

## Commitment 012: A Commitment to Intervene

The dictionary defines the word “intervention” as, “action taken to improve a situation.”<sup>1</sup> It’s synonymous with terms such as, “intercession, involve oneself, get involved, interpose oneself,” and “step in.”<sup>2</sup> Intervention, therefore, requires a commitment to become involved in somebody else’s trouble or needs. On some occasions, the needs can be positive, such as in an intervention to help people achieve a goal or gain superiority over the situation. In either case, positive or negative, a decision must be made to commit to the intervention. Normal human behavior often chooses to disregard or turn away from other people’s challenges. Commitment to intervene is always a choice to get involved. It’s taking action to move toward the trouble or needs. There can be any number of motivating factors. The decision to intervene will usually be related to issues of sacrifice, faithfulness or compassion. The commitment to intervene will cost you. Paying the cost must be motivated by God’s love, faithfulness to friends, family or even country. Otherwise, it will lack the strength of will to give you the tenacity to finish with success. We will look at two examples from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

### Never Crumble Under the Challenge.

Our first Old Testament example is Nehemiah, who was the Persian king Artaxerxes’ cupbearer. Though Nehemiah was a captive Israelite, he had gained the king’s favor, served him faithfully, and was highly regarded. Nehemiah heard of the broken down condition of the walls of Jerusalem. He became determined to intervene, going back to his homeland to rebuild those walls to bring new life to Jerusalem. He gained permission and authority to do so from the king, himself. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he soon found that there was dangerous opposition to his commitment to finish those walls.

*Nehemiah 4:1-3, 7-9 (NKJV)*

*“But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were*

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<sup>1</sup> Software: Dictionary from Macbook Pro 2.2.3.

<sup>2</sup> Software: Thesaurus from Macbook Pro 2.2.3.

*rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. {2} And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?" {3} Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall." ...<sup>7</sup>Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, {8} and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. {9} Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night."*

*Nehemiah 6:15-16 (NKJV)*

*"So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. {16} And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God"*

What can we learn from Nehemiah's commitment to intervene? Never let your dreams and visions depend on what others say about your circumstances. Nehemiah refused to allow his vision of a rebuilt wall crumble under threats of intimidation from ungodly opposition. He took the necessary steps to work through the opposition. How did he do this? Nehemiah took the necessary steps to work through the opposition and problems. He got organized and he got going. He refused to be intimidated by either the task itself or those who opposed his godly call to intervene. He was determined and would not be denied. He stayed with it and protected his task until his intervention was completed. He applied his faith and perseverance, along with the wisdom of God to all his challenges.

The challenge for us is to discern how we can apply God's promises to every-day problems. Remember, the success of what you do will be determined by the attitudes you commit to daily. First, believe God is who

He says He is. Second, obey the ways His Word says to go through life, day-by-day. Finally, stay with it, trusting Him for the outcomes. Make this your lifestyle and you will be well able to step in and make a difference in fine fashion.

Our second Old Testament example of intervention is an Israelite warrior whose commitment was to serve King David. His name was Abishai. He had been a long-time faithful friend of King David. He had served as a great warrior throughout David's career as king. Many times he had proven his dependability and skill. He was familiar with danger and his motivations would have been beyond any fear of his own personal safety. A study of the Bible shows us that his commitment to David was based on love for his king and country. Its foundation was Abishai's faithfulness. A time came, toward the end of David's life, when he led his troops into one final battle at Gezer against the Philistines. The biblical narrative of this event tells us about the strength of Abishai's commitment to intervene to watch over his friend and king.<sup>3</sup>

#### *2 Samuel 21:15-17 (NLT)*

*“Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel. And when David and his men were in the thick of battle, David became weak and exhausted. {16} Ishbi-benob was a descendant of the giants; his bronze spearhead weighed more than seven pounds, and he was armed with a new sword. He had cornered David and was about to kill him. {17} But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue and killed the Philistine. Then David's men declared, “You are not going out to battle with us again! Why risk snuffing out the light of Israel?”*

David had no way out. He was cornered and about to be killed. Abishai intervened and fought David's battle for him. Think about the opportunities you will have to step in and fight a battle that someone else might not have the strength for. You may be the only answer to someone's prayer. You will consistently discover that your intervention will require a sacrificial, loving commitment.

Let's go into more detail about this kind of commitment.

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Chronicles 20:4-8 provides additional historical details to 2 Samuel 21:15-17.

