

Are we Good Samaritans? (Luke 10:25-37)

We are trained to see ourselves as the hero.

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The story of the Good Samaritan is so familiar to many of us.

That familiarity can prevent us from actually hearing the story, the way we might hear it if it was new to us.

One method for seeing a familiar story in a fresh way comes to us from literary analysis and creative writing workshops, as well as from spiritual practices. Ask yourself, “Who am I in this story?” We can see a story differently by looking at it through the eyes and viewpoints of different characters.

Many of us want to believe that we would be the Good Samaritan. We are trained to see ourselves as the hero.

We don’t want to believe that we might avoid those who need our help, the way the priest and the Levite do. We don’t want to see the ways we ambush each other, as the robbers do in the story. Perhaps we’d prefer to be the innkeeper—the character who gets to play a part in caring for the person in need without being the one who takes the risks.

Here are some questions that might help us approach the story from different angles:

- Who is in our path who needs help?

- What do the wounds look like? Not everyone who needs help will bleed in obvious ways.
- What roles do we play that might keep us from seeing those who need help?
- When we can't help in a direct way, how can we be like the innkeeper and play a supporting role?
- What resources do we have to share?
- How can we help suffering people with their physical needs?
- What other kinds of suffering might we alleviate if we shared resources?
- When is sharing our financial resources the best way we can help? When do we need to play a more active role in bandaging the wounds?
- What other ways can we show love for our neighbors? How do we translate love into action?