

## Compassion Towards Others

When we think of being compassionate towards others our first thoughts are kindness and sympathy. Actually, compassion goes much deeper. The dictionary defines kindness as being friendly, generous or considerate. Sympathy is having pity or sorrow for someone else's problem. Those are nice, but not enough. In Latin, the word "compati" (root word for compassion) means to "suffer with." Someone else's heartbreak becomes your heartbreak. Compassion is suffering when someone else is suffering. It invests you in the situation others are facing.

The Old Testament gives us many scripture verses about a **Compassionate God**. Here are two:

- *But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness (Psalm 86:15)*
- *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him (Psalm 103:13).*

Jesus is a **Compassionate Savior**. The New Testament provides many examples of His compassion. Here are some examples:

- Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, even though He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:33-35)
- The blind men receive their sight. (Matthew 20:29-34)
- The healing of the lepers (Mark 1:40-42)
- The parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-24)
- The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- The feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21)
- Jesus wept for the people in the city of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39).



Now, it is our turn. The Bible tells us to be **Compassionate People**.

- *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3:12)*
- *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*
- *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32).*
- *Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble (1 Peter 3:8).*

Following Jesus' example: When Jesus lived among us, He recognized people's needs. He had the heart to feel their pain and a mind to understand their confusion. And then, He did something about it. The Bible tells us that when Jesus saw the crowds, He realized they had no guide or provider, no protector or comforter. They were at the mercy of the situations in which they lived. They needed God's compassion and mercy. *"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:16).* How about us? Jesus is the "shepherd" who provides for our needs and mercifully cares for us. Following His example, we can show compassion for people in need. We suffer when they suffer. And then, we can do whatever is in our power to help them. Compassion may start with a sympathy card and being kind to someone in need, but it also includes personal involvement. We suffer *with* them, and then try to help them.

**Question:** How can you be more compassionate towards the needs and suffering of others?

**Prayer:** Thank you, Lord, for sending us your son, Jesus, to demonstrate your compassion to others, and to give His life for us all, on the cross. Amen.