

Wisdom of the Bible ~ Compassion ~ Discussion Questions

1. The definition of *compassion* in the dictionary is very short. It simply says that compassion means sympathetic consciousness of others' distress along with a desire to alleviate it. In your own words, what does it mean to you?
2. In what situations is it easy to be compassionate? When is it difficult? Why?
3. Read Luke 10:25-3. How would you describe the lawyer to whom Jesus told this story. Why do you think he wanted to "justify himself?"
4. How might we explain the religious professionals' (the priest and the Levite) lack of compassion for the beaten-up stranger?
5. It's easy to condemn the priest and Levite, but what if 300 people were gathered in a synagogue in the next town waiting for the priest and Levite to lead a service? And some of these people were hoping for spiritual healing from the priest.
6. Where do you suppose that the Samaritan got his compassion for the victim?
7. Jews of that day despised Samaritans (half-breed Jews who intermarried with pagans). So why do you think Jesus made the Samaritan the hero in this story?
8. According to this story, what does compassion look like?
9. The Bible has more than 90 specific references to compassion. Most Old Testament verses refer to the Lord's compassion toward his people and most New Testament version refer to Jesus' compassion on those in need. Here are a few:
 - A) The Lord will always have compassion on us. (2 Kings 13:23, Nehemiah 9:27, Psalm 103:13, Isaiah 54:8) Does the Lord expect something from us in return?
 - B) Jesus felt compassion to those in need. (Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34, Mark 6:34, 8:2, Luke 15:20, etc.)
 - C) Those who walk with the Lord will have compassion. (Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12-13, Philippians 2:1-2, 1 Peter 3:8)
 - D) Compassion fulfills the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)
10. Think of some people you know who are in need. Why are you compassionate to some of them and not to others? What tends to keep you and/or others from being compassionate to them?

Wisdom of the Bible ~ Compassion ~ Questions for Small Groups

1. Is it easier to be compassionate to A) a friend, B) a stranger or a neutral acquaintance or C) an enemy? How do you feel about being compassionate to a terrorist whose main objective in life is to kill Christians? (Proverbs 24:17-18, 2 Chronicles 28:15)

2. There are literally hundreds of Bible verses in which the compassion of God and Jesus is shown toward people who are sick, hungry, needy, and, indeed, to all of us (Psalm 116:5, James 5:11) and state that the Lord's compassion never fails (Lamentations 3:22). Are there any circumstances where the Lord will withhold or withdraw his compassion from us? (Jeremiah 15:6, Hosea 13:1-2, 14-16)

3. I think we can all agree that compassion (sympathy, mercy, pity, charity) is a good trait and one desired and honored by God. What are six opposite traits from compassion that we should try to rid ourselves of?

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| A. <u>Pitiless</u> | D. _____ |
| B. <u>Callous</u> | E. _____ |
| C. _____ | F. _____ |

4. Let's say that you notice a distinctly non-compassionate behavior in a friend who is clearly unaware of it. Would you point it out?

5. You're with your 12-year old son (or nephew) and see a disabled veteran asking for money. You'd like to teach your son about compassion, so you: A) give the vet \$5 setting an example for your son, B) give the vet \$5 and explain to your son why you're doing it, C) hand your son \$5 to give to the vet, D) Tell your son that you're going to give the vet \$5 and he should give him \$1 from his yard work earnings, E) tell your son that it's a disgrace for a vet to beg and walk on by.

6. There's a Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Keep it in mind. The truck of your unemployed and penniless son (or good friend) needs a new head gasket (a reasonable do-it-yourself job). A local garage wants \$2,800 for the repair. As a compassionate person, you A) give your son (or friend) money toward the repair, B) give him money toward taking a vo-tech course in auto repair, C) tell him to sell the truck and use public transportation until he gets a job.

7. Do you judge others by higher or lower standards than you use to judge yourself?

Wisdom of the Bible ~ Compassion ~ Scripture (Luke 10:25-37)

The Most Important Commandment

²⁵ One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?”

²⁷ The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”^[a]

²⁸ “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”

²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Parable of the Good Samaritan

³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

³¹ “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant^[b] walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins,^[c] telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

Footnotes:

- a. Luke 10:27 Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.
- b. Luke 10:32 Greek A Levite.
- c. Luke 10:35 Greek two denarii. A denarius was equivalent to a laborer’s full day’s wage.

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