

BECKY COMBEE MINISTRIES, INC.



Called To Compassion

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I remember as a child we seldom locked our front door. Sometimes, when we were not home, one of the neighbor kids would go in our house and help himself to gum and candy. He also found it funny to turn our lights off at the panel box. This is a surprise, I suppose, but it was okay back then.

As my mother aged, she frequently locked herself out of the house. One day she called me from a neighbor's house to come let her in. By the time I got there, though, the neighbor had taken Mom's front door off the hinges. Yes, that was okay, too. My, how times have changed!

My father always depended on his neighbors to help him. When his water heater did not run, he called a neighbor who promptly came to see if he could fix it. One day, I was talking to a neighbor's son, and he told me that he had bought Daddy a new coffee pot. Apparently, Dad was sure the kitchen electrical plug did not work, but as the neighbor's son examined the electrical connection, he discovered that coffee pot had actually died. Dad was sure it was an electrical issue, so, unknown to him, the neighbor replaced the coffee pot, fixing the problem for good. This was also okay!

It was startling when I realized neighbors no longer helped each other. Over time, the "good old boys" system was dismantled and replaced by

"every man for himself." Today, when someone who is especially compassionate arrives on the scene, we single them out as a special gift from God. Although it may be true that God sent them, the Kingdom of God is not divided into those gifted with compassion and those who have not been given that responsibility. Each of us must have compassion on our neighbor!

I love the writings of First John on love and compassion. He says, "*Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.*"¹ Every

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Christian is given the seed of God's love ² when he is born again. Of course, this love must grow, and it grows as we allow God's love to dominate our lives. When God's love leads us, compassion is evident.

Compassion can be defined as "love in action."³ According to the dictionary, it is pity coupled with an urgent desire to aid or to spare. Pity is the ability to feel another's suffering. It is similar to sympathy, which is the power to enter into another's emotional experience. Pity and

Paid In Full

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I pay my bills online, and the payment screen always gives at least 3 choices - minimum amount due, the total owed on the account, and other.

Jesus paid all we owed. He cleared all the accumulated debt on the account, every balance transfer, every late payment, all the interest. He wiped the slate clean.

We owed it to a thief. The thief didn't care about the dollars. He wasn't really interested in us paying off the debt. He wanted to hold it over us forever. But Jesus satisfied the debt and destroyed the power of the thief.

Our only debt now is to love one another.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Rm 13:8)

References: Jn 10:10; Heb 2:14

(Continued from "Called To Compassion")

sympathy are explained by the Scripture, "Weep with them that weep."⁴ But COMPASSION is so much more than understanding how you feel. Compassion always asks, "What can I do for you?"

Compassion is more than being a nice person. It overwhelms our heart with an urgency to help and rescue. There is no better example than the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. On the road to Jericho, a man was robbed, beaten, and left for dead. A priest and a Levite saw him but did not stop to help. A Samaritan passed by, stopped and administered aid, and took him to an inn. He left him at the inn with instructions to take care of him.

The interesting thing about this act of compassion or mercy is the reason that Jesus told it. Jesus was talking to a lawyer about loving your neighbor when the lawyer asked Him, "Who is my neighbor?" After Jesus told the story of the Samaritan, the answer was obvious. Someone who loves their neighbor is merciful. Why is this? Compassion is birthed by love.

Compassion is an essential ingredient of love. Just as you cannot have apple pie without apples, or custard without eggs, you cannot experience the fullness of God's love without compassion. Love is compassionate! Again, we face the question posed by the Spirit in First John. If one is not compassionate, "*How dwelleth the love of God in him?*"

Compassion is an idea given by the Spirit. It is more than a random concept or a grasping-at-straws idea because "I feel I must do something." God always leads! Oh, I know that some acts of compassion are obvious. The Holy Spirit does not have to speak too loudly to encourage a gentleman to change a lady's flat tire or to encourage you to carry a pot of soup to a sick neighbor. But there are times when we don't know what to do. We gladly turn to the Father of mercies⁵ and capture His idea. We are His representative on the earth, walking in His will, sharing His compassionate heart with others.

Jesus revealed the Father's compassionate heart. When He healed the sick, it was an act of the Father's compassion.⁶ When He fed the multitudes, it reflected the mercy of God.⁷ He raised the widow's son from death because He carried the

Can godly compassion be seen in me?

compassion of His Father.⁸ Jesus was the visible image of the invisible God.⁹ So much so, that Jesus said to Philip, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"¹⁰

Now I must ask, "Can godly compassion be seen in us? Can it be seen in me?" Godly compassion makes me a good listener, a sympathetic correspondent, the queen of casseroles, and an available taxi. It often opens the door to the healing hand of God and a bold gospel message to someone in need of Jesus.

Can I do better? Yes! Can you?

¹Jn 3:17 ²Rm 5:5 ³F.F. Bosworth ⁴Rm 12:15 ⁵2Co 1:3
⁶Mt 14:14; Mt 20:34; Mk 1:41 ⁷Mk 8:2 ⁸Lk 7:13 ⁹Col
1:15 ¹⁰Jn 14:9