



When is Compassion Wrong?

Matthew 9:36: (NASB) *Seeing the people, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.*



Guest: Joy Thompson

When you think of compassion, what do you picture? Perhaps you see Jesus healing the multitudes or volunteers caring for victims of some natural disaster. Perhaps you see an individual patiently working with a disabled person or a soldier protecting children in a war-torn region. Perhaps compassion makes you think of Doctors Without Borders or food drives for the hungry. Whatever it is, thinking about compassion probably makes you think about the best of humanity - it probably makes you think about that glimmer of hope that says

we can get along. Now, when you think about compassion do you ever see yourself in the role of the compassionate? Wouldn't you like to be in that role? Just what does it take to become a truly compassionate person and most importantly, what are the limits of compassion? Are there times when compassion is NOT appropriate?

Two words stand out: Compass + Passion. The compass points us in the right direction, and we should have passion to want to help others. We want a direction for our compassion. How does it work?



Rick's sister, Joy, joins us on this program. Her comments in purple are edited for clarity and brevity.



I am part of a family business I married into over 30 years ago. I started out grading lumber and "pulling on the green chain" (a lumber delivery system in a sawmill). When I was pregnant with our daughter, making it difficult to do that job, I made lunches for the family members working in the business. Eventually I learned how to do the bookkeeping and began to get involved in our monthly educational and team building presentations. I am now in charge of all personnel issues, which includes hiring, interviewing, discipline for our employees when it is necessary, firing and documenting the whole process.

This job is WAY out of my comfort zone. I do not like conflict. I want to be everyone's friend. I would rather overlook an issue and put off dealing with it. I do not want to hurt ANYONE's feelings!

This job is absolutely contrary to my natural inclinations, but I am doing it because I am part of the family. I think God has led me to these challenges, which gives me the ability to make decisions according to our family values. I recently was emotionally involved in a situation where my compassion went into overdrive.



 A compassion test, *What Would I Do*, doncrawley.com

- *Earlier this fall an assisted living home in California was shut down by its owners, leaving many of its elderly residents with nowhere to go. The staff members left when they learned they weren't being paid, except for the cook, Maurice Rowland, and the janitor, Miguel Alvarez. Rowland and Alvarez decided on their own to stay and care for the residents, some of whom had dementia. They made a personal sacrifice to take care of their fellow humans until the sheriff and fire department took over several days later. Rowland and Alvarez both showed extraordinary compassion and empathy for the residents. When I heard the story on NPR, I felt like I was punched in my gut. I wonder what I would do in a similar situation. Would I stay and care for the residents, or would I assume that someone else would be there to take care of them and go on my way?*

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: **Compassion**

Sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it

There are several words translated *compassion* in the New Testament. One of these words really focuses on Jesus and his compassion:

Compassion: Strongs #4697 to have the bowels yearn, i.e. (figuratively) feel sympathy, to pity [Greek English Lexicon](#) - to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)

We say compassion is felt "deep down," that hurt in the pit of your stomach. The human body is wired to have a physiological reaction to someone else's hurt or pain.

What can we observe about Jesus and his compassion?

Matthew 15:32: (KJV) *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have **compassion <4697>** on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

He entered into the experience of these people, who had traveled a long way on dusty roads. Jesus' compassion caused him to feed the people, satisfying their immediate needs with a miracle.

Mark 6:34: (KJV) *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with **compassion <4697>** toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

Jesus' compassion caused him to teach, filling the pressing void in the people's lives. He identified with the people and fed them spiritually.

Matthew 14:14: (KJV) *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with **compassion <4697>** toward them, and he healed their sick.*

Jesus' compassion caused him to heal many who were sick. He lifted away their immediate trial.

Luke 7:13: (KJV) *And when the Lord saw her, he had **compassion <4697>** on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

Jesus' compassion caused him to raise this widow's only son back to life. While they were marching him down the street in a funeral procession, Jesus



interrupted the procession and restored life to the young man. Jesus replaced her grief with joy.



Jesus' compassion ALWAYS led him to the decisive action of lifting people out of their immediate lack, trial or grief. His compassion ALWAYS produced a beneficial result.

That is what I want to do! Jesus was able to zero in on what the need was and immediately alleviate the problem.

He literally took the problem away in all of these examples. That is the result of that deep, gut-wrenching movement on his part. This is where his kingdom will eventually bring the entire world of mankind.

**We follow in Jesus' footsteps.
Shouldn't our compassion produce beneficial results as well?**

We had an experience with a possible new hire. I will call him "Gary." Gary was a young man who had the courage to use money he saved up to travel across the country to the Northwest, where we are, to find the job that would fit his passion. He responded to an ad from our company. My husband talked on the phone with him at length and saw his values and desire to work. My husband was very impressed. I phoned his references and had the privilege of speaking with his family member who employed him, who reported that Gary's work ethic was great, and he was reliable and responsible. He also shared that Gary had some hard experiences and asked about the kind of business we had. He was impressed with our values and said he felt good that Gary might hire on with us. He said with emotion in his voice, "Please watch out for him. He is such a great kid." I felt a connection with the relative and Gary, who I hadn't even met!

