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Who are You in This Story?

I've heard the "Good Samaritan story hundreds of times.

I've been familiar with the beloved parable for over 40 years, and most times I hear it, I ask, "Who am I in this story?" Am I the Priest, the Levite or the Samaritan?"

Of course, the goal is to be the Samaritan. He was the one who crossed the bridge of prejudice, expended his time and money and risked his safety and comfort to help someone who was left for dead. Throughout my childhood and early teen years, my goal was to be the Samaritan because people are broken and needy, and I must help them.

Snob or Samaritan?

During adulthood, I became more aware that I didn't want to be one of the religious snobs who looked the other way, ignoring the dying man lying on the side of the road. I wanted no part of their spiritual elitism. So I've continued to ask myself, "Am I the Samaritan in the story, or am I the Priest or Levite?"

Read the story in Luke 10:25-37 again and ask yourself, "Who am I in this story?" I did that recently and I felt the deep awareness of who I really was in the parable. I was not the Levite, the Priest or the Samaritan.

The Fourth Man

For the first time, I realized I was the fourth man in the story. I was, and am, the man beaten and left for dead. I had never even considered that I might be him in all my years of hearing the story.

At first blush, identifying with the broken, needy man in the story doesn't seem to make me spiritually elite, does it? But never recognizing that I was that man showed that deep down I was just like the Priest and Levite--spiritually elite. I've always been that man, but my own pride hid my true identity.

Shipwrecked on God

I've falsely assumed and hoped that God needs me more than I need Him. He needs me to fix the broken and help the needy. I never saw myself as the one who was broken and needy who needs God, needs healing and needs help. But, oh the freedom of brokenness! Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (Jn. 12:24)

To truly bear spiritual fruit, you must be broken and recognize you need God far more than He needs you. When you and I realize our total dependence upon Him and our condition without Him, then we are ready to give out of our own emptiness and serve out of the abundance of what we have received, not achieved.

Perhaps we could all benefit from experiencing what Vance Havner meant by being "Shipwrecked on God, stranded on omnipotence."

So ask yourself today, "Who am I in this story?"

Blessings
& Joy,

Jennifer



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needs me more
than I need
Him.*

4 Values for Ministry that Matters: Part 3

by Karen True



*I can check items
off of lists.
People don't get
checked off so
easily.*

It's been two years since our family moved from the town I called home for more than 30 years. We're Texans now and are doing our best to pronounce y'all and fixin' with an appropriate drawl. The real Texans are not fooled! We like the cowboys, ranches and barbecue, but sometimes I miss the place I called home for so long.

It's not the restaurants or even the brilliance of spring that often draws my thoughts there. There is really just one thing I miss about my former hometown. The people. Family. Friends. Familiar faces. People I've known for pretty much ever. I miss the familiarity of stories already partly told. Shared memories and lives.

The highlight of our return visits are the people. Our visits seem vain attempts to cram relationships that once enjoyed years of attention into a matter of mere hours. Yes, we email and facebook and exchange phone calls, but there's being together is irreplaceable, even if only for a little while.

Leaving to return to our new home always gives me reason to reflect on the dear people I leave behind once again. And it's hard

to miss the lesson that lingers as the miles accumulate ...people matter.

Jesus sure thought so. He let people interrupt Him. He reached out and touched them. He often changed plans to accommodate them. And He saw their abundant neediness through eyes of compassion. He prayed for them and in the end, He gave His life for the people who rejected Him.

People are the point of what we do. That is surely stating the obvious, but I've seen firsthand how easy it is to begin with people at the top of my list, only to find them nudged aside by the demands of urgency. Lists are easier to deal with than people. I can check items off of lists. People don't get checked off so easily.

Examine your ministry and your leadership and where people fit into your priorities with these simple questions.

- Are people an interruption in your day or a welcome part of your ongoing ministry?
- What steps do *you* take to personally make people feel welcome and valued?
- How does *your ministry* make people feel welcome and valued?
- Do you find it difficult to be a good listener because you are distracted by the things you need to get done?
- Is your day more likely to begin with thoughtful prayer for those you serve or with concern over your to do list?

People really don't care how much we know until they know how much we care. Do we care enough to keep them at the top of the list?

Your diligence, your hard work and your commitment to blessing and enriching so many women's ministries around the world is making a huge difference in ways you will never know this side of Heaven!
—Robin



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Leading
Resources
for Leading
Women



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To Do

*There are two
types of
people...those
who come into a
room and say,
“Well, here I
am!” and those
who come in
and say, “Ah,
there you are.
—Frederick
Collins*

To Pray For

To Remember

MAY 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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JUNE 2009						
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28	29	30				

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