

WHEN COMPASSION MEETS ACTION

This study guide will help us turn what God is saying to us into action steps. The questions and scriptures are here to help us take our "Next Steps." Have a great discussion!

PRAYER & ICEBREAKER

Have you ever been blessed by someone who was a complete stranger? How did that make you feel? Share with your group. (i.e. The car before me in the drive thru paid for my meal, a stranger complimented me on something I was feeling insecure about, etc.)

READ

Throughout history and all throughout the Bible, we're able to study the many attributes of God. On many accounts we see that He's powerful and He's wise. God is creative, all knowing, and He even has a sense of humor. But perhaps one of His greatest attributes, the thing that allows us to connect and have a relationship with Him is His *heart*. Although He is an omnipotent and almighty God, He is truly a loving Father who possesses a heart filled with deep compassion for His children. The following Psalm describes Him well.

"Sing to God, sing in praise of His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before Him – His name is the Lord. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling." (Psalm 68:4-5)

DISCUSSION

If God, the One who created the universe and all that exists within has a heart of compassion and cares for orphans and widows, then surely we can aim to possess that same heart!

Can you think of a time when you were able to bless someone who was less fortunate than you? Share your experience with your group.

READ

If you have access to hot water, motorized transportation, and warm meals everyday, then you have more wealth than over half of the entire world. Living in a society where the constant pursuit of more wealth has become a driving force, we can easily become blinded to the issues that truly matter most. It's important that we develop a habit of asking ourselves, "What should I be concerned about?"

John Ortberg, a well-known Christian author, said it best in this quote that perfectly puts into perspective what truly matters and what doesn't:

"We all have problems. You can have a big problem or you can have a small problem. A small problem is 'How do I be more successful?,' 'How do I get better looking?,' or 'How do I grow my 401(k)?' A big problem is 'How do I join Jesus in saving the world?'"

DISCUSSION

Would you say that you spend more time thinking about worldly success or ways that you can do work for the Kingdom? Share with your group.

READ

It's true, God has called us to join him in saving this fallen world. So how can we achieve this? Some would argue that we must simply have faith that God will do that work. Let's see what God's Word says:

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:14-17)

In this passage we see a clearly painted picture that God wants us to put *action* to our faith. Rather than people who speak about God's goodness, He wants us to be His hands and feet, a people who minister His goodness to others in a tangible way.

Compassion International is a Christian humanitarian aid child sponsorship organization dedicated to the long-term development of children living in poverty around the world. New Hope Windward has been partnering with this organization for the past several years in efforts to minister God's love and goodness to children in these areas of poverty.

Sponsoring one of these children is a great opportunity to apply action to our faith as mentioned in James 2. More information can be found at www.compassion.com. You may also visit Guest Services at New Hope Windward services on Sunday for more information.



REFLECTING GOD'S HEART

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

God saw a dire need in the world and He did something about it when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we could experience everlasting life. Just as He committed a selfless act of love on our behalf, God wants us to follow His lead in doing the same for the sake of His Kingdom here on earth.