So Gary flew in to see us. We interviewed him. He was evaluated by a Health and Safety coach we use, and unfortunately he did not pass the evaluation. I had to tell him this job would not work for him. He was devastated and I was devastated.

Soon thereafter, I talked to Rick because I was feeling so bad. I was so upset that I could not sleep and even though I was praying, I did not know what to do.

Rick observed that I needed to watch my "circle of compassion," because it could be a "circle of destruction." What?!? I had always considered compassion to be a good thing, no matter what.

Joy's stress level was overwhelming.

The word used to describe the compassion Jesus displayed is *never* applied to his followers. That depth of compassion is "above our pay grade" for now. He had an ability we do not - he could read the heart.





Our compassion has limited influence, and we need to understand those limits for it to be effective!

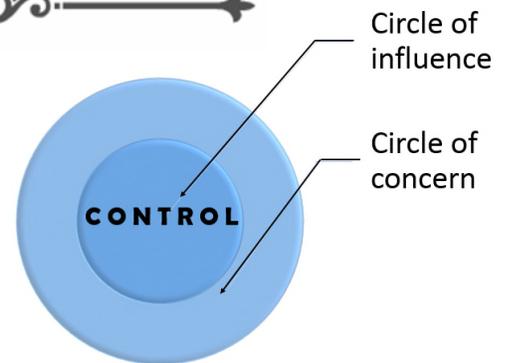
Let's review a key point from our **January 2, 2017** podcast, "What Should I Be Doing Differently?" to begin to reassign our compassion to its most effective level.

To better invest my time and maximize my experiences, I need to understand how to focus on my circle of influence and NOT my circle of concern. - Weldon Long, "The Power of Consistency" book



The circle concept comes from Steven Covey's book, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

The **circle of concern** is the area that we have no control over. The **circle of influence** is the area that we have control over.



Our circle of influence is often smaller than our circle of concern. We do not have control over the health of a loved one or the economy. When we focus on our circle of concern, it adds to feelings of stress and helplessness because we cannot change anything in that circle.



Let's look at the Apostle Paul's conversion as an example of how this works. Saul (Paul's original name when he was a Pharisee) was forcibly shown the error of his ways and repented.

Ananias, the Christian brother who would be sent to Saul, did not need force; he simply needed faith:

Acts 9:10-15: (NASB) ¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Here I am, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said to him, Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying,

Ananias was given a very specific task to accomplish. This task falls within his circle of influence since Jesus proclaimed it to be so in the vision. But Ananias was being asked to talk to the very person he was probably hiding from!

¹³But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.



Now we see Ananias' circle of concern. "Are you sure, Lord, you have the *right* Saul of Tarsus?" *How much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem - He is wandering outside his circle of influence into his circle of concern, and his concern is legitimate.*

¹⁵But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.



Observations:

- Jesus' answer allays his concern and helps Ananias to focus on that which he could influence.
- Ananias walks in faith, applies his influence and does his job. **THIS WAS A DEFINING MOMENT** for both individuals leading to the "canceling" of his circle of concern regarding Saul.
- Applying ourselves to that which we *can* influence works!

Our time is only well-invested when we are focusing on our circle of influence. Our time is wasted, never to be retrieved, when spent focusing on our circle of concern.



Our circle, *Human - The Circle of Compassion*, Abby Lammers

- *The term human is more than just a designation of a species. So, what is this humanness? Well, it's a function of what I call your circle of compassion. The circle of compassion is simply the range of people that you care about. For something like a tree, something incapable of complex thought, that only extends to the tree itself. As complexity increases, the range also increases. A duck cares not just for itself but also for its offspring. An elephant might care for itself, its offspring and the other elephants in its herd, maybe even all the other elephants it has ever met. But humans, well humans are something special. Humans have the ability to expand their circle of compassion to encompass not just their children, not just the people they know, but all of humankind and we don't stop there. We have the capacity to care about all of the creatures on our planet, present and future.*

Back to Joy's story:

I was face-to-face with Gary's deep disappointment and I could not take that away from him. I tried to encourage him, but I took on those feelings and did not know what to do with them.

