

TALKING POINTS

STRETCH - COMPASSION

LEANING IN

Compassion is a deep awareness of the suffering of another with the desire to take action. Unfortunately, we live in an age where we have forgotten to be compassionate to one another.

To act with compassion is to represent the very character of God - to love the way Jesus loves. When God revealed Himself to Moses, He revealed Himself as the God of compassion. Jesus constantly acted with compassion towards the scattered, the sinning, the sick and the suffering.

Compassion is incredibly powerful because we can see it when it's being practiced. Compassion stands out like a beacon in a world where it is largely absent. It has the power to transform lives, and Jesus is the living example of it. We are called to do the same.

Read Exodus 34:6, Matthew 9:35-36

Can you share a time when you saw an act of compassion which powerfully impacted you?

LIVING IT OUT

Since compassion reflects the very heart of Jesus, it would do us well to imitate Christ by practicing compassion ourselves. Here are four decisions you can make to cultivate compassion in your life:

Be Dangerous, Not Safe - to exercise compassion, you have to *risk* entering into someone else's life and coming alongside them in their suffering.

Read Matthew 8:1-3

Have you ever had fear keep you from showing compassion towards someone?

Be Real, Not Religious - religious acts are often done to *impress* either God or someone else. Acts of compassion are often done in secret, and always for the *good* of others.

Read Matthew 6:1-4

What does "real" compassion look like?

Be Intentional, Not Rushed - sometimes we're so rushed doing the things we think we *have* to do, we overlook slowing down and doing the things we *should* do (like showing compassion).

Read Luke 18:35-43

How does the speed of our lives negatively affect our ability to be compassionate?

Act, Don't Delay - it's not enough to just *feel* compassion, we are called to *act* on it. Compassion is something we *do* when the opportunity presents itself.

Read Proverbs 3:27-28

Is there someone in your life you need to show compassion to *right now*?