



COMPASSION: 30 DAYS OF HEARTWORK DAILY DEVOTIONAL

# DAILY DEVO WEEK THREE

COMPASSION



HEARTWORK

## Day 16

### Co-Suffering With Christ

Romans 8:16, 17 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

#### HEART //

How incredible it is that God would call us His children! Because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, God has brought us into His family and promised us true life in Him. As family, we have the privilege of sharing in the good and the bad, the glory of God, and in His sufferings. As we focus on living compassionately this week, let’s take a better look at what it actually means.

The original meaning of the word “compassion” means to “suffer with” one another. How are we called to “suffer with” Jesus? Well, let’s think about it this way: To love our neighbor as ourselves means that we are open to feeling what they feel and are willing to put ourselves in their place. This leads us to experience a deep passion to alleviate any suffering they may be experiencing. It leads us to *care*. Don’t you think God’s heart must break as He feels the suffering of His children who are enslaved by things like poverty, fear and the pursuit of worldly pleasures? How often do we allow our hearts to be touched by the suffering of our fellow humans?

We are God’s children, and He has given us everything we need to be His hands and feet to those who are suffering around us. We become more like God when we engage our hearts with His and we begin to care about the people He cares about. When we follow in His footsteps, our lives can get a little out of the ordinary, but isn’t that what being a Christian is all about? Putting others first doesn’t always mean selling everything and moving to a poverty-stricken community. But we must know that when we open our hearts and begin caring about the vulnerable people in our world, things will begin to look different ... and for most of us in modern, affluent churches, “different” could be a very good thing.

#### WORK //

Think about this: Worldwide more than 3 million children die from malnutrition each year.\* About one out of every nine people worldwide suffer from hunger, and one in three are malnourished.\*\* Most children living in poverty get to eat only one meal each day, which is often a small portion of beans and rice. **Take on the challenge of eating beans and rice this week — for lunch each day, for an entire day, or for the whole week!** As you eat, think about what it would be like to eat that for every meal and have barely enough to survive.

For your journal: Are you willing to suffer with Jesus even if it means that you may experience uncomfortable conversations or circumstances?

\*[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

\*\*[www.compassion.com/Stats](http://www.compassion.com/Stats)

## Day 17

### *Touching the Need*

Mark 1:40-42 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

#### **HEART //**

Having compassion means we don’t only see the need, compassion means we *touch* the need. All throughout Scripture the thing that always caught Jesus’ attention was another human being in need. Not only did He see the needs of those around Him, but He was willing to act on their behalf.

During the time Jesus walked on the earth, it would have been considered “defilement,” almost like polluting or contaminating Himself, to touch a person with leprosy. But Jesus cared more for the man than He did about what the culture said was right or what people would think about Him. He lovingly engaged in the suffering the man was facing — and touched and healed him.

It is often too easy for us to close our eyes to the needs of the people around us because we are so concerned with ourselves and what others may think of us. Jesus asks us to love one another as we love ourselves, and says that the world will know we are His disciples by the way we love one another (John 13:35). What does the world see when they look at our lives? When we stop and remember how healing, comforting, and good God’s love has been to us, it’s not hard to want to share that love with others.

#### **WORK //**

Let’s keep our eyes open for opportunities to show the world what God’s love looks like. Dr. Wess Stafford, president emeritus of Compassion International, once said, “It all begins, I maintain, with that powerful and underutilized thing called love. God’s love for the individual is displayed by those people who reflect His love in their words and deeds. It ultimately gets understood and accepted by the child in poverty, and through that individual’s love for others, the world gets changed.”

Think about those without a family, without a home, who face injustice, and who are not always shown dignity. Refugees of war, those caught in a cycle of poverty, children with special needs living in countries that don’t value them, for instance. **Find 15 minutes today to spend in complete silence to empathize with children who have no one speaking up for them or comforting them today.**

For your journal: Have you ever had a situation where you’ve felt like someone really cared about you more than they cared about how they looked to others? How did that feel?

Check out this video about a young person named Elizabeth whose life has been changed as she has made personal sacrifices to sponsor a girl living in poverty. Find video at [Compassion.com/Elizabeth/](http://Compassion.com/Elizabeth/).

## Day 18

### *Generosity for All*

Lamentations 3:21-23 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

#### **HEART //**

Where there is much poverty and despair, there is even more hope and generosity.

Clarice, Aira, Kate and Mary Ann are a part of Compassion International's child sponsorship program in Masbate, Philippines. Despite being born into poverty, they learned about the love of God and received hope and resources through sponsorship. Their lives have been transformed, and they want to give back and help others in need.

These teenagers have decided to use their resources to serve by teaching and feeding children in their community. They gather other teenagers to travel to a nearby fishing community to serve children in poverty. They share the gospel, teach songs about God, play games and give out food. By partnering with a local church, the teenagers have the resources to lead a generous, much-needed ministry.

Clarice, Aira, Kate and Mary Ann find incredible joy by giving back to their community. Being in leadership sometimes feels nerve-racking, but Mary Ann explains, "Teaching kids is a privilege." Through this ministry, the teenagers have discovered God's calling for generosity on their own lives and futures.

