
Words of Truth

Having Compassion One Of Another

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The English word “compassion” means: “sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Compassion “συμπαθής”, as it is used in one Scripture we will soon talk about, means: “having a fellow-feeling (“sympathetic”), i.e. (by implication) mutually commiserative: — having compassion one of another. Suffering or feeling the like with another, sympathetic” (Strong’s # 4835).

Compassion is a word you read throughout the King James Version in both the Old and New Testaments. The word “compassion” first appears in Exodus 2:6 when the daughter of Pharaoh found the baby Moses and had compassion on him. The word “compassion” appears in the Scriptures various times talking about the compassion of God for His people (Deuteronomy 13:17, Deuteronomy 30:3, I Kings 8:50, II Kings 13:23, II Chronicles 30:9, II Chronicles 36:15, Psalms 78:38, Isaiah 49:15, Jeremiah 12:15, Lamentations 3:32, and Micah 7:19). Saul perceived that the Ziphites had compassion on him when they revealed David’s location to Saul (I Samuel 23:15-22). The king of the Chaldeans had no compassion for the captives of Israel neither did other nations (II Chronicles 36:17 and Ezekiel 16:1-5).

Jesus has compassion and it is evident through His actions (Matthew 9:35-38, Matthew 14:13-21, Matthew 15:29-39, Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 7:11-17, and Hebrews 4:14-5:10). The fact is, compassion is a character trait of our Lord. Notice: *“But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth... He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion... Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous... The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy”* (Psalms 86:15, Psalms 111:4, Psalms 112:4, and Psalms 145:8).

All of us who are in Christ understand that we are to follow [imitate] our Heavenly Father (Matthew 5:48, Ephesians 5:1, and I Peter 1:13-16) and our Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:21-22 and I John 2:3-6). We have read that both our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ are compassionate. That alone should tell us we need to have proper compassion patterned after our Father and our Savior. In addition to that though, we are also told to have compassion one of another. It is an important instruction for it ties to various other things expected of us and how we relate to our brethren in specific. Therefore, we are going to have a brief study of the compassion we need to have towards our brethren.

Compassion Towards Each Other

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (I Peter 3:8). The word translated “compassion” in this Scripture was defined in the first paragraph of this article. The definition of this word is seen in certain instructions we read in the New Testament. For example, last week’s article referenced Romans 12:15 in teaching us that we need to be able to rejoice or weep with our brethren. Without compassion, you will not be able to fulfill that instruction. Without compassion, your efforts to share in the emotional times of joy or struggle with our like-minded brethren will really just be fake.

Compassion is a key component to our working together as Christians in the body of Christ. How can you work to help each other if you cannot show compassion one for another. If a brother errs, properly confesses and repents (Proverbs 28:13, Luke 17:3-4, Acts 26:20, etc.). The Scriptures teach we must forgive him or her (Matthew 6:14-15, Ephesians 4:32, and Colossians 3:13). Forgiveness requires compassion (Matthew 18:15-35). How can you forgive if you have no compassion for your brethren?

Take a few moments and think about how the inner workings of the body of Christ require you to be capable of compassion (i.e. I Corinthians 12:14-27). Hopefully you read the Scriptures I just referenced. Think about them. Without compassion how can you have “the same care for one another?” How would you do something such as recognize and help a needy saint (I John 3:14-18) if you lack compassion? Helping someone in true need requires compassion (Luke 10:25-37).

If you struggle with compassion, you have to find a way to begin truly learning compassion. While there is no “blanket answer” for this as all people are different and many need taught different things. Let’s consider a starting point that would apply to most.

Where To Start In Showing Compassion

As saints, we have to be able to put others before ourselves (Romans 12:10 and Galatians 5:13). You can learn this by carefully studying our Savior (Philippians 2:3-8). We cannot be faithful Christians if we are selfish (Acts 20:35, Romans 15:1-3, I Corinthians 10:24-33, and James 2:8).

Conclusion

This is not a complete study of compassion. It should however give you much “food for thought” (so to speak). Examine yourself (II Corinthians 13:5). Do you have the ability to be compassionate? Do you show compassion? If not, REPENT for such is expected of you.