

Choosing Compassion When You Feel Cold

"What's On Your Mind?" series- Part 02

Use the next few minutes to connect and fellowship with other members of the group by discussing the following: What brings out the best in you?

Let's get on the same page -

In Matthew 20, we have the story of the two blind men who kept crying out to Jesus. Those in the crowd around them tried to shut them up. Their emotional response to these men was embarrassment, aggravation, and perhaps anger. Jesus, on the other hand, "felt sorry for them" and despite the opposition from the crowd, He healed them. The Greek verb translated as "felt sorry for" means "to have compassion for." It's related to a noun meaning "internal organs or guts." We might paraphrase as "Jesus' heart was moved." When He heard the desperate cries of the blind men, He sensed their pain, felt drawn to them, and He acted.

The crowd on that day represents many of our reactions today when we observe people in desperate situations. Instead of choosing compassion, we are emotionally moved toward blaming the hurting, discounting the need, assigning others the responsibility, and ultimately, inactivity!

Can you recount a time when you felt a prompting to help or assist someone, and yet found yourself excusing yourself from acting? Reflecting on that moment today, what did you need to help you to choose compassion and commit an act of kindness?

In our study today, let's look at the instructions that the Apostle Paul gave to the Christians at Rome on how to choose compassion...how not to pretend to love others, but really love them.

Book: Romans 12:9-21

Rom 12:9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

Rom 12:10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Rom 12:11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.

Rom 12:12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.

Rom 12:13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.

Rom 12:15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

Rom 12:16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

Rom 12:17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

Rom 12:18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Rom 12:19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

Rom 12:20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Rom 12:21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Let's get into the Word:

How might a Christian use the second part of verse 9 to convince themselves to choose judgment rather than compassion toward others who are hurting?

From the Scriptures above, make a list of the "Do's" and the "Do Not's" that reflect true love and compassion:

Do's	Do Not's

When we act with compassion, those we have helped are the beneficiary. Yet many who have chosen compassion have given testimony that they too have been greatly blessed. Please look at verses 19-21 and identify three blessings that are ours when we choose loving compassion:

Verse 19:

Verse 20:

Verse 21:

Let's make it personal:

What are the needs in your local community that could benefit from Christian compassion?

What are some concrete actions you can take to exercise compassion that is active and not just emotive?