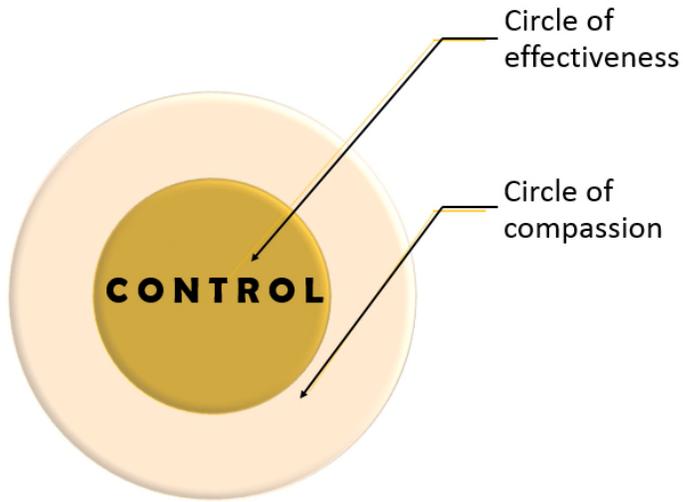
1 Peter 5:7: (KJV) *Casting all your care (circle of concern) upon him; for he careth for you.*

That is part of the process and what Ananias had to do in facing Saul. He had to cast his circle of concern upon the Lord knowing the Lord cared for him, and everything fell into place eventually. It is a challenge in those moments! I imagine Ananias as being afraid - he had reason to be. In my situation, I saw how it was affecting this young man and it was difficult.

He was not able to do what the job would have required of him.



We see the power of Jesus' compassion and want to do what he did, but we are not able - more on this soon!



When our **circle of compassion** is larger than our **circle of effectiveness** (and it often is), we need to be wary of that circle of compassion becoming a circle of distraction and destruction.

It means we are focusing on something bigger than us that we cannot change or influence, and it can be a heartbreaking experience. Compassion has to be clearly understood.

If our compassion cannot be effective like Jesus' compassion, then what good is it?

Joy had to do some rethinking.

I prayed about it and started to realize that I had similar patterns of response from other experiences and I never thought my compassion might be an issue. Part of my pattern is I get caught up in the disappointment and struggles of other people and it has a great effect on me.

We get consumed by other people's lives and it is a dead end because we can't change it.

There was another experience recently with a very fine person, Raymond, who was really down on himself for not making wiser decisions, because these decisions prevented us from hiring him. He was so upset with himself. I had the same reaction of intense feeling for him, but I now had this insight of our circle of influence and knew I had to deal with him in a different way.

Christian compassion needs to be learned.

Defining Christian compassion:

Hebrews 10:32-34: (ASV) ³²But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; ³³partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. ³⁴For ye both had **compassion <4834>** on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

Compassion: Strongs #4834 to feel "sympathy" with, i.e. (by implication) to commiserate
KJV - have compassion, be touched with a feeling of

When we commiserate with somebody, we enter into the feelings of their difficulties and feel along with them, desiring to help them.



1 Peter 3:8: (KJV) *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having **compassion one of another <4835>**, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*

Compassion one of another: Strongs #4835 having a fellow-feeling (“sympathetic”), i.e. (by implication) mutually commiserative
KJV - having compassion one of another

1 John 3:17: (KJV) *But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his **bowels of compassion <4698>** from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Bowels of compassion: Strongs #4698 probably strengthened from the spleen; an intestine; figuratively, pity or sympathy
KJV - bowels, inward affection, tender mercy

This is the gut reaction that says, “I am hurting with you. I want to help you. I want to walk with you through this.”

For Joy, her compassion in its raw state was bringing her to a place where she could not help anyone.

Praying about her discussion about the circle of influence led her to this:

Hebrews 12:1-3: (NASB) *¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

This has some red flags for dealing with feelings that come up.

*...let us also lay aside every **encumbrance <3591>**...*

Encumbrance: Strongs #3591 weight, burden

*...and the sin which so easily **entangles <2139>** us...*

Entangles: Vines Interlinear #2139 - standing easily around, i.e., easily encompassing; easily surrounding or encircling

...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us - If we are running a race with weights, burdens and obstacles surrounding our feet, it is a hindrance to our race and therefore our spiritual life.

If your depth of feeling is taking away from your ability to ‘run the race,’ if it is getting in the way, distracting you from your faith in God and Christ to overrule the outcome, if it is causing you undue stress or lost sleep over the issue, this is a strong sign that your circle of compassion needs an adjustment somehow. We don’t want to “shut off our bowels of compassion,” but any distraction in our life is a sign there is a weight or a sin encircling us or burdening us.

In other words: I realize my compassion, as it exists naturally in me, can be something that tangles my feet up and trips me as I try to run this race. Our compassion, if it brings us to anxiety and stress, is not allowing us to run our Christian race.

The compassion Joy had was causing an extra level of stress. When dealing with Gary, Joy’s reaction to him was one of real disappointment.



He knew I was disappointed, as I shared my feelings with him. I empathized with him thinking it would help him a little. I do not think anything helped him at the time because he was so disappointed.

