

Compassion



A Traveler Provides for a Helpless Stranger

INTRODUCTION

God has given abundantly to meet your needs and the needs of others. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (II Corinthians 9:8). How can you use what God has given you to help others? Maybe you could take time to listen and pray with someone who is hurting. Perhaps you can buy needed items to help people in distress or share what you already possess to relieve their suffering. Maybe you could send an encouraging word to someone who is sad or needs a friend. Show compassion to those who are burdened by sharing with them of the resources and comfort that God has given to you. (See II Corinthians 1:3–7.)

COMPASSION

Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others

Compassion Overview

What is Compassion?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what compassion means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of *compassion* is “investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.” When you see someone in pain, can you imagine how they are feeling, especially if something similar has happened to you? As you empathize with them, you not only *see* but also *feel* their sorrow. Who do



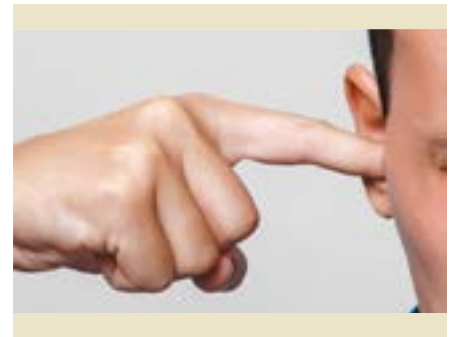
The Red Cross was born of a desire to relieve the pain and misery of wounded soldiers. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40b).

you know that is hurting? How could you help heal someone else’s pain? You may see that your mom is tired after a hard day and would appreciate a backrub. Your brother may have cut his finger and need a bandage. Your friend may have lost a loved one and would be comforted by receiving a sympathy card. Put yourself in the place of others. What if *your* back hurt, or you cut *your* finger, or one of *your* loved ones had passed away? What would you desire others to do to comfort you? Look beyond yourself and consider how someone else is feeling. Being moved to help ease their pain is compassion. Is your heart tender to notice those in need, and are you then willing to give whatever it takes to bring healing?

The opposite of *compassion* is *indifference*. Indifference is exhibited when you are unconcerned and not stirred

by the suffering of others. If you do not care enough to want to help in some way, examine your heart and ask the Lord to give you His love for others. “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?” (I John 3:17). As you experience the depth of God’s mercy in your own life, your love for Him will grow, as will your desire to share His love with others through compassionate words and actions.

When Jesus saw the needs of hurting people, He was moved with compassion and began to help them. He came to earth to preach the Gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, and preach deliverance to the captives. Although Jesus’ time on earth was short, He set the example for us and expected His followers to continue this ministry. Christians are given the Holy Spirit at salvation to enable them in these great tasks. You cannot solve every problem you see, but when you realize the needs around you, you can pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send out laborers. (See Luke 10:2.) When God sends you to meet a specific need, are you ready and willing to minister to others?



“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Proverbs 21:13).

Compassion in Scripture

Read aloud and discuss each verse, question, and concept.

Proverbs 2:1–6 says, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” What a privilege to study the rich truths of God’s Word, hide them in your heart, and apply them to daily life! These truths are priceless treasures, far above the value and beauty of rubies and diamonds. As you dig deeper into God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will be a radiant expression of His love. He will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

We see examples of compassion in God’s character in the following ways:

- God stands as an Advocate for the helpless. (See Psalm 72:12.)
- God is our Healer, both physically and spiritually. (See Psalm 103:2–6.)
- God is full of compassion and mercy, forgiving us when we do not deserve it. (See Micah 7:18–19; Psalm 78:38.)
- Jesus’ tender heart for the multitudes moved Him to heal those who were physically and spiritually sick. (See Matthew 14:14; Mark 2:17.)
- With the compassion of a shepherd for his helpless and wandering sheep, Jesus ministered to the multitudes even when He was weary. (See Mark 6:31–34.)

- Jesus comforts believers with an everlasting consolation and hope. (See II Thessalonians 2:16–17.)
- The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and constant Companion. (See John 14:16.)

COMPASSION IN MY LIFE

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out compassion daily.

