

Turning Interruptions Into Amazing Opportunities

Jesus was a master storyteller. Many times when people asked Him questions, He responded with parables to help them understand the point He was trying to make.

For example, in Luke 10:25-28, a lawyer who is described in The Amplified Bible as “an expert in Mosaic Law,” asked Jesus, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” When Jesus asked him what the Law said, the lawyer’s response was, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (v. 27).

When Jesus told him he was correct, the man then asked, “Who is my neighbor?” and Jesus responded by telling him the story of The Good Samaritan.

In this parable, we read about a man who was going from Jerusalem to Jericho when he encountered robbers who stripped him and beat him, leaving him half dead. After this, a priest came along but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. Then a Levite (a very religious man) came by and did the same thing.

Verses 33-35 (ESV) say, “But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’”

I love how Jesus said the Samaritan “had compassion” for this man so he stopped his journey to care for him and then take

him to a place where he could safely rest and receive the help he needed until he was better. It wasn't a quick, easy job either. And this Samaritan was going somewhere, just like the priest and the Levite, but he was willing to be interrupted to take care of someone in need.

Make Allowances for Divine Interruptions

We all have moments when something comes along that can interrupt our plans and sometimes they are "divine interruptions" we should take. We shouldn't be so focused on doing what we want, or planned, to do all the time that we limit God when He wants to use us to help someone else. That's like walking around with a "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging around our necks.

I often hang this sign on my door at hotels when I don't want to be bothered and that's okay. But it's not okay to have this attitude when God wants to interrupt our plan.

If we're really going to love people the way Jesus loves us—following the example He showed us of how to walk in love—then we can't have a selfish, self-centered mindset that says, "Don't bother me. I don't want you in my space!"

A Day in the Life of Jesus

Matthew chapter 8 gives us some insight about Jesus' life on Earth. Verse 1 (ESV) says, "When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him." Notice that Jesus "came down from the mountain." He spent time alone with His Father before He went about His day, reaching out to others. If He needed to do this, then we need time alone with God even more!

In verse 2, a leper came to Jesus and asked Him to heal him. "And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt.8:3). Jesus made Himself available to people in need as He followed God's plan each day. He was willing to go to

people who had needs.

When we see people in need but it's not convenient for us to help them, it's easy to say, "God bless you! I can't stop what I'm doing to help you but I'll pray for you!" And there will be times when distractions and interruptions are not part of God's plan.

But I've found that many times God wants me to allow Him to change the course of my day so He can use me to bless someone else. It could be a small act of kindness that only takes a few minutes or it could be something that totally changes my day. Either way, when I'm following Jesus, I never have regrets!

I want to encourage you to pray every day, "God, what can I do for YOU today?" You'll be amazed at the ways He works in and through your life when you do—even when it interrupts your plan.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's five-teaching CD series *The Cause and Cure for Worry*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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