It is okay to be expressive. We are suggesting that according to the way Jesus' compassion is described to us, it was a deep gut reaction and connection because he had the ability to fix, lift and alleviate circumstances. We can have compassion but cannot alleviate other people's circumstances. We can identify, sympathize and walk beside them. The power of Jesus' compassion could lift them out. The power of our compassion brings us into their lives and it can lock us in with them, but our compassion cannot bring them out. Unless we are applying compassion with scriptural principles in mind, our compassion can be destructive.



Our compassion is deep and real sympathy with a powerful desire to be helpful, but it is not (yet) in a position of being able to lift others out of their immediate lack, trial or grief.

I have a new approach to manage this kind of stress. I first ask myself, "What is within my power to do?"

Our compassion has limits.

I am more quickly aware of when I get distracted or stressed with a situation, when my "feet get tangled." That is my cue to pray about it. I saw that these kind of experiences of someone else's disappointment or discouragement triggered some of my own unresolved issues from my past. I realize I have what I call a "compassion deficit." I had a block to experience forgiveness in my own disappointment and failures in life. I know I am forgiven, but it was to a level that was not reaching into my heart. This experience has led me to pray throughout the day, just thanking God and Jesus that they love me. Especially when I make a mistake, I just say, "I am sorry, I confess this and I thank you for loving me." I even picture Jesus embracing the little girl in me with understanding and acceptance. I hear them say to me the words of [Isaiah 43:4](#): *You are precious in my sight...and I love you*, so it is a very personal way to claim their compassion in my life.

When we are free to experience the compassion of God and Christ, we are free to experience compassion for others in a balanced and healthy way.

Your adjustment was internal. You change the manner in which you process the emotions that surround your compassion. This is an important way to put a stop to the circle of distraction and destruction. You have to rewire your internal reaction.



🔊) Growing into the circle, *Human - The Circle of Compassion*, Abby Lammers

- *To be human, to have humanity, is to have an infinite circle of compassion. And yet, all of us are guilty of transgressing that circle through acts of hatred or violence, whether deliberate or accidental. Every time we shun another human our circle of compassion shrinks a little bit. When we destroy our environment or neglect our neighbors we become a little bit less human. That's why "human" is more than just a species designation. It's a goal, it's a virtue, but most of all, it's a responsibility - a responsibility to ourselves, to our planet and to each other.*

We have an incredible capacity for compassion to flow out of us, but that does not mean our compassion has the power to make things different.

Our circle of influence can house many opportunities for proactive compassion with our kids, spouse, family and close friends. Within this small circle, we can sometimes lift others by the power of our compassion. But sometimes their issues are outside of our circle of influence, and often people outside our circle of influence need our compassion. How do we deliver it when we cannot change things?

Rework and manage the emotions attached to our compassion - we need perspective.



What about when you have a friend or family member who can be constantly taking advantage of you and others that you love? They can be verbally abusive due to their personality, and there could be possible mental illness or addiction problems. They constantly expect you to give them what they need (financially, emotionally and verbally). They cause stress to all those around them. Is it more compassionate to withhold supporting them in the ways mentioned? Is it adding to their destructive pattern OR is it compassionate to be a doormat?

We are supposed to be *persecuted for righteousness sake* and are to forgive others *70 times 7*, but should we keep this cycle of abuse going?

We do not believe that is the compassionate thing to do. Properly placed, compassion is a principled and powerful tool for righteousness. What about compassion when someone is not acting in a godly manner? Do we not hold someone accountable? Do we accept bad behavior? No, that is not compassion; that is cowardice. If we are not powerfully placed in the principles of righteousness and godliness, we are not helping but instead are hurting.

For example, if I would have hired Gary, I would have hired him to do a job that would have ended up hurting him. He would have been happy for a moment, but I had to look at the bigger picture for his own good.

Let's begin building a foundation of compassion. We start with God, of course...



God's compassion is always on and always effective because His plan is eternal and cannot fail:

Lamentations 3:21-26: (NASB) ²¹*This I recall to my mind; Therefore, I have hope.* ²²*The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.* ²³*They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.* ²⁴*The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him.* ²⁵*The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.* ²⁶*It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.*

His compassions never fail - even though we do not always see the immediate results of that compassion, His plan put Jesus in place as the ransom sacrifice, a plan of enormous compassion.



While we cannot deliver eternal results with our compassion, we know who can!

God can and God will. Therefore, we should be in contact with the Eternal Deliverer of Compassion about our own experiences with compassion.

The compassion Jesus displayed in his earthly mission always delivered, though its results (aside from his teaching) were a *temporary* relief of earthly pain and suffering. It was a sneak preview of the permanent kingdom miracles.

The temporary results of Jesus' compassion served as a witness to the unending power of God's love and plan:

Matthew 9:35-38: (NASB) ³⁵*Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.* ³⁶*Seeing the people, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.* ³⁷*Then he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.* ³⁸*Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.*

He taught, proclaimed and used the miracle of healing to draw attention to what it will be like in his future kingdom.