- More often than not, it won't be convenient to make commitments. When things are inconvenient, they tend to aggravate our flesh. They tempt us to have ungodly responses and feel resentful toward the person who needs our intervention. The love of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit are what we must turn to if we are to overcome these carnal feelings.
- As you previously read, intervention will likely be costly. It most certainly will interrupt your day, your own agenda and plans. Commitment to intervene, by its nature, is acceptance of the interruption of your personal agenda. This allows you to become an interruption in the course another person's life, for the purpose of making it better. This will require your time, energy and perhaps a variety of your personal resources. Understanding this is part of having the heart and mind of Christ.
- A commitment to intervene will reveal your character. A refusal to commit is a red flag. It is a signal that reveals something in your character needs work. Acknowledging this and adjusting your thinking will build your character.

*A commitment to intervene will reveal the strength of your character.*



It's always good for us to look within ourselves to be sure that we are aligning our thinking with biblical principles and guarding our hearts from hardening. Intervention requires that we honor what's right and then take a stand to do it. It's compassion and integrity, combining in actions that demonstrate the mind of Christ and the heart of God.

Though committing to intervene can feel like a detour, causing you to temporarily change your current course of life, it will eventually lead you somewhere good. The Bible says "*all things work together for good.*" It might lead you to become someone who, by intervening, was changed forever.

*Romans 8:28-29 (NKJV)*

*"And we know that all things work together for good to those who*

*love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. {29} For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

## Our New Testament Example: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

*Luke 10:25-30 (NKJV)*

*“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” {26} He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” {27} So he answered and said, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.” {28} And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” {29} But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” {30} Then Jesus answered and said...”*

### The Lord’s Answer to the Lawyer: A Parable.

*Luke 10:31-35 (NKJV)*

*“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. {31} Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. {32} Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. {33} But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. [Message Bible: “his heart went out to him.”] {34} So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. {35} On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’”*

## The Lord's Challenge to the Lawyer: Would the Lawyer Commit to Intervene?

*Luke 10:36-37 (NKJV)*

*“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” {37} And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”*

The Samaritan was not one of God's “chosen” people. He would not have been expected or obligated to show the same mercy as an Israelite. When Jesus asked the lawyer who he thought was the injured man's neighbor, the lawyer's own response cornered him. It left him no way out of his attempt to justify himself. His response to Jesus answered his question that had prompted the telling of the parable. Once he had cornered himself, Jesus challenged him to behave as the Samaritan had. Why did this entire conversation take place?

The conversations that begin and end the parable narrative, reveal the historical context of the lawyer's encounter with Jesus. Together with the parable itself, these conversations teach us the deeper, more fundamental lesson. It's about commitment to intervene.

*A commitment to intervene will reveal the degree of your love for others. It may also reveal the degree of your commitment to serve Christ.*



In reading the entire narrative from Verses 25 through 35, we get the more fundamental point, that loving God is demonstrated by loving our neighbors, and our neighbors are anyone that Jesus would love. By the end of Verse 37, the lawyer had his challenge and the instruction that accompanied it. He would now have to choose. Of course, in reading these verses we are faced with the same challenge. When the opportunity presents itself, will we commit to intervene without making prejudicial, self-justifying judgments or allowing our hearts to be hardened? Think carefully about this. What would you choose, and why? Will it be because of obedience alone, or will there be something more to your response. Let

Jesus' own powerfully clear words clarify the importance of this final question.

*Matthew 25:31-40 (NKJV)*

*“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. {32} All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. {33} And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. {34} Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: {35} for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; {36} I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ {37} “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? {38} When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? {39} Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ {40} And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”*

Consider “*one of the least of these My brethren*” to be more than just people in the church. The Parable of the Good Samaritan clearly illustrates this truth. I will ask the question once more, “What would you choose?”

Christ loves all of His creation. This includes His followers, those who are outside of His church, and even those who have turned their backs on Him. Yes, there are consequences to rejecting Christ. Yes, there will be an eternal price to pay. However, these consequences and their price are not God's choice. He offers grace to everyone and rejects no one. Have you accepted your salvation through God's gracious offer? If not, do so now. It's accomplished by simply asking Him to forgive you of your sin of unbelief, accepting Him as Lord and Savior, and allowing Him to intervene and change the direction of your life's journey. Be assured that He already made His commitment to intervene for you two thousand years ago, when

He died for your sins on the cross.

*The commitment to your own salvation through Christ is  
a commitment to yourself.*