Even though the teenagers in Masbate live in poverty, they cannot wait to give back to their community. "I don't really consider this giving back," said Clarice. "We feel we are simply giving what these children need, and what God wants us to do for them." They have received generosity, and they want to give generosity in return. What a beautiful reflection of the love and sacrifice of God.

The reality of compassion and generosity isn't just that the rich need to give to help the poor. It's that Christians need to be like their Father and live with relentless compassion. We are to do what our Father does. Even the poorest and youngest Christians are called to give and love generously. Mark 12:42-43 describes a poor widow who gave "more than all the others" in Jesus' opinion, with the few cents she was able to sacrifice. With selfless generosity comes indescribable joy.

#### **WORK //**

**Today, make a list of a few gifts or skills God has given you.** Ask Him to show you how you could use those gifts to be His hands and feet to your community and to the world. You may not realize how your gift of music, art, building, hospitality or conversation (to name just a few!) could touch someone's life. But God does! Ask Him and He will show you!

What is one area where you feel like you have very little to give but you could offer even a small amount to God as a gift of faith and love?

## Day 19

### Love as Brothers

Hebrews 13:1-3 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

#### HEART //

One day a Kenyan woman was out gathering twigs when she heard crying coming from a bush. She soon discovered a newborn baby wrapped up and left to die. She ran into town and brought a woman named Nasdine from the community to help. When Nasdine saw the newborn baby crying, hungry and alone, her heart broke and she knew what she had to do.

Nasdine took the baby into her own home. She, along with the community elders, tried to find the baby's parents, but they never did. So Nasdine adopted the baby as her own child. She named the baby Lenkai, which means "God's son."

Raising Lenkai was not exactly convenient for Nasdine. She lived in poverty and struggled to get the necessary resources to raise a child. She was looked down upon as an unmarried woman with a child. But Nasdine saw the need of a child and joyfully sacrificed her own comforts in order to love and care for him. "I believe it is the responsibility of society to take care of children who are abandoned. We should all strive to help, no matter how little you have," Nasdine said. She truly sees Lenkai as God's good gift to her. He is a reflection of hope. And he has hope for the future because a woman chose his well-being over her own. Lenkai is now enrolled in his local Compassion International program where caring staff come alongside Nasdine to ensure he is known, loved and protected — all in the name of Jesus.

Try to imagine what it would be like to be born an orphan. Now, imagine if someone like Nasdine loved you enough to make personal sacrifices in order to take care of your needs. Think of how your life would change if you heard the love and hope of Jesus! There are people in our schools, our cities and around the world who need a word of encouragement, a meal or a listening ear today. May we show true compassion and use the gifts, talents and resources that God has given each of us to care for those who are suffering. Let us be people who love like Jesus does and refuse to ignore our brothers and sisters in need.

#### WORK //

Globally, at least 2 billion people use a drinking-water source contaminated with faeces. In 2014, 61 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school. In 2016, 5.6 million children died before reaching their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable diseases.\* As Christians, these facts should move us to compassion and loving action.

**If you sponsor a child, do a little research today to find out about the nation and community he or she lives in.** Where do they live? How do they live?

Now, take action! **Learn about the needs of people in your own community who are in need of love, and find a simple way to help.** Maybe you can volunteer at a soup kitchen, write letters to kids who are in the hospital or donate clothes to your local homeless shelter. There are so many ways we can serve the materially poor, and the poor in spirit, both globally and locally. Cultivating the desire to serve in one area often leads to another. Of course, we can't (and should not try!) to do it all. But learning about the needs, praying and trusting God to lead your family in how to serve is a great place to start!

\* <https://www.compassion.com/Stats>

## Day 20

### *Knowing God by Living Like Him*

Jeremiah 22:16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know Me? declares the Lord.

#### **HEART //**

At this point in the book of Jeremiah, God stepped in and spoke to the kings who were leading the nation of Judah. He rebuked them for how they were neglecting and even oppressing some of the people. The current king was building his own kingdom and palace by unrighteous and unjust acts. God saw the needs of His people and desired to set things right. He commanded the king to make justice and righteousness a priority in leading the nation. In fact, God said that defending the cause of those who are poor and in need is ultimately what it means to know Him.

To truly know God is to know what He is like and what things He cares about. His heart is compassionate toward those who are in need, and He talks about loving the poor all throughout Scripture. He sees their needs and rescues them. Therefore, our faith requires action. Because we believe in an all-powerful, compassionate God, we must serve the poor and oppressed.

The issues of poverty and injustice in our world are deep and complex. It will take generations of change to make a dent in the issues at large. But there is a choice each one of us can make only for ourselves. We can choose to make caring for the poor a priority in our own lives by becoming educated on the issues in our world, being willing to change our ways, and living simple lives that are marked by action.

In his book “Crazy Love,” Francis Chan addresses this issue in our modern church. He states, “The concept of downsizing so that others might upgrade is biblical, beautiful, and nearly unheard of. We either close the gap or don’t take the words of the Bible literally.” We, as Christians, must be willing to step outside of the norms of our society and ask God honestly, “How can I best serve Your Kingdom?” We must understand the needs of our world and live out our faith through action. There is so much we can do!