"Sr Y" chats: When Lazarus died, we read that Jesus wept - this is a beautiful example also of compassion. (John 11:35)

Jesus had compassion at every turn. His very life was a statement of compassion. He is described as *a man of sorrows* in **Isaiah 53:3**, not because he had anything about himself to be sorrowful for, but because he took upon himself the sorrows of those around him.



Our compassion - rather than being a circle of distraction and destruction - should be a circle of sympathetic compassion and prayer. In this circle we observe the hurt, do what we can and deliver what we cannot do to the God of compassion through Jesus, the messenger of compassion in prayer.

The way Joy began to rewire the emotions around her own compassion was through prayer asking, "What is in my power to do? What is *outside* my power to do? How can I best affect this situation?"



Hebrews 4:13-16: (NASB) ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

God in His plan has created a big, big picture and His compassions never fail. So we know every person will experience that compassion. Jesus was able to temporarily take away the pain, picturing this future kingdom blessing. We have to trust everything will be taken care of.



How can we be deeply compassionate without being at all destructive?



A CQ App listener writes: I truly appreciate this lesson today! A close friend of mine is going through a very difficult situation in her marriage. I've been struggling with how involved I should get when she asks me for advice. I've prayed about it continuously. I thank the Lord for allowing you to share this program because I've received the answer! God is so faithful to answer our prayers!

This is the value of understanding our limitations. It is not our job to heal the world around us...yet!

There are a few more steps the Lord led me to from this experience. When I ask what is in my power to do, as an employer, one of the answers is to make hard decisions that need to be made. However, how I look at it has completely changed. I can look at it as a privilege to help people connect the dots of cause and effect and realize it is part of growing. Just thinking of it that way makes it a different experience.



Jesus' compassion was expressed with *backbone*. I have heard three illustrations to approach relationships. One is the jellyfish approach (permissive), the other the brick wall approach (rigid and authoritarian) and the backbone (strength of consequences and the flexibility of mercy and good will). I can be a "backbone employer" in Christ, which means having the strength of both accountability and flexibility, and of finding a way to be a blessing, to give a person the tools or hope to go forward.



The problem we have with our compassion is we tend to act solely on feelings and emotions. We present six principles about compassion to try to help. While we cannot do what Jesus did, we *can* abide by the principles he followed.



Compassion Principle #1

Spiritually-based compassion
can be *offered*
without being *accepted*

Matthew 23:37: (NASB) *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.*

While Jesus gave ample time for his compassion to be received, he never forced it upon anyone. This was weeks before his crucifixion. How gracious are we with our compassion?

People do not always respond, but that does not cut off my privilege of helping "connect the dots" for them, helping to give them something that might help them make better decisions.



Compassion Principle #2

The choice to receive or reject
spiritual compassion always
has results or consequences

A specific result of accepting Jesus' compassion:

Matthew 20:32-34: (NASB) ³²And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, What do you want me to do for you? ³³They said to him, Lord, we want our eyes to be opened. ³Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

They gained their sight and they followed him - they not only took the gift of the moment; they took the gift of the transformed life.

They made a choice, and their life changed for the better.

A specific consequence of rejecting the compassion of Jesus:

Matthew 23:38: (NASB) *Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!*

The consequence of rejecting Jesus was on the nation of Israel. Every other example we have of his compassion fixed something or someone. When it came to the nation, it identified the problem that needed to be fixed.

Jesus accepted when people's choices led to consequences.



It is healthy to accept other people’s choices and realize they are part of their learning tools. It hurts them and causes disappointment but is part of their process to grow.

This leads back to our original practical question about how to treat someone who is taking advantage of us, where their demands are greater than the supply should be. It is self-centered. Sometimes mental illness is part of the picture, but give and take is really important.

At the same time, we cannot use that as an excuse to let consequences unfold in that person’s life, because that would be destructive.

Many times we have to just “let it be.”



Compassion Principle #3

Whether accepted or rejected,
spiritual compassion
always brings
a valuable learning experience

Right after the “desolate” proclamation:

Matthew 23:39: (NASB) *For I say to you, from now on you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

Here Jesus was weeping over Jerusalem and offering them his compassion. They did not understand it or accept it. Even though he had that depth of emotion and was rejected, he gives this prophecy that they will eventually see him - *blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*. That is when things will turn around, they will accept him as the Messiah and be blessed and healed in the fuller sense in the kingdom.

Jesus is speaking of the casting off of Israel but prophesying about the coming back of Israel into God’s favor. He showed both. Jesus knew the price he paid for all men could not and would not be received by all...not yet!

Do we have confidence in the long-term spiritual lessons of our compassion if expressed in terms of spirituality and godliness?



Compassion Principle #4

Spiritual compassion
requires
maturity and prayer



Psalm 35:11-13: (NASB) *¹¹Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. ¹²They repay me evil for good, to the bereavement of my soul. ¹³But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom.*

In a bigger sense, this was a prophecy about Jesus and his reaction to those who hated him. He knew they were sick and he was in mourning for them. He humbled his soul with prayer and fasting, even though they were not healed instantly. Eventually in the kingdom, that prayer will be answered.

