

## Compassion Youth Bible Study

- **Different Approaches to a Topical Bible Study**
  - List of Questions (what do you want to learn from this study?)
  - Definitions (Webster's, Strong's Concordance, Bible dictionary)
  - Scripture References
  - Bible Stories or Examples
  - Thompson Chain (#3517, #3518, and #3519)
  - Discuss/Consider: Other approaches?
- **Questions**
  - What is compassion?
  - How to have compassion? More compassion?
  - What does having compassion look like? What does it not look like?
  - How to have compassion on difficult people, people unlike me?
  - Must compassion include agreement? Can you have compassion and disagree?
- **Dictionary**
  - **Definition:** deep awareness of the suffering of another accompanied by the wish to relieve it.
  - **Synonyms:** pity, sympathy, sorrow for another, mercy, tenderheartedness, kindness, commiseration
  - "Compassion literally means 'to suffer together'"
    - Discuss (how can you "suffer together" if you don't like them, don't understand them?)
  - **"Reciprocal Compassion"** (this is more common)
    - "The basic idea is that compassion leads you to do things for people who will return the favor" (Robert Wright).
    - Example: "If a close friend has something really terrible happen to them, you feel really bad. But if you read in the newspaper that something really horrible happened to somebody you've never heard of, you can probably live with that" (Robert Wright).
- **Strong's Concordance**
  - 41 references (have youth look up definitions)
    - **H2550** – pity, spare, compassion, commiserate
    - **H7355**– love, have mercy, have tender affection
    - **G4697** – to be moved as to one's bowels (compassion)
      - the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity
    - **G1653** – mercy, compassion, pity
    - **G4835** – suffering or feeling the like with another, sympathetic
- **Bible Examples**
  - **Pharaoh's daughter** – "And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children" (Exodus 2:6).
    - **Observations**
      - compassion was prompted by the baby's crying
      - "She was conditioned by her culture and upbringing to reject the Hebrews"

- (Enduring Word).
  - What or who are we conditioned by our culture and upbringing to reject (fail to have compassion on)?
  - God moved on Pharaoh's daughter's heart because God had a plan
  - She took risks (rejection, other risks?) in taking this baby to raise
    - What risks might we face if we have compassion when others do not?
- **Ziphites reveal David's hiding place to King Saul** – "And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me" (1 Samuel 23:21).
  - Here is the flip side of compassion – just as Jonathan had compassion on David, others had compassion on Saul
  - Saul makes it sound like it is of God – "Blessed be ye of the Lord"
  - this word "compassion" is defined as "having pity, to commiserate"
  - Ziphites were of David's own tribe (Benson Commentary)
    - this was NOT the only time they would betray David
    - what might have been their motives?
      - fear of King Saul?
      - desire to get in good with King Saul?
  - **Observation**
    - could we "have compassion" on people and secretly have ulterior motives?
- **King of the Chaldees Had No Compassion**
  - 2 Chronicles 36:17 – "Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand."
  - God's people had continually rejected His messengers, His prophets, and His words
    - "rejection" is described as: mocking, despising, and scoffing (verse 16)
      - other versions: treating God's words with contempt, insulting, ridiculing, making fun of God's prophets, refusing to listen
  - God turned them over to one who had "no compassion"
  - "Nothing was spared and all was destroyed" (Enduring Word Commentary).
  - **Observations**
    - Compassion comes in many forms – "warnings" were a form of God's "compassion on his people" (verse 15)
    - God's compassion might be firm, strong, hard to hear at times
    - What lesson can we draw from rejecting God's compassion?
- **Jesus' Compassion ...**
  - **On the Sick**
    - "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14).
    - context: Jesus had been trying to get alone for some peace and quiet (verse 13)

- might He have been irritated?
- "What right had they to invade his privacy with their continual demands?" (Barclay).
- Jesus saw them and was moved with compassion for them – how did He not give in to the irritation, tiredness, and need to get alone?
- **Observation**
  - people who need compassion very possible might irritate us, might not understand our need for privacy or that we are tired and overwhelmed
  - Mark 6:34 – Jesus was moved with compassion "because" – we have to look beyond the personalities and actions and find their REAL needs
- **On the Hungry**
  - "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat" (Matthew 15:32).
    - were there no nearby towns to find/purchase food?
    - it is believed that the people were probably used to skipping meals
    - would the people be expecting food from Jesus (there were 4,000 people)?
    - Jesus was teaching them about God; how could He be expected to keep them fed physically?
  - **Observation**
    - instead of having compassion, we might feel that they should be able to help themselves, or it's unreasonable to expect us to do some things for them
- **On the Blind**
  - "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him" (Matthew 20:34).
    - Look at the cry for help: "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David" (verse 31).
    - How did Jesus answer that cry? "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" (verse 32).
  - **Observation**
    - one of the best ways to have compassion is to first ask, "What do you need?" or "How can I help you?"
- **On the Leper**
  - "And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean" (Mark 1:40-41).
    - Jewish attitude toward the lepers (Enduring Word):
      - You are the walking dead and you deserve this because this is the punishment of God against you
      - Jewish custom – do not even greet a leper, stay 6 feet away
      - Jewish law – do not touch a leper
      - lepers could not live with their families (Numbers 5:2)
      - lepers generally lived in a community with other lepers