#### **WORK //**

**How much of you (your money spent, plus time in activity AND thinking about the activity) is spent on your clothes or your entertainment (you know whichever is more of a vice for you!). Try to calculate time and cost per week, then multiply it by 52 to think about the whole year.** When you’re finished, answer this question: Are you at peace with the amount being spent in this way, or should you rethink it?

There is nothing wrong with spending money on clothes, food and entertainment, but how much of yourself is being spent in search of popularity, escaping reality or just plain boredom? Ask the Lord to search your heart and help you understand the difference between things you “need” and things you “want.”

## Day 21

### Loving God by Loving People

Matthew 25:31-46 When the Son of Man comes ... he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another... Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'When did we [do that]?' ... 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these ... you did for me.'

#### HEART //

When Hannah was in ninth grade, her heart broke for children in poverty. Hannah's family sponsored a girl from Ethiopia named Ruth. Hannah and Ruth exchanged letters through Compassion International. One day Hannah learned that Ruth's house was made of sticks, hay and dirt and that Ruth's family did not have electricity. Hannah was heartbroken by Ruth's living conditions, and she knew she had to do something about it. So she got to work.

Hannah loved science and engineering. She soon discovered she could use this passion to help others around the world. Hannah invented a renewable-energy device that converted energy into a source of electricity. With this invention, Hannah won first place at the 2015 Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge. Her device worked, and with some refinement, it could provide electricity for families in poverty around the world.

But Hannah's generosity did not stop there. She decided to give \$3,000 of the winnings from the Young Scientist Challenge to her family's two sponsored children, Ruth and Daniel, and to Compassion International's Christmas Gift Fund. Because of this donation, Ruth and her family received medical care, clothes, shoes, blankets and supplies for their home.

Not only did Hannah use her God-given talents and passions to come up with a solution for the lack of electricity for people in poverty, but she also generously sacrificed a portion of her reward to help children in poverty. Even though Hannah was young, she made a huge impact. As young people, it's easy to feel that our contribution can't really make a difference, but that is simply not true. No matter our age, we can ask God what our part is to love people who are in need. He will give us the wisdom, strength and gifts we need to do our part.

#### WORK //

God has uniquely designed you to participate in His Kingdom coming to this world. He's given you creativity, the ability to work hard, and the resources (even if they're small!) to be a generous giver. Ask Him to teach you how to use those things to join Him in His plan.

**Today, make a plan to gather with friends or family to pray together.** Do a little research before your meeting about issues aligned with your passions and gifts. God is still at work in the lives of the vulnerable and needy! What are a few things you and your community can do throughout *Compassion: 30 Days of Heartwork* to raise money to aid in Compassion International's efforts

around the world? Is your Heartwork jar being filled? **For the rest of these 30 days, challenge yourself to set aside a little bit of money *each day***, giving up something you would normally spend on, so that you can give your best gift to your sponsored child's family at the end of this journey. If you don't sponsor a child, set money aside to provide access to a Safe Water Well for a community in need.

Learn more about a Family Gift : [Compassion.com/SpendYourself](https://www.compassion.com/SpendYourself)

Learn more about a Safe Water Well: [Compassion.com/Give30Days](https://www.compassion.com/Give30Days)

## Day 22

### God's Rescue Strategy

Psalm 82:3-4 Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

#### HEART //

In this world, the wealthy, powerful and privileged are honored and esteemed. In God's Kingdom, it is exactly opposite. Over and over again in Scripture, God reminds His followers to honor and defend the weak and most vulnerable people in their world. He sees their suffering every day, and His heart is full of compassion for them.

Those who cannot fight or speak for themselves, those who seem to be nothing in this world, are special in His sight. Jesus urged us to treat our hungry and needy neighbors as royalty. He told us that what we do to the "least of these" we are doing to Him!

As Christians, we are the hands and feet of Jesus. We are to take what was purchased on the cross — the nature of Jesus Christ — and help transplant it into the hearts of people here on Earth. We are to behave not like this world, but like Jesus. ... When the world sees us, we are to look different because we are from another realm, a noble, brave and selfless realm that teaches us to spend ourselves for the weak.

Psalm 140:12 says that God secures justice for the poor and upholds their cause, but Psalm 82 calls us in to do the work. He secures that justice through us. We are to defend the weak and the fatherless. We are to uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. We are to rescue the weak and the needy, to deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

He calls us out of indifference. In selfishness, we want to separate our hearts and our lives from the brokenness around us, but God calls us to see people and then to take what we see and meet it with compassionate action. God so loved the world that He GAVE (John 3:16). When we call ourselves by His name we are called to do the same.

#### WORK //

Are you so sick of beans and rice yet? Isn't it starting to sink in what it would be like if that was your ONLY option? It's heartbreaking to realize this is reality for so many in our world.

**Today, as we wrap up our week on Compassion, write down your thoughts about your beans and rice experience and make a plan to serve at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter in your area or take a meal to a shut-in, if possible, sometime next week as we focus on Mission!**

Take a few minutes to think of yourself as the child of God you are: noble, brave and selfless. How could that perspective affect the way you treat others?