Spiritual compassion requires such maturity and prayer in large part due to a lack of response. Our unbridled emotions are not necessarily compassion. They can lead us down a long, detrimental path.



Compassion Principle #5

Spiritual compassion
does not fix people;
it opens doors of
opportunity for them

Mark 6:34: (NASB) *When Jesus went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.*

Just because he taught them does not mean they learned.

We can see people are like sheep without a shepherd. People need direction in their lives and they need Jesus. They may not accept him now, but we can begin to teach them many things by our example and how we respond to them. We can give people tools now that sow seeds for their future healing time.

It does not matter if someone is receiving the compassion you want to give to them. What matters is that we are living up to our responsibility to be compassionate followers of Christ, and that we understand what we can and cannot accomplish with that compassion.



Compassion Principle #6

Spiritual compassion
is driven by a higher
and more powerful cause
than our emotions

This is so important!



Hebrews 12:2: (NASB) *...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame - meaning, he made the shame "little." That was a huge issue to be humiliated on the cross as a blasphemer. He was able to do this because he was not driven by emotion; rather, the joy set before him.

That allowed him to fulfill his mission of being the ransom price for all mankind.

What will be the result of our compassion if applied in a godly manner?

What are the results of properly applied compassion?

Because I have a better perspective on understanding that I cannot fix or take away the disappointment of others, but I still need to make the backbone decisions of strength and consequence that are necessary, my conscience is clear. When you know your limitations and are doing the best you can making these hard decisions, you know you cannot control the other person. I can control how I express to them the consequences and can give tools to them.

The success of delivered compassion is not in the response of the other individual, it is in the checkpoints of spiritual thinking.

My mind is clearer. I am not so clouded by emotions and can think more on the spot. Looking at my experiences now, I am able to trust the process more for my own spiritual growth in becoming more Christ-like.

Philippians 3:12-14: (NASB) *Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on (respect the process) in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal (WE ARE IN PROCESS; respect the process) of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

It is easier for me to let go of the past. We have no control over the past except to learn from it. It also helps me to respect the process more of the growth of other people. Their choices are *their* choices and the consequences are so valuable. I think of the consequences in my life and how they teach me all the time! I do not want to cheat people of consequences and how they could learn and grow from the experience.



Compassion Principle #7

Christlike, spiritual compassion empowers others and does not enable them!



Remember the Prodigal Son? The father let the son leave - he knew there would be consequences and he did not interfere, but he did wait for him to return:

Luke 15:20-24: (NASB) ²⁰So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ²²But the father said to his slaves, Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him...let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate.

Jesus' story of compassion here empowered a broken and contrite son to reinstatement. The son was allowed to go through the misery of his own decisions.

 **Compassion vs. enabling, Real Love Nugget With Greg Baer**

- *Compassion is natural and effortless. Enabling requires a great deal of thought and effort, in fact, sometimes it is just overwhelming. Compassion is simple. I simply care about you. Enabling becomes unbelievably complicated as the effects of enabling become more and more twisted like a ball of yarn. Compassion is ennobling and strengthening whereas enabling weakens the other person. Compassion means giving someone what they need. Enabling means giving people what they want. Compassion makes people more independent while enabling makes people weak and dependent. So, figure out the line between compassion and enabling, and it's not a fine line.*

ENABLING

If our compassion is based on godly, spiritual principles, it has the power to empower. When we let our emotions run ahead, we often become enablers.

How grateful are we that our heavenly Father gives us what we *need* and not what we want! He does not enable us!

What would happen if God gave us what we want? We would become the "god" and God becomes our genie. Our wish is His command. That is not spiritual; it is as earthly and sensual as possible.

1 Peter 1:8-9: (NASB) ⁸and though you have not seen him, you love him, and though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

The outcome of our faith is not just our own salvation; it is *the salvation of souls*. The end result of our faith is not just our own deliverance; it is the deliverance of our whole human family when we will be *kings and priests* with Jesus in heavenly glory. All the people will be resurrected and have the opportunity to understand the truth. THIS is *inexpressible joy*.



It is also an inexpressible joy to be a righteous influence on people now, by being a light, by acts of kindness, by making difficult decisions and carrying through with them, helping people to connect the dots between what they sow and what they reap. It is an inexpressible joy because it is planting the seeds of future deliverance, even if they do not learn from it now. What a joy that there is a bigger picture!

So, while our spiritual compassion in this age is very limited, it can bring encouragement, hope and direction to those who would receive it, but it cannot fix them.

BUT...this is only the beginning!

1 Peter 2:9-12: (NASB) *⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were not a people NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light - This is part of our compassion experience! This is part of being a footstep follower of Jesus. But remember, our compassion cannot change people like Jesus could, but it can encourage them and give them something to look forward to or to reject. No matter what the end result is now, the lesson of spiritual compassion will always be learned.

