

Write Upon My Heart

Compassion

Published by Keepers of the Faith

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CHARACTER—WHAT IS IT?

What is character? Why do we say that one person has good character and another poor character, or that someone has character and someone else does not? What is being measured? It is not really a person's actions, for people often make mistakes acting in good faith, and we do not consider that bad character. No, it has to do with who a person is—or has become—by the *habits* that he or she has formed.

Good habits become good character, and bad habits become bad character; and yet character is not just the sum of one's habits. In many cases it has taken only a single bad habit to destroy a life. In other cases, just one outstanding good habit has prevented an otherwise mediocre life from totally crumbling. We cannot know which habit might be our most powerful support, or which might cause our complete downfall. So, the safest venture is to develop as many good habits or traits as we can, especially in areas displacing any habits that we have which may not be good.

It takes work to form habits, but the good news is that once they are formed they are a snap to keep, for then they come naturally to us! How nice it is to be so used to doing the right thing that we actually prefer to do it! *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”* —Galatians 6:7. Develop good habits when you are young, and you will reap the benefits for all of your life.

Where can we look to find the best essence of good character? How about God's Word? It has the essence of everything good. Jesus was an example of perfect character. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,”* —1 Peter 2:21. As we study His life and God's Word, they will give us the guidelines by which to form our own habits and lives.

HABITS—WHAT ARE THEY?

Habits are those things that we do most naturally or instinctively—without having to make a decision, because the decision has been made enough times that we do not have to think about it any more. Things said and done by habit are

sometimes done without thinking.

For example, you do not contemplate whether or not to dress in the morning. You do it out of habit. If you brush your teeth every morning, you do not ask yourself if you should each day. You do it out of habit. Each good habit that we build—diligently—doing the best thing in an oft-repeated situation—is like a fence that we build between ourselves and some sort of heartbreak. However, it requires no effort to develop bad habits, and bad character is exactly what lack of effort becomes. So, a little work early in life can do much to prevent the manifold grief and loss encountered as a poorly formed character limps on through the years of life.

HABITS—THEY BEGIN IN THE HEART

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,” —Proverbs 23:7a. That means that we are what we think. We say what we think, and we do what we think. What determines what we think? We do. Why do we think the way that we do? We taught ourselves to think that way. Often when people say, “I really didn’t think about it,” they had already taught themselves exactly what to think about “it.”

Each thought makes a tiny connection in the brain like a thread. Each similar thought strengthens that connection by adding another thread. Eventually, the threads become great enough in number that they become a rope. Often a mind becomes bound by such a rope, whether it is a good rope or a bad rope. Habit begins to affect our thinking. We begin to do things almost automatically because what we think is what we will do.

It is important to form good habits *now*. Later may be too late. We are becoming *right now* what we are going to be. We are going to become what we are thinking *now*, because *“as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* Our thoughts are very powerful. We cannot touch them or see them, but nevertheless, they are very real. They are more powerful than our actions because they control our actions. However, we can decide what we think! We can make our thoughts subject to our will and the will of God. We have access to a power stronger than our thoughts—the power of God. He tells how to control our thoughts. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and*

every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” —2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

So, why is it so important to form good habits early? Is not God powerful enough to break bad habits? Yes, He has the power to break any habit, but there are very many that He never breaks. The reason is that people grow to like their habits. They begin to hate the thought of breaking them—even the bad ones. People do not like change. The ropes that bind their minds are of their own making, and they are loath to give them up. How many drug addicts live absolutely horrid lives, bound to drugs from which they wish they were free, yet who will lie, cheat, steal, fight, and even kill to continue taking the drugs causing them so much misery? People grow to like their bad habits so much that they often will not let them go for what they wish they could have.

How do we learn not to like our bad habits? By learning to like new ones. Do what is right, and soon you will like doing it. There is a saying, “Your actions will determine your emotions.” We become comfortable with something only after we do it for a while. Another saying says, “Eat olives nine times and you will like them.” Proverbs 16:3 teaches, “*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*” Do you want to think rightly? Do you want to feel good doing right even if you do not like it right now? Just do it anyway! See how much it changes the way you think and feel. Replace bad habits and have good character by simply making new habits in place of the old ones!

