

BECOMING A PERSON OF COMPASSION

Mark 1:40-45

Pastor Roy Halberg

→ Every follower of Jesus is expected to display Christ-like compassion for others

1. JESUS CONSISTENTLY _____ COMPASSION FOR ME

-I can see what it looks like...how it behaves...how it lives out in a life

Mt 14:14; 15:32; 20:29-39; Lk 7:11-16

2. GOD CONSISTENTLY _____ TO COMPASSION

A. Compassion is a _____ in the character of God (Ps 86:15, 111:4, 112:4, 145:8)

-He is "full of compassion/mercy/lovingkindness" (Ex 34:6; Ps 78:38; Lam 3:22)

B. Compassion is an _____ of the people of God

Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:8; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12

→ God doesn't call me to _____ compassion in others,

He calls me to _____ compassion in my life

SO WHAT?

HOW DO I CULTIVATE COMPASSION IN MY LIFE?

1. Admit my callous, cynical, indifference—my _____ -
2. Ask God to give you compassion and make you a _____
3. Soak your mind in scriptures about compassion-
(Lk 7:11-16; 10:33-34; Jms 1:27; 1Jn 3:17)
4. Learn to see People _____ . . . He saw them as they really are (Mt 9:36)
5. Find contemporary models to emulate: who is your _____?
6. See _____ as opportunities for you to learn greater compassion
for others (2 Cor 1:3-7)
7. Pray with people as well as for them

NOW WHAT?

1. Take a Personal inventory
 - A. Am I truly grateful for the _____?
 - B. Do I reflect _____ from my life to others?
 - C. Who has God placed near me that I can _____?
2. Take Action . . . compassion is an action word . . . it begins _____ but moves quickly to _____ . . .
3. Pray: confess lack of compassion, ask for compassion, & commit to steps of obedience
4. Try it: Ask someone this week, "How can I pray for you?"

Ask People How You Can Pray for Them

Excerpted from Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*

Over and over I've seen one simple question open people's hearts to hear the gospel.

Until I asked this question, they showed no interest in spiritual matters. But then after six words—only seventeen letters in English—I've seen people suddenly begin to weep and their resistance fall. The question is, "How can I pray for you?"

This may not seem like such a powerful question to you. Perhaps that's because you hear it, or a question like it, quite often. Your Bible study group or your church prayer meeting asks for prayer requests every week. You may even see requests for prayer solicited each Sunday morning in the worship bulletin.

But realize that most people in the world *never* hear such a question. And while many churchgoers know that a pastor is willing to pray for them, in some traditions they're expected to make a special donation to the church for such services. So when you ask, "How can I pray for you?" and it's obvious that you're asking out of love alone, it can touch a person more deeply than you imagine.

This question is similar to one that Jesus Himself sometimes asked: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Matthew 20:32). For what we are really asking is, "What do you want me to ask Jesus to do for you?" And by means of this question, we can show the love of Christ to people and open hearts previously closed to the gospel.

I had tried to talk about the things of God many times to a business-hardened, retired executive who lived next door. He was a pro at hiding his feelings and keeping conversations at a superficial level. But the day we stood between our homes and I asked, "How can I pray for you?" his eyes filled with tears as his façade of self-sufficiency melted. For the first time in seven years he let me speak with him about Jesus.

It's a short, easily remembered question. You can use it with longtime friends or with people you've just met. It doesn't seem too personal or pushy for those who'd rather give you a shallow answer just now, and yet it often leads to a full hearing of the gospel. You can ask it of people nearly every time you speak with them and it doesn't get old. Just simply and sincerely ask, "How can I pray for you?" You'll be surprised at the results.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care