- When you serve the needy, Who else are you serving? How will the Lord reward compassionate deeds? (See Matthew 25:37–40; Proverbs 19:17.)
- Should different nationalities or social standings of others affect my kindness toward them? (See Colossians 3:10–12; Exodus 23:9.)
- How does my suffering now help me to comfort others later? (See II Corinthians 1:3–7.)
- Does God use other people to comfort me? Am I willing to let His love flow through me in order to comfort others? (See II Corinthians 7:6–7.)
- To whom could I lend a helping hand or listening ear? (See James 1:27.)
- What is a compassionate way that I could respond to Christians who have fallen to temptation? (See Galatians 6:1–2.)
- What Scriptures could I use to comfort someone who is discouraged, sorrowing, or hurting? (See Psalm 9:9; 20:1; 28:7.)

COMPASSION KEY VERSE

“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?” I JOHN 3:17

Bible Story

A TRAVELER PROVIDES FOR A HELPLESS STRANGER

One day a Jewish lawyer asked Jesus a question about eternal life. Jesus wisely replied to the lawyer's question with a question about the Law. The lawyer answered knowledgeably that the Law said we should genuinely love God and our neighbors. He was so confident of his own righteousness that he then pressed Jesus further and asked, "And who is my neighbour?" This time, instead of another question in return, Jesus responded with a story. The parable began with a Jewish traveler attacked by brutal thieves who stole all he had! What would happen

to him? The story took a surprising turn when a Samaritan appeared on the scene. Samaritans and Jews were not friends. The Jewish people despised Samaritans because of their mixed heritage. The beaten Jew needed a compassionate friend, not an enemy. He needed someone who would give of his limited resources to help him. Read today's story from God's Word to find out how many people passed by the injured man and if any of them stopped to give true love and compassion. How would Jesus' parable answer the question, "And who is my neighbour?"

BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

Read Luke 10:25–37 together and discuss the following questions:

- 1. What question did the lawyer first ask Jesus? What was his second question? (See Luke 10:25, 29.)**
If a friend asked you about how to have eternal life, what answer would you give? (See Ephesians 2:8–9; II Corinthians 5:21.)
- 2. In Jesus' parable, what happened to the Jew on his way to Jericho? (See Luke 10:30.)**
Who do you know that has had theft or another tragic event happen to them?
- 3. Who came along and what did they do when they saw the injured man? (See Luke 10:31–32.)**
What causes you to turn away from opportunities to help those in need? What excuses have you made not to help someone who was hurting?
- 4. Who was the third person to encounter the beaten stranger? Did he only pity the hurt man, or did he do something to help? (See Luke 10:33.)**
Are you willing to give of your time, possessions, and skills to help others? Who do you know that is sad, hurt, or alone right now, and how could you help?
- 5. Why was it surprising that the Samaritan helped the Jewish stranger? (See John 4:9.)**
Is it easier to give to someone who likes you or to give to someone who does not like you? To whom does God want you to show mercy? (See Luke 6:31–36.)
- 6. What did the kind Samaritan do to care for the injured Jew? (See Luke 10:34.)**
What sacrifices have others made to help you or your family in your times of need?
- 7. As he left the inn, what did the Samaritan offer the innkeeper so that the care for the Jew would continue? (See Luke 10:35.)**
When you compassionately share your resources, do you give as little as possible, or do you choose to give more than is required?
- 8. After hearing the parable, was the lawyer able to answer his own question? Who was his neighbor? (See Luke 10:36–37.)**
Who do you find difficult to love? Have you asked God to give you His sacrificial love? (See Romans 5:8.)

Memory Verse

I JOHN 3:17

Play the game together to help the children commit I John 3:17 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“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?”

I JOHN 3:17

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Disappearing Visual

Write I John 3:17 on a sheet of paper in the format shown above. Hold the paper so the children can see the verse and read it together. Next, fold back the first phrase on the dotted line. Have the children read the verse again, this time with the first phrase hidden. Can the children remember the missing section of the verse? If not, review the first phrase. Fold back the next line of the verse so that it “disappears.” Have the children read the verse and see if they can say from memory the part that is missing. Continue hiding each line and reciting the verse until the Scripture has completely disappeared and the children are reciting the entire verse from memory!

