

The Good Samaritan

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**Abstract**

The parable of the Samaritan is a story of a person helping a traveler who has been beaten, robbed, and left to die on the road side. This paper will explore the contexts of the story, and how it relates to the three stages of a crisis, as well as the human biases, institutional failures, special interest groups and building resilience. In doing so, I will explore and examine the Samaritan characteristics and how his virtuous conduct connects to leadership.

Crises are those events that we never wish to happen to us nor anyone near and dear to our hearts. Unfortunately, crises do occur and can occur at the most inopportune time. If

preventative measures are not taken before one occurs, the end results can be more drastic than needed. On the other hand, when precautionary measures are taken, the outcomes can be less severe. Stages of crisis come into play in this case. Then there are those crisis moments when the situation is one in which one happens upon. Such is the case in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The characters at hand were not acquaintances nor or any work relationship. They all just happened to be strangers in a world filled with unexpected crises.

The well-known piece of literature known as the Bible details some of the most alluring stories as it pertains to biblical history. Such stories include David and Goliath, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, Jesus and his 12 disciples and a plethora of others. One particular story is known as The Parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable of the Good Samaritan begins with an individual who looks to Jesus for advice on the steps needed to attain eternal life. Jesus proceeds to tell a story which entails a young man on his travels from Jerusalem to Jericho. While on his journey, he comes across a group of thieves. The encounter resulted in the young man being beaten and stripped of his clothing. He was left to die as he had no wherewithal to save himself. The first person to witness the dying man was a priest. He noticed but walked on the other side of the road. Next, a Levite was in passing and he too walked on the other side of the road. Lastly, a passerby known as Samaritan approached the dying man. He felt mercy for man and bandaged his wounds with healing liquids--oil and wine-- in hopes of reviving him. The Samaritan then brought him to an inn and cared for him. The next day, he paid the innkeeper to watch over the man and stated that he would pay him for any extra expenses incurred while he was away.

The parable of the Good Samaritan was a crisis in its entirety. A crisis is defined as "any major unanticipated event that poses a significant threat. Such events are rare (making them

difficult to prepare for), generate a good deal of uncertainty (their causes and effects are unclear) and are hard to resolve (there is no set formula for determining how to act). Further, decisions about how to deal with a particular crisis must be made rapidly, and those outside the immediate group--customers, clients, supplies, and neighbors--are also affected.” (Johnson, 2018, p.415). The young man robbed, beaten by the thieves, and left for dead experienced a dreadful crisis. The Good Samaritan who approached the young man in the interim too experienced a crisis.

Like all things, a crisis undergoes stages. A crisis in particular encompasses a total of three stages: precrisis, crisis event, and post crisis. Crises are typically resolved by leaders--leaders who “have a moral obligation to carry out particular tasks or functions” as stated in Johnson 2018, p.416. The Good Samaritan as detailed in the book of Luke was a leader who underwent the three stages of crisis.

The precrisis stage is the point at which it is understood that risks may be involved in future situations. Either the situation is not well-thought out or the individual at hand is well-aware of the potential circumstances. The young man injured in the parable of the Good Samaritan was in the precrisis stage when he set out for his journey. He set off alone with no form of protection and risked being harmed by whomever. Of course, this was far from his intent, but as is the case of anyone who sets off alone, there is always a potential to be inflicted by a crisis. While the young man was well-aware of potential dangers, he did not seem to have any preventive crisis strategies in place just in case. According to Johnson (2018) “ethical leaders in the precrisis stage help their groups detect possible trouble and develop strategies for managing crises should they strike.” Unfortunately, the young man was not prepared for such an event--a crisis.

Stage 2 encompasses the crisis event stage. It entails the actual crisis--any event that

potentially causes harm and requires immediate action. During stage 2, emotions run high among the individuals involved. Emotions range from fear, sadness, anxiety, concern, or uncertainty. The leaders involved in this stage are the prominent members to recognize the crisis and engage in crisis prevention mode. Their aim is to resolve or rectify the issue at hand in the most sound way possible. The Good Samaritan was the leader in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He happened upon a crisis and immediately went into action-mode in order to engage in “damage control” (Johnson 2018, p.422). As soon as he witnessed the injured young man, he bandaged him up in hopes of saving his life, He then proceeded to take him to a nearby inn to care for him further. He did so alone as well as garnered help from the innkeeper who he was also willing to pay for any additional costs incurred for caring for the young man.

Lastly, stage 3 also known as post crisis involves assessing the crisis after its occurrence. Leaders must analyze what caused the crisis and how to prevent it from happening again. All of the factors that came into play are analyzed. Furthermore, any parties involved must be assured that the scene is now safe and procedures are in place for prevention. Considering that the Good Samaritan did not know the young injured man nor the details of the crisis, his post crisis steps involved steps taken when all details are unknown. His post crisis steps were assuring the innkeeper that everything would be ok as long as he cared for the young injured man in his absence. He even paid the innkeeper and promised to reimburse him if any other costs were incurred. This must have made the innkeeper feel at least to some degree. The Samaritan might not have left the young man if this were not the case.

In addition to the stages of a crisis, there too are barriers to crisis prevention. These barriers are human biases, institutional failures, and special interest groups. Human biases are beliefs that work against the act of prevention. These beliefs lie in preconceived notions such

there is no issue at hand nor could there be in the near future, These beliefs are then used to convince members of hierarchy that the need for proactiveness is not warranted. The young injured man himself might have had his own human biases that did not prevent his crisis. He failed to recognize a future or potential crisis. He went off alone from Jerusalem to Jericho without any protection as a safeguard. The priest and the Levite too had human biases. Neither individual sought to help the injured man. They both walked on the opposite side of the road. They clearly did not think nor cared to think about the severity of the young man's situation.

The priest and the Levite also exhibited signs of institutional failure. Neither one of these individuals even took the time to assess the young man's crisis. They instead turned a blind eye by walking on the other side of the road. Had they stopped they could have helped the injured man sooner. Perhaps he would not have lost a lot of blood. Perhaps he could have been brought to a safe place to receive help sooner. Perhaps the thieves could have been sought after and caught. Turning a blind eye prolonged the crisis and nearly led to the young man's death.

Finally, a bias that exists as a barrier to crisis prevention is special interest groups. Special interest groups are only those individuals that think and live selfishly. They do not think about the benefit of others, but the benefit of oneself. They also blame others for their circumstances; no mercy is given. The priest and the Levite were most certainly only thinking of themselves. They might have felt as though the young man caused his own burdens and so they went on about their way. There was no benefit to helping the young man, they must have thought.

In conclusion, a crisis is an unfortunate event or situation that occurs unexpectedly and poses a threat. Crisis prevention entails three stages: precrisis, and post crisis. Crises are typically handled as best as possible unless there are biases at hand in regards to crisis prevention. These

biases include human biases, and special interest groups. Specifically these biases are traits that causes a person to ignore others in a crisis situation. However, a true leader will face a crisis situation with humility, courage, and strength such as the Samaritans.

### **Reference**

Johnson, Craig. Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership: Casting light and shadow. SAGE, 2018.

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