- lepers did not usually make people feel compassionate
  - repulsive to look at
  - fear of contagion
  - Luke 5:12 says this man was "full of leprosy" (advanced stages)
- Jesus "touched him"
- **Observation**
  - having compassion might include touching someone: putting your arm around them, patting them on the back, hugging them
  - people who need compassion are often people no one else wants to be around
    - can you think of someone who – gets on your nerves, is "repulsive," seemingly "deserves" the trouble their in, other people avoid, etc.?
    - might they need compassion the most?
  - possible fears of having compassion on "lepers" today
    - what will people think?
    - will I be guilty by association? (Contagion)
    - I am repulsed by their condition
    - I don't know how I'd be able to help them
    - their condition is because of their reaping (Jews – "God's Finger")
  - "Compassion ... expresses itself in the simple act of presence. . . . just being there, showing up." – Krista Tippett
- **On the Bereaved**
  - "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not" (Luke 7:13).
  - Going to calling hours or funerals
    - Excuse: "I don't like to go to calling hours/funerals"
      - no one does
    - Romans 12:15 – "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."
      - Review one compassion definition = "suffering or feeling the like with another, sympathetic"
  - **Observations**
    - Difficult to have compassion on situations you've never experienced
      - "I'm here to walk through this valley with you"
    - However, what does it mean when we can say, "I've been there too"?
- **On the Lost and the Struggling**
  - "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).
  - Context: previous verses – Jesus was criticized, false accusations, laughed at
    - Jesus didn't let being mistreated stop Him from having compassion on others
  - Jesus felt the depths of compassion ("moved with")

- His solution: pray for God to send laborers
- Jesus looked at this as an opportunity to reap souls
- **Observations**
  - What is our initial reaction when unfairly criticized, accused, or laughed at? Are we in any mood to spend time with people or do we want to go off by ourselves?
  - How do we feel about the lost? Do we look at their sin or at them? Do we realize they just need the Shepherd?
  - Do we say that they are "distressed, bewildered, troubled, helpless" or do we feel that they are "stupid"?
  - Do we say, "Well, they know better"? (How do we know that?)
  - Compassion says, "Look at all these souls who could be won for the Lord."
  - Compassion realizes you might not always be the one to win them. We each have unique doors.
    - "Pray ... that he will send forth laborers into his harvest"
    - You might text someone – "Could you reach out to So-and-So today?" (Why? They have a door that you don't.)
    - For one reason or another – it might not be good for you to spend time with that person. If so, pray for God to send someone who can help them.
- **The unmerciful servant** received compassion – "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Matthew 18:27).
  - he failed to have compassion on a fellow servant – "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matthew 18:33).
  - context – Peter's question: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Verse 21)
    - 3 times was the accepted limit taught at that time
    - Peter was being very generous (7 times?)
    - Jesus' answer: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (verse 22).
    - Genesis 4:24 – "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."
      - Lamech was the 1<sup>st</sup> polygamist
      - Lamech boasts that if he is killed, the revenge will be "seventy and sevenfold"
      - some commentators believe Jesus was alluding to Lamech's boast when He answered Peter
        - "His allusion to Genesis 4:24 neatly contrasts Lamech's unlimited vindictiveness with the unlimited forgiveness of the disciple." (France)
  - the debt of the first servant (commentators estimate it to be between \$12 million and \$1 billion – unpayable) versus the debt of the second servant (approximately 100 days wages)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> servant choked the 2<sup>nd</sup> servant, demanded repayment, and threw him in a debtor's prison

- **Observations**
  - lack of compassion can arise when we forget how much Christ has forgiven us for (our sins) or how many faults we have
  - 1<sup>st</sup> servant seemed to have no remorse for what he had done
    - fellow servants saw what happened & reported it to the king
    - Are we blind to our own lack of compassion (while it is obviously apparent to others)?
  - How is it possible to lack compassion in the very same area one has had his own struggles? (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> servant both had a debt problem)
  