Even though the compassion you expressed might be rejected, *they may because of your good deeds as they observe them, - which includes your compassion to glorify God - not now - in the day of visitation.* They will remember! The lesson of compassion is never wasted if it is godly and principled.

The expressions of our present and limited spiritual compassion WILL have a MIGHTY and Christlike empowering effect later!

This gives me so much comfort because we can be very misunderstood in our Christian lives, and our decisions can be misunderstood. To realize the Lord has crafted this plan that makes us a part of being a blessing - if not now, then in the future - for all of these people is such a privilege.

Little experiences can have big results!

When it came time for my daughter Emily to learn how to drive, I had no confidence putting her on the road at the beginning. She had very little hand-eye coordination. What do I do so she could learn how to be mechanical? I had her mow the lawn a few times to practice. That little task of learning made the connection in her mind so she could do something more significant.





In principle, our compassion can be likened to the Parable of the Pounds. The end result in this life may be very small, perhaps not even worth counting, but the everlasting result is staggering!

Luke 19:16-20: (ASV) ¹⁶And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more. ¹⁷And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. ¹⁸And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds. ¹⁹And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities. ²⁰And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin:

This is about doing the work of God when you have opportunity, but we can apply its principles to compassion. If we do well with little, we can eventually be trusted with great things. Our faulty little compassion now expressed with godly power, principle and righteousness is teaching us to be able to have compassion like Jesus that changes people.

We need to invest our compassions wisely, using whatever talents and pounds we have. I realized from the study of this subject that I needed to adjust my compassion expectations. I can accept the compassion of God and Christ for my own failings, which helps me not be confused with the disappointments and failures of others - I can separate those. When I feel compassion, I pray to be led to the right action. I know I cannot fix people, and I can accept my limitations better. I can trust the process of letting people make their decisions and learn from them or have the pain from them. Maybe they will only learn from their mistakes in the kingdom, but that is okay. It is about the human experience of learning. My conscience is clear, and I see my job as being a little picture of the kingdom, because I get to help people connect the dots.

**So, when is compassion wrong?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**



The Serenity Prayer (its message is to trust the process!)

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as a pathway to peace;
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is;
Not as I would have it;
Trusting that You will make all things right
If I surrender to your will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen



Compassion Word Study

First, all uses of the word for compassion we began with on this program - the word that specifically applies to Jesus and his compassion:

Compassion: Strongs #4697 to have the bowels yearn, i.e. (figuratively) feel sympathy, to pity

Greek English Lexicon: To be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)

Matthew 9:36: (KJV) *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with **compassion <4697>** on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

Matthew 14:14: (KJV) *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with **compassion <4697>** toward them, and he healed their sick.*

Matthew 15:32: (KJV) *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have **compassion <4697>** on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

Matthew 18:27: (KJV) *Then the lord of that servant was moved with **compassion <4697>**, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

Matthew 20:34: (KJV) *So Jesus had **compassion <4697>** on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

Mark 1:41: (KJV) *And Jesus, moved with **compassion <4697>**, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

Mark 6:34: (KJV) *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with **compassion <4697>** toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

Mark 8:2: (KJV) *I have **compassion <4697>** on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:*

Mark 9:22: (KJV) *And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have **compassion <4697>** on us, and help us.*

Luke 7:13: (KJV) *And when the Lord saw her, he had **compassion <4697>** on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

Luke 10:33: (KJV) *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had **compassion <4697>** on him,*

Luke 15:20: (KJV) *And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had **compassion <4697>**, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

Next, a list of all the other uses of *compassion* as expressed in the King James Version of the New Testament to see what that word means:

Romans 9:15: (KJV) *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have **compassion <3627>** on whom I will have **compassion <3627>**.*

Compassion: Strongs #3627 to exercise pity
KJV - have compassion on



Hebrews 5:2: (KJV) *Who can have **compassion <3356>** on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

Compassion: Strongs #3356 to be moderate in passion, i.e. gentle (to treat indulgently)
KJV - have compassion.

