people, a priest and a Levite, see the man but pass by him. Their positions as religious leaders in the Jerusalem Temple may have caused the original questioner, a teacher of the law, to believe they would help the man, but they did not.

Where are we looking for clues as to how we should respond to someone in need? Are we looking to the crowd? Are we waiting for someone else to make a move? Or do we look at the one in need and ask, "What must I do?"

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Date Created

10/23/2020