DOERS OF THE WORD

In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “give to the benevolence offering at church,” or “help Mom prepare a meal for a family in need,” or “give up my bed for a guest.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to _____

_____.

I ask that You would develop compassion in my life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.

Activity

WORD SEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the compassion key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards.

M D S T R U H E T W O V
D W E L L E T H H X D F
C S D E D K E A C B R P
O O I N N N T T O O U T
J T M N A E T H M W H T
O I H P V C U I P E S D
H A V E A E H O A L E O
N L R Q R S S I S S E G
W O R L D S S T S O T O
F V A Z O A I I I I H S
R E H T O R B H O N H W
H O W F G Y R I N N G T

I 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?”

Compassion

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If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “God” and “love.” Younger children could point to the ABC’s. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words instead of only the underlined words.

Object Lesson

“YOUR PAIN IS MINE”

INTRODUCTION

During this study we are asking the Lord to develop compassion in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! We are not alone in our journey. As Christians, God has designed us to work together as His Body. Our joys and sorrows affect each other, and we are called to compassionately understand and help our fellow believers. Our activity today will help increase our understanding of those who are suffering physically.

Supplies:

- Blindfold (bandana or dish towel)
- Cotton balls
- Sling (necktie, scarf, or belt)
- Crutches (or long sticks)

Instructions

What would it feel like to have a broken leg or arm? Today we are going to pretend to have an injury or an infirmity so that we can better understand others who are hurting.

Let the children decide the injury or infirmity each one wants to pretend to have. Some suggestions follow in the list below:

- Wrap your arm in a sling as if broken
- Wear a blindfold as if blind
- Put cotton balls in your ears as if deaf or hard of hearing
- Use crutches as if lame

Have the children try to eat a meal, play outside, do their chores, or visit a friend while pretending to be impaired.

How did your pretend ailment or impairment affect you? What did it prevent you from doing? What activities were less enjoyable or more difficult to do? What assistance did you appreciate from others? Can you imagine being limited in that way for a week?

For the rest of your life? How can this activity help you better understand others with these injuries or infirmities?

When one part of our body, such as a finger or toe or head or stomach, is hurting, our whole body is affected.

The same is true of the Body of Christ. If one Christian is suffering, the whole Body of Christ suffers. In other words, we all suffer with the one who is hurting.

We are told in I Corinthians 12:25–26:

“That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

We can care for each other by praying, as Paul did (Philippians 1:4), or by personally comforting others as we have been comforted (II Corinthians 1:4).

Unlike the indifferent crowd who rejected the blind man, when we see people through God’s eyes of compassion,

we will feel their pain and do what we can to relieve their suffering.



A Traveler Provides for a Helpless Stranger



“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Luke 10:33-34).

Hymn History

“I Must Tell Jesus”

Sing “I Must Tell Jesus” and read about the compassion of the hymn writer, Elisha Hoffman.

The poor, ill woman had seen many afflictions. The pastor, Elisha Hoffman, was known for his compassion for the destitute and those literally from the poorer side of town. As he visited this suffering lady, she wearily unburdened her heart to him. She looked to him in pain and discouragement and begged of him, “What shall I do? What shall I do?”

How well the pastor understood her pain and her sorrows! His own life had been touched with deep sorrow when his young wife had died several years earlier. With tenderness and heartfelt empathy, he prayed with the suffering woman and shared specific Scriptures to comfort her. Then he added, “You cannot do better than take all of your sorrows to Jesus. You must tell Jesus!”

Her eyes lit up as she exclaimed, “Yes! I must tell Jesus!”

Pastor Hoffman later recorded: “As I left her home I had a vision of that joy-illuminated face . . . and I hear all along my pathway the echo, ‘I must tell Jesus. I must tell Jesus.’”

