

THE ALLEGORY OF THE RIVER

A woman was walking along the bank of a swiftly flowing river. It was a beautiful day, and the woman was enjoying the the fantastic scenery. Then the woman looked out over the river, and much to her surprise, she saw a small child floating in the water. The child was splashing and thrashing about, trying to keep her head above the water. The child was drowning!

The woman did what any decent person would do -- she tore off her shoes and dove into the water to rescue the child. The water was very cold, the current swift and strong. The woman was not sure she could even make it to the child, but she was determined to try. After much effort, she reached the child and swam safely back to shore.

Once she arrived at the shore, the woman looked back at the river and realized that two more children were floating downstream! Surely she could not let them drown. She dove into the water again. The water felt even colder, and the current stronger than it was before. It was a great struggle to reach both children in time.

When she reached the shore again, she looked back over her shoulder to see not one, not two, but 10 children floating down the river! The woman knew that she alone could not save the children, so she called for help. A crowd of adults had gathered at the shore. Once they realized what was happening, they organized a system for retrieving and reviving the children. Some of the adults dove into the water to rescue the children, while others stayed on shore to comfort the children and help them to safety.

Now matter how many times they jumped into the water, more children kept floating downstream -- 20, 40, 100 of them! Some of the children were struggling, while others were chillingly quiet. It was clear that most of the children were seriously injured. While many would live, they would be left with scars and even disabilities. Some of the children were beyond the reach of the adults and would not survive at all.

The adults were getting tired. The swift, cold water was draining them of their strength and energy. The woman, who had only wanted to help, was discouraged. She began to feel that she could not enter the water another time. Her fingers and toes were numb, her arms weak, her heart breaking.

Suddenly, the woman had a thought. She climbed out of the water and began to walk purposefully upstream. "Wait! Where are you going?" the other adults cried in alarm. "You can't leave us now. There are too many children who need our help if they are to be saved."

The woman replied, "Someone or something is causing these children to fall into the river. We could be here for years pulling broken bodies from the water. I am going to walk upstream until I find out what is causing these children to fall in and see if I can do something to stop it!"

Her idea made a lot of sense.

-Anonymous