Hebrews 4:15: (KJV) *For we have not an high priest which cannot **be touched with the feeling <4834>** of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Hebrews 10:34: (KJV) *For ye had **compassion <4834>** of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*

Compassion: Strongs #4834 to feel "sympathy" with, i.e. (by implication) to commiserate
KJV - have compassion, be touched with a feeling of

1 Peter 3:8: (KJV) *Finally, be ye all of one mind, **having compassion one of another <4835>**, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

Having compassion one of another: Strongs #4835 having a fellow-feeling ("sympathetic"), i.e. (by implication) mutually commiserative
KJV - having compassion one of another

1 John 3:17: (KJV) *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his **bowels <4698>** of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Bowels: Strongs #4698 probably strengthened from the spleen; an intestine (plural); figuratively, pity or sympathy
KJV - bowels, inward affection, tender mercy

All uses of this word:

Luke 1:78: (KJV) *Through the **tender <4698>** mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,*

Acts 1:18: (KJV) *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his **bowels <4698>** gushed out.*

2 Corinthians 6:12: (KJV) *Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own **bowels <4698>**.*

2 Corinthians 7:15: (KJV) *And his inward **affection <4698>** is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.*

Philippians 1:8: (KJV) *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the **bowels <4698>** of Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 2:1: (KJV) *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any **bowels <4698>** and mercies,*

Colossians 3:12: (KJV) *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **bowels <4698>** of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

Philemon 1:7: (KJV) *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the **bowels <4698>** of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.*

Philemon 1:12: (KJV) *Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own **bowels <4698>**:*

Philemon 1:20: (KJV) *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my **bowels <4698>** in the Lord.*



1 John 3:17: (KJV) *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his **bowels <4698>** of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Jude 1:22: (KJV) *And of some have **compassion <1653>**, making a difference:*

Compassion: Strongs #1653 to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace)
KJV - have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, shew) mercy (on)

All uses of this word:

Matthew 5:7: (KJV) *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain **mercy <1653>**.*

Matthew 9:27: (KJV) *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have **mercy <1653>** on us.*

Matthew 15:22: (KJV) *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have **mercy <1653>** on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

Matthew 17:15: (KJV) *Lord, have **mercy <1653>** on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

Matthew 18:33: (KJV) *Shouldest not thou also have had **compassion <1653>** on thy fellowservant, even as I had **pity <1653>** on thee?*

Matthew 20:30: (KJV) *And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have **mercy <1653>** on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

Matthew 20:31: (KJV) *And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have **mercy <1653>** on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

Mark 5:19: (KJV) *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had **compassion <1653>** on thee.*

Mark 10:47: (KJV) *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have **mercy <1653>** on me.*

Mark 10:48: (KJV) *And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have **mercy <1653>** on me.*

Luke 16:24: (KJV) *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have **mercy <1653>** on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

Luke 17:13: (KJV) *And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have **mercy <1653>** on us.*

Luke 18:38: (KJV) *And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have **mercy <1653>** on me.*

Luke 18:39: (KJV) *And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have **mercy <1653>** on me.*

Romans 9:15: (KJV) *For he saith to Moses, I will have **mercy on <1653>** whom I will have **mercy <1653>**, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

Romans 9:16: (KJV) *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth **mercy <1653>**.*



Romans 9:18: (KJV) *Therefore hath he **mercy <1653>** on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Romans 11:30: (KJV) *For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained **mercy <1653>** through their unbelief:*

Romans 11:31: (KJV) *Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain **mercy <1653>**.*

Romans 11:32: (KJV) *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have **mercy <1653>** upon all.*

Romans 12:8: (KJV) *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth **mercy <1653>**, with cheerfulness.*

1 Corinthians 7:25: (KJV) *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained **mercy <1653>** of the Lord to be faithful.*

2 Corinthians 4:1: (KJV) *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received **mercy <1653>**, we faint not;*

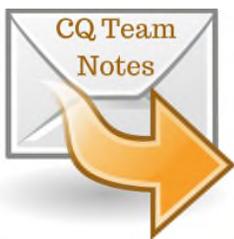
Philippians 2:27: (KJV) *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had **mercy <1653>** on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

1 Timothy 1:13: (KJV) *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained **mercy <1653>**, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

1 Timothy 1:16: (KJV) *Howbeit for this cause I obtained **mercy <1653>**, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

1 Peter 2:10: (KJV) *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had **<1653>** not obtained **mercy <1653>**, but now have obtained **mercy <1653>**.*

Jude 1:22: (KJV) *And of some have **compassion <1653>**, making a difference:*



Julie contributes: I learned a really important lesson about compassion. As Job was going through all his horribly painful trials, his friends came to comfort him. Do you know what they said to Job the very first day they all arrived from their hometowns? Absolutely nothing. Do you know what they said on the second day? Still nothing. They said nothing on day 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. Job 2:13: *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great.*

We don't have to be a great orator or write a symphony or a masterpiece of a condolence card to show compassion. Sometimes it is just about showing up and letting the person know that we see them, we hear them and we care about them. We can sit quietly with them as we share this common experience with sin together and try to help each other get through the worst of times.

I have a friend whose beloved husband died and I asked her how she could possibly get through something so trying. She told me that immediately after the funeral, sympathy cards and phone calls poured in. But the loneliness and grief set in months later, when the phones stopped ringing and people went on with their own lives. She said she really needed the comfort and compassion at



the six-month mark. The one year mark. The first Christmas alone. Their wedding anniversary every year. So, I have tried to be conscious of this - to not forget the widows and those who have undergone extreme loss.