

CS 3.18-24 ~ *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters,²³ not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

CONCLUSION

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Harlan Ellison

LK 10.36-37 ~ *Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”*

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Seedman & Hellman

INVITATION

The crime was terrible: its consequences horrible. But there was one good thing that came from this terrible crime. When Kitty was attacked, one of the issues at the time was that there was no single option for the victim—or witness—to call. But following the violent death of Kitty Genovese, that changed. And now, even children are taught, in an emergency, a single number to dial: 9-1-1.

Today, **when see people who are suffering, what do we do? When we see people who are lost and lonely and without God, what do we do? Do we put our heads down, crossing on the other side of the street—too busy to join the work?**

Or do we recognize the need and get to work? Our Lord has provided a means by which people can find help, direction, and salvation—a kind of 9-1-1 found not in government, not in family, but in His body, the church!

GL 6.6-10 ~ *Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

#668 [Exp-NTG]

09/15/2025

The Bystander Affect

PC Pchd _____

LK 10.25-37

QUESTION: How do God's people allow for evil to befall others?

TRN TO LK 10

INTRODUCTION

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Early Life

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Assault

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Death

The death of Kitty Genovese is terrifyingly familiar—a violent and senseless death of a woman simply returning home at the end of a long shift at work. It sounds eerily similar to deaths and assaults we've heard from this past month—similarly a young woman, similarly attacked unprovoked, similarly killed on the city streets of America. But the similarities don't stop there.

CRIME/Kitty Genovese/Public Reaction

Over the course of the next 60 years, this same callousness has repeated itself multiple times—on city streets, in apartments, and on public transit. In each case, the same question ask: **could no one have helped? Why were so many willing to simply stand back and allow a young woman's life to be taken?**

PSYCHOLOGY/The Bystander Effect/Origin

We see evidence of **“The Bystander Effect”** not simply in crimes and tragedies that befall women like Kitty Genovese or Iryna Zarutska. We see it in our homes, our workplaces, our cities, and, yes, even in our churches.

BD1: The Lawyer, Looking for a Loophole

LK 10.25a ~ *And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test* This wasn't uncommon to our Lord—people could come to Him all the time with spiritual **“brain teasers”**. In this case, it seemed simple enough: **“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (LK 10.25b)** As he was wont to do, Jesus responded with a question: **“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (LK 10.26)**

The man's response was valid: **“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.” (LK 10.27)** These commands were considered to be the basis on which the entirety of the Law was founded. And as Jesus would state, if he'd just **do this, and** [he would] **live.” (LK 10.28)**

God's command to His people was challenging, but it was also simple: **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.” (LK 10.27)** And yet, the Jewish people had completely missed the point—they stood by while the poor suffered and the powerless were taken advantage of.

MC 6.8 ~ *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

God had created the Jewish nation with the intent of them serving as an example and an influence on a pagan world: His desire had been that the people would see, in Judea, an example of how to live and how to serve and how to minister. Instead, the

world had seen a nation that regarded them as enemies, when God had intended the Jewish people to see them as neighbors.

LK 10.29 ~ *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

EX: He didn't get it. He was on the lookout for the barest of minimums: the simplest of excuses that would allow him to go on living and working as he'd always done. **The lawyer was on the hunt for a loophole.** And so, his question stood: **“who’s my neighbor? I don’t have a problem serving God—that’s easy. But which people do I have to serve? The guy who lives next to me? The guy at the neighboring stall in the marketplace? The people of my neighboring tribe?”**

AP: The mindset of the lawyer is replicated endlessly today. We, like him, find comfort in the simplicity and structure of that first of the Lord’s commands—we take comfort thinking that, as we sit in our pews and worship, as we open our Bibles in the privacy of our dens, that we *love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.*

JN 14.21 ~ *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*

Serving God is easy, in concept: after all, there's only one God! But like the lawyer, we can't help but wonder: **who is our neighbor?**

BD2: The Victim, Looking for Help

To help the man understand, Jesus told a story. **Was this a parable?** Possibly. Though, it was such a realistic story it's entirely possible this was something that was a semi-regular occurrence. You'd think that the road between Jerusalem and Jericho would have been a safe one—it was traveled enough at the time. But if you've ever noticed how the streets and neighborhoods “downtown” can decay so quickly, you realize that some things are easy in concept, and difficult in practice.

LK 10.30 ~ *Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.*

EX: What a terrible event! To find oneself, over the course of your day to day life, beaten, bruised, and left for dead. Jesus presents the victim, looking for help for healing and for recovery.

AP: Is this a reference to the Gentiles? To the poor Jews? To modern sinners? In a way, yes—this is as simple as it appears to be: this is a person who's been hurt and is longing for help. **But would he find it?**

RM 5.12-14 ~ *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*

BD3: A Priest and a Levite, too Busy to Help

Oh, how terrible it must have been for the lonely man, bruised and broken on the side of the road. Oh, how terrible it is for the sinner—bruised and broken by the evil wiles and temptations of the evil one. How desperately they longed for help—for

direction and for healing! **But, instead, what did they find?** **A priest and a Levite, too busy to help.**

LK 10.31-32 ~ *Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

EX: “We've got too much going on right now; we've got work to do in the temple. We've got work to do in the synagogue! We can't be expected to help every person stuck on the side of the road. I'm sure someone else will handle it!” The Jewish people had convinced themselves it was someone else's responsibility to take care of the hurt, broken, and hurt. They had too much on their plate!

AP: The Jewish leadership was the perfect example of **“The Bystander Effect”**—they simply stood by on the sidelines while the widows, the orphans, and destitute were heart broken and defeated. And too often, the same happens with us, as well. There are so many who need the Gospel. There are so many who are broken and hurting on the side of the road. We can't afford to assume someone else will pick up the slack! They're our neighbor—and God's called for us to love them as we love ourselves!

JM 4.13-16 ~ *Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

BD4: A Samaritan, Hard at Work

Jesus' next words, though, would have turned everything on its head: **But a Samaritan...**the Samaritans were regarded as half-breeds—unfaithful to God due to their intermarriages and pagan worship. They were the last you'd expect to do anything right and righteous. But while the priest and Levite were too busy to help, the Samaritan *as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.* (**LK 10.33**)

LK 10.34-35 ~ *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. ³⁵ 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.’*

EX: Was the Samaritan any less busy than the priest or Levite? It's hard to say. But regardless, the Samaritan was **hard at work.** He saw the need, and he did it! He didn't see himself too busy or the work as too beneath him. He saw what was needed to be done, and he stepped out of **bystander mode** and served.

AP: What I wouldn't give to have a congregation of men and women like the Samaritan in our Lord's story—willing to stop their running and rushing, seeing the need and stepping in and filling it. In the Samaritan, we see the example of one who truly understands and loves their neighbor—resulting in them being **hard at work.**