- **The Samaritan Had Compassion on the Injured Jew**
  - "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Luke 10:33).
  - Cultural rift – long-standing hatred between Jews and Samaritans
    - involved lineage (Samaritans were half-breeds – pagan ancestry), worship (Jerusalem versus Mount Gerazim), Scriptures (Samaritans rejected all but the first 5 books of the Old Testament)
    - Samaritan couldn't be a witness in a Jewish court (Bible-history.com)
    - Samaritans worked hard to hinder the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Sanballat & Tobiah)
  - More likely, help should have come from fellow Jews (priest and Levite)
  - Did the Samaritan worry about ...
    - if the bandits were still around?
    - what would the priest & Levite think of him?
    - what if other Samaritans came along?
    - what if the innkeeper told people he helped a Jew?
    - time and money spent on an enemy?
  - **Observations**
    - "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). Is there anyone you "have no dealings with" because of prejudice?
    - Is it harder to have compassion on people who are not like you?
    - What made the Samaritan different? What could you do to have more compassion on people others are passing by?

### How to Have Compassion on Difficult People

- **Listen** (are you hearing what they are saying or are you thinking of your response?)
  - listen with your ears, eyes, and body
  - what does it say when you continually look at your phone or the clock?
  - what does it say when your body language shows you are on the verge of leaving?
- Might require **plain speaking** (John 8:47)
- Might require **silence** (Luke 23:9)
- **Ask questions** (seek first to understand)
  - saying "I understand" when you really don't will not help the person
- **Share experiences** – tell a story (is this how you're feeling or what you're going

through?)

- **Be careful of pride** (I would never ...) – Romans 12:3
- **Avoid controversial topics** that start arguments
  - Proverbs 20:3 – any fool can start an argument
  - Proverbs 17:4 – abandon the quarrel before tempers explode
- **Look for things they do well** – create a positive attitude about this person
- **Remind yourself** that you don't know their whole story (walk a mile in their shoes)
- **Don't go on the defense**
  - if they say negative things, say, "You might be right" or "I'm sorry to hear that"
  - don't take it personally – people lash out FROM hurt not always AT the one doing the hurting

### Quotes

- "How would your life be different if...You stopped making negative judgmental assumptions about people you encounter? Let today be the day...You look for the good in everyone you meet and respect their journey." – Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*
- "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." – Leo Buscaglia
- "You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." – John Bunyan
- "A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal." — Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*
- "Self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection - or compassionate action." — Daniel Goleman
- "The only time you look in your neighbor's bowl is to make sure that they have enough. You don't look in your neighbor's bowl to see if you have as much as them." — Louis C.K.
- "By compassion we make others' misery our own, and so, by relieving them we relieve ourselves also." – Thomas Browne, Sr.
- "People may excite in themselves a glow of compassion, not by toasting their feet at the fire, and saying: 'Lord, teach me compassion,' but by going and seeking an object that requires compassion." – Henry Ward Beecher
- "Compassion changes the way the way we think about what is doable, what is possible." – Krista Tippett

### Additional Scriptures

- 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment – "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).
  - can only do this after we do the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment – "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).
- 1 John 3:17 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

**Further Study of Compassion Examples**

- **The prodigal son's father** – "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).
- **The Hebrews had compassion on Paul** – "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods" (Hebrews 10:34).
- **God had compassion on Israel** – "And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet" (2 Kings 13:23).
  - Read Psalm 78:38
  - Read Psalm 86:15

**Sources**

- [https://www.ted.com/talks/robert\\_wright\\_the\\_evolution\\_of\\_compassion/transcript?referrer=playlist-how\\_to\\_make\\_compassion\\_thrive#t-186750](https://www.ted.com/talks/robert_wright_the_evolution_of_compassion/transcript?referrer=playlist-how_to_make_compassion_thrive#t-186750)
- [https://www.ted.com/talks/krista\\_tippett\\_reconnecting\\_with\\_compassion/transcript?referrer=playlist-how\\_to\\_make\\_compassion\\_thrive#t-44380](https://www.ted.com/talks/krista_tippett_reconnecting_with_compassion/transcript?referrer=playlist-how_to_make_compassion_thrive#t-44380)
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-18/>
- [https://www.bible-history.com/Samaritans/SAMARITANSJews\\_and\\_Samaritans.htm](https://www.bible-history.com/Samaritans/SAMARITANSJews_and_Samaritans.htm)
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/dealing-difficult-people.html>