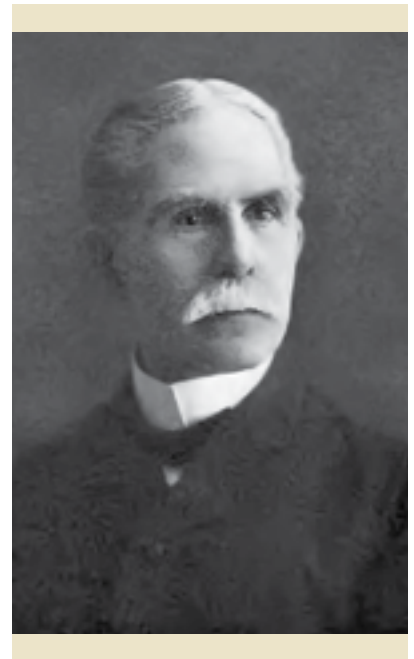
Once home, the pastor wrote down those words and the lines they inspired. From burdens to troubles to temptations, over and over the refrain answered: “I must tell Jesus!” Pastor Hoffman’s hymn proclaims the loving compassion of Christ. Similarly, Pastor Hoffman’s Christlike concern is a wonderful illustration of the operational definition of *compassion*, which is “investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.” He considered those in helpless

situations, visiting and listening when people shared their woes with him. He was ready to be involved to help the hurting and downcast as God enabled him. He understood God’s merciful compassion, having experienced it deeply with his own painful, personal loss.

Pastor Elisha Hoffman not only wrote the words to this particular hymn, but he also composed the tune. He named the tune “Orwigsburg,”

which is the name of the small Pennsylvania town where he was born in 1839. Pastor Hoffman wrote many other hymns and their tunes, and by the time he died at the age of ninety, he had penned over 2,000 hymns!

The next time you don’t know what to say or do to encourage someone, remember these words from the hymn: “Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.” Ask Jesus to enable you to have compassion for the hurting, the poor, and the lonely. He is willing and able to answer your prayer to help heal the hurts of others.



Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929)

Hymn Sheet Music

I Must Tell Jesus

Elisha A. Hoffman (1839–1929)

Elisha A. Hoffman (1839–1929)

1. I must tell Je - sus all of my tri - als, I can - not bear these
2. I must tell Je - sus all of my trou - bles, He is a kind, com -
3. Tempt - ed and tried, I need a great Sav - ior, One Who can help my
4. O how the world to e - vil al - lures me! O how my heart is

bur - dens a - lone; In my dis - tress He kind - ly will help me,
pas - sion - ate Friend; If I but ask Him, He will de - liv - er,
bur - dens to bear; I must tell Je - sus, I must tell Je - sus,
tempt - ed to sin! I must tell Je - sus, and He will help me

He ev - er loves and cares for His own.
Make of my trou - bles quick - ly an end. I must tell Je - sus!
He all my cares and sor - rows will share.
O - ver the world the vic - t'ry to win.

I must tell Je - sus! I can - not bear my bur - dens a - lone; I must tell

Je - sus! I must tell Je - sus! Je - sus can help me, Je - sus a - lone.

Word Search Answer Key

M D S T R U H E T W O V
D W E L L E T H H X D F
C S D E D K E A C B R P
O O I N N N T T O O U T
J T M N A E T H M W H T
O I H P V C U I P E S D
H A V E A E H O A L E O
N L R Q R S S I S S E G
W O R L D S S T S O T O
F V A Z O A I I I H S
R E H T O R B H O N H W
H O W F G Y R I N N G T

Hymn History Bibliography

Johnson, Guye, *Treasury of Great Hymns and Their Stories*, Bob Jones University Press, Greenville, SC, 1986, pp. 163–164.

Osbeck, Kenneth W., *101 More Hymn Stories*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1982, p. 131.

Recommended Resources

- *2018 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar*
- *Hymns for the Family* CDs (“I Must Tell Jesus” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 3.)
- *The Power for True Success*
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- *Character Sketches*, Volumes 1–3
- *Achieving True Success*
- “Compassion, the Lost Art” (Message by Roger Magnuson, available at store.iblp.org.)
- *A Cry From the Streets* by Jeannette Lukasse

To view these resources
and many more, visit us at:

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