



SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD

Compassion: The Heartbeat of God

Life Reference: Jude 22-23

Focus Verse:

“And of some have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 22).

From the time we were little, bedtime stories filled our heads with handsome princes who searched until they found a beautiful princess. We bought into the idea very early that someone someday would seek us out too. As we matured, the novels we read became slightly more mature versions of those little girl bedtime stories. To be sought after was a recurring theme.

Most children who have been abandoned dream of being located by their parents. “My daughter, it was all a mistake. We’ve searched for you for years. We love you. We’ve come to take you home.”



The rest of us dream of being sought after too. Many long to be loved or simply included. Others fantasize about being famous, having their talents and abilities discovered.

The Bible tells a story of one man sought out by Jesus. The soft slap of leather against sun-baked earth echoed as Christ walked the shores of Galilee. First He called Peter and his brother, Andrew: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18-19). Then He beckoned James, John, and the others.



© 2010

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com

It seemed that Jesus simply reached out to those in His path except for one. Philip. The Scriptures stated that He "findeth Philip" (John 1:43). This simple statement implies that Jesus went out of His way to locate this particular man. Why was Philip special?

Life Reflection:

Is there a longing in my heart to be sought after?

Do I possess the qualities God is seeking?

Philip's response to Christ's statement, "Follow me," provides our first clue to his character. Philip was not content to just follow Christ himself; he felt compelled to bring someone else with him. He ran and found his friend, Nathanael.

Ecstatic, he proclaimed, "We have found him!" Nathanael was not convinced Philip had found the Messiah. However, Philip was not easily deterred. "Come and see." (See John 1:45-50.) He used his influence to sway his friend.

Philip had a heartbeat to bring others to Jesus. Was this the unique characteristic Jesus found so compelling about Philip?

Life Reflection:

Do I share Philip's desire to introduce others to the Lord?

At one particular feast a group of Greeks had come to worship. They approached Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:20-22). Philip facilitated their request.



These men did not approach the disciple who would one day preach on the day of Pentecost. Nor did they select the disciple who described himself as “the one whom Jesus loved.” If they had petitioned the disciples who attempted to turn away the children who had been brought to Jesus to be blessed, they perhaps would have been turned away.

Peter, James, and John may have been more visible with the miracles, signs, and wonders they performed, but it was an obscure disciple, Philip, they approached. Philip did not rebuke them and send them away. He was not too busy to take time for their needs.

Philip’s compassion for others prompted Him to go into Samaria, an area most Jews avoided. The Samaritans were only half Jew, and most Jews considered them inferior. Yet Philip traveled to Samaria and preached Jesus. God confirmed His Word with many conversions. Others were healed and delivered. (See Acts 8:5-8.)

Life Reflection:

Am I willing to step outside my comfort zone, so others can hear the gospel?

Philip was not only compassionate but obedient. One day an angel of the Lord told him to arise and go, and he arose and went. Again, the destination was not ideal. It was into a dry, desolate desert. The location, however, was unimportant. It soon became apparent why he had been sent. A man from Ethiopia sat in his chariot reading E-sa’-ias the prophet. The Spirit of the Lord prompted Philip to join this man, and Philip did. “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The Ethiopian man was converted. (See Acts 8:26-40).

Philip was caught away to another place, and there is no mention of him ever seeing this man again. He had no idea the far reaching impact of his conversion. His actions echo through time. Millions of Ethiopians have received the Holy Spirit since that day. Is it possible that Philip’s convert precipitated the onslaught of revival that followed in that country?



Life Reflection:

Am I willing to stop what I am doing for one person?

How sensitive am I to the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

Life Response:

Cultivating a heart of compassion is a decision. We daily choose our priorities, focus, and how we spend our time. God recognizes any effort we make to reach out to people—to love people. God is in the people business. If we want to be involved in the work of the Lord, we have no option but to be in the people business too.

It must have been Philip's love for people—his compassion—his heartbeat for the lost that identified with the priorities of the Lord. Stories of Jesus' compassion fill the four gospels. "And Jesus, moved with compassion," (Mark 1:41) healed, touched, lifted, encouraged, and restored those He met. His love for lost, grieving, hurting humanity prompted Him to go to great lengths to touch their lives.

Life Reflection:

Is compassion a quality I can develop?

While some people have a natural inclination to interact with people, all of us can choose to develop the skills we need to make us effective in the kingdom of God. The little lad who gave Jesus his lunch is a good example. He had little, yet he gave what he had to the Lord. Jesus gave thanks, distributed it, and fed the entire multitude. (See John 6:1-14.) We may perceive our abilities, talents, and gifts as limited, but when we commit our willing heart to God, He can take our availability and provide the ability we may lack.



When we allow God to use us, our willingness to serve, minister, and love those for whom He died, gets His attention. He is searching for hearts of compassion and those who love others enough to do whatever it takes to see the lost won. He is searching—seeking— longing for someone who cares.

Stop for a moment. Look at your hands. Look at your feet. They are God’s hands and feet in this world. He has none except ours.

All around us today are men, women, boys, and girls who in their own way are saying, “We would see Jesus!” Are you a Philip? Will you introduce them to the Master?

My Prayer:

Lord, give me a spirit of compassion that that I may touch others with Your love. Remind me each day that there are many who long for more in life but do not know how to find true fulfillment that comes from You alone. Make me sensitive to the needs of others and allow me to love them as You love them.

More Life with God References:

Psalm 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8
Zechariah 7:9
Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 20:34; 28:19-20
Mark 6:34; 16:15
Luke 7:13
I Peter 3:8

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Bible study written by Bonnie Peacock



© 2010

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com