Lastly, it is not enough to have good character. We can have the very best character, and yet become lost for eternity, for there are none who have not sinned. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for our debt of sin. Only by trusting Him will we see the Celestial City.

It is said that “character has its own reward,” and so it does. People with good character instinctively feel much better about themselves than people without it. This is a far better and happier way to live. However, this reward pales at the prospect of eternal reward. It is great to have character. But, remember, it is infinitely more rewarding to belong to Jesus, and have character for His glory.

Compassion

*If I am hard-hearted and insensitive,
If I see others hurting and look the other way,
If I care more about my own wants than the needs of others,
I know nothing yet of compassion.*

We like very much for people to show compassion to us. When we are hurting, we would like to be comforted. When we need help, we long for people to help us. When we are discouraged, we feel better when someone encourages us. However, should we always be on the receiving end of compassion? And should any Christian lack compassion? A compassionate person is always ready to offer help and encouragement for the difficulties of others. The opposite of compassion—seen in a person who always seeks help and encouragement—is actually selfishness. We really have either one or the other. The difference between the two can be found in Philippians 2:3-4 which says, “. . . *let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*” That is what learning compassion is all about, learning to look on the difficulties of others rather than simply caring about our own things.

God displayed His compassion by loving us. “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,*” —Romans 5:8. Lastly, Jesus lived His life compassionately for us, and then died out of compassion for us. Is there not room to add some compassion to our lives?



LEARNING THE TRAIT

Compassion means to have pity and sympathy for others in their troubles and sorrows. A compassionate person would be caring, tenderhearted, kind, responsive to the needs of others, and full of warm feelings toward others. An uncompassionate or selfish person finds it easy to ignore or “forget” the needs of others. Look up the definitions of the following words using a dictionary, and write them in the space provided.

Caring _____

Hardhearted _____

Kind _____

Merciless _____

Pity _____

Responsive _____

Sympathetic _____

Tenderhearted _____



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

Psalm 145:8

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

BIBLE EXAMPLE



1. Read Matthew 9:35-38.
2. Answer the following questions.
 - (1) What was Jesus busy doing?

- (2) What did Jesus see that moved Him with compassion?

- (3) Why was He moved with compassion?

- (4) Explain Jesus' compassion for the souls of the people.

(5) How had Jesus already shown compassion for their bodily needs?

(6) What could “shepherds” do for the people?

(7) About what kind of harvest was Jesus speaking?

(8) Why did He say to pray for laborers?

(9) What would laborers do?

(10) Why would they need compassion?

(11) Does Jesus still need laborers today? Why?

(12) What kind of physical needs might these laborers meet?

(13) Describe how you might help as a laborer.

(14) Explain what you personally learned from reading this passage.



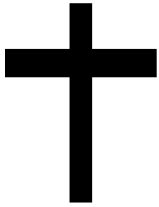
SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Psalm 86:15

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your own life?

MORE ABOUT JESUS



In the Bible we often read that Jesus was “full of compassion,” but we read something more about Jesus. He was not only *full* of compassion, but He was *moved* with compassion. There is a difference, you know. Compassion is not a feeling. It only exists through action. Jesus put actions with His feelings. Thus He had compassion. He cared for people. He healed people. He fed people. He prayed for people. He died for people. His compassionate feelings were followed by movement. Again, Jesus did not just have feelings. He knew that simply “feeling sorry” for people is no help to them. Nor is talking about their needs. Jesus was a man of action—the action of compassion.

Things are no different today. People still have needs. We may feel sorry for them, but do we have any compassion for them? What are we doing for them? Are we still spending our lives doing things for our own personal enjoyment? Jesus’ compassion *moved* Him. Does ours move us? If it does not, then we have none.

1. Explain why compassion without action is not really compassion.

2. Why do we need to do more than just “feel badly” for someone?

3. Explain why we need compassionate actions to show God’s love.

4. Is there anyone for whom you feel sorry? Why do you feel sorry for that person?

5. What types of things could you do to make his or her situation better?



A STORY ABOUT COMPASSION—

PETER’S DILEMMA

T. Zakula

“Whew!” Peter exclaimed, as he shut off his mower with sweat pouring down his face. “I am glad that job is over. That should just about put me over.” He was mowing lawns to earn money for a new bike because his old bike was getting worn out. Mr. Jones, down at the bike shop, had them on sale for the next month. Peter had the one that he wanted all picked out—a shiny, red, ten-speed bike.



“Peter!” Mrs. Elbert called.

“Yes, Mrs. Elbert?” Peter answered.

“I heard the mower stop. Are you finished?”

“Yes ma’am,” said Peter. “I just finished up.”

“Well, come around to the back and have a cold glass of lemonade while I get your pay for you,” said Mrs. Elbert.

“Okay!” said Peter eagerly. He quickly pushed his mower around the house and tromped up the back stairs. There was a tall glass of cold lemonade waiting for him on the small table on the back porch. He drank it thirstily.

“Mmmm! That was very good. Thank you very much, Mrs. Elbert!” said Peter.

“Well, thank you for doing such a fine job, Peter. You didn’t have to come today, and it is so hot out, but I really appreciate your coming earlier than I had originally asked on account of my company coming this weekend,” said Mrs. Elbert.

“Well, thank you for allowing me to earn the extra money, Mrs. Elbert. I certainly appreciate it—and the lemonade. I should be getting home so you can get ready for your company. Please let me know if you need anything else done,” said Peter.

“I sure will,” said Mrs. Elbert, as she handed Peter his earnings for mowing her lawn.

“Have a good day!” said Peter as he started down the street pushing his mower home.

“You will never guess what happened!” Jessica exclaimed. She was nearly out of breath. She ran up to Peter just as he entered the driveway.

“What?” asked Peter, as he put the mower away in the garage.

“There was a big fire yesterday at the Johnsons’ house, and they lost just about everything they had,” said Jessica.

“Really!” said Peter. “That is too bad. Did they lose *everything*?”

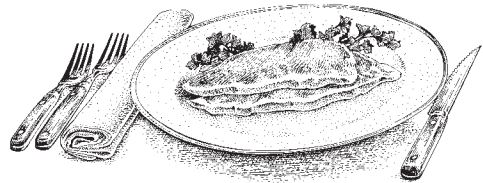
“Yes, just about everything” said Jessica. “You know, they were already struggling to pay their bills since Mr. Johnson had lost his job when the sawmill closed a few weeks ago. He hasn’t been able to find work in the area, so he was thinking about going south to try to find work; but now I do not know what they will do.”

“That is a real shame!” exclaimed Peter. “I know their son, Joseph. He is just a year or two younger than I am, and he is a real good guy. He is hard-working and honest. I suppose he doesn’t have much of anything now,” Peter contemplated aloud. “Boy, that would be tough!”

“Peter! Jessica! Dinner is ready!” their mother called from the house.

“Let’s go eat, Sis!” Peter said. “I am starved!”

Peter and Jessica went into the house, washed their hands, and sat down to dinner with their parents. After their father had prayed and they had begun to eat, Jessica asked, “Did you hear about the Johnson family, Dad?”



“Yes, I sure did,” said their father. “Some of the men were talking about it down at the machine shop today. I guess it was caused by some old wiring in the house. You know that house they were living in was very old. They were trying to update things, but it is expensive and takes time. It is a shame for that to happen to anyone. Everyone down at the machine shop has decided to try and take up some kind of collection for the family since they are without everything, and really have no place to turn. I do not think it will be too much since none of us have much to spare, but I hope it will help them out some. It is not only hard on the parents, but very hard on the children as well.”

“Dad?” asked Peter.

“Yes, Son?” answered Peter’s father.

“Do we have much to give to them?” asked Peter.

“Not too much, Son,” said his father. “I would like to give much more, but business has been slow, and we have had trouble making ends meet ourselves. We will give what we can, though, because that is what Jesus would want us to do. If we were in the Johnsons’ shoes, I would hope someone would have compassion and help us.”

“Dad, I have been thinking while you have been talking, and do you think it would be proper for me to give what I could?” asked Peter.

“Well, Son, I cannot make that decision for you, but you should do what you think Jesus would want you to do,” said Peter’s father.

“Well, I have a good chunk of money saved for that new bike I have been wanting, but I suppose I can do without the bike for another year. The Johnsons will be doing without for quite a while I suppose. Could I just give the money to you, and you could give a gift from our family, Dad?” asked Peter.

“I think that the Lord Jesus would really like that, Son,” said his father. “I am glad to see you are striving to serve the Lord with your possessions. You will never regret giving to someone. I believe that God is truly pleased with compassion.”

Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. Why had Peter been working extra hard all summer?

2. What caused Peter’s dilemma?

3. Why was it a dilemma for him?

4. What would Peter's "giving" cost him?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

1 John 3:16

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

Help Somebody To-day.

Mrs. Frank A. Breck.

Chas. H. Gabriel.



1. Look all around you, find some one in need, Help some-bod-y to - day!
2. Ma-ny are wait-ing a kind lov-ing word, Help some-bod-y to - day!
3. Ma-ny have burdens too heav-y to bear, Help some-bod-y to - day!
4. Some are discouraged and wea-ry in heart, Help some-bod-y to - day!



Tho' it be lit-tle—a neigh-bor-ly deed—Help some-bod-y to - day!
Thou hast a mes-sage, O let it be heard, Help some-bod-y to - day!
Grief is the por-tion of some ev-'ry-where, Help some-bod-y to - day!
Some one the jour-ney to heav-en should start, Help some-bod-y to - day!



CHORUS.



Help some-bod-y to - day, Some-bod-y a-long life's way; Let
to - day, homeward way;



sor-row be end-ed, The friendless befriended, Oh, help some-bod-y to - day!



DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

The Chicken Pox

It was the first sunny day after a week of dreary, wet, drizzling weather. The Maxwell boys—Bob, Joe, Jim, and John—had been looking forward all week to going out to play in their new fort their father had helped them to build. They had planned to spend the entire day outside, and they might even get to sleep overnight in the fort. However, a problem arose during the night—Jim and John both broke out with the chicken pox! Jim and John were upset and disappointed that their plans were ruined, and they would have to remain indoors. Bob and Joe had already had the chicken pox a couple of



years earlier, so the illness did not present a problem for them. Bob and Joe were happily making sandwiches to take to the fort, and were talking about what they were going to do during the day. They felt sorry for their brothers with the chicken pox, but they thought, “Oh, well, these things happen. It’s just too bad for them.”

Jim, in a pleading sort of way, asked, “Oh, guys! Can’t you wait for us to get well so we can all start playing in the fort at the same time?”

“No way!” answered Bob. “It’s too bad you got the chicken pox right now, but why should we let it spoil our fun?”



Bob kept making his sandwiches, but a nagging little thought began tugging in his heart. “*Do unto others as you would have them do to you.*” He knew that if the shoe was on the other foot, he would want his brothers to wait a few more days so he could join in the fun. Another thought crept into his mind from family devotions the previous night. Dad had said something about compassion—not just feeling bad for others, but doing something to make them feel better. Dad said that that often requires a sacrifice of time, money, or even our own plans.

Bob whispered something to Joe. Joe nodded his head. What was

one more week? Bob said, “You know, guys, it wouldn’t be such a big deal to wait a few more days. We have all summer.” All four boys were happier.

1. Why were Bob and Joe feeling happy about their day and feeling sorry at the same time for their brothers?

2. Do you think the problems (chicken pox) of their brothers should affect what Bob and Joe had planned for the day? Why?

3. What made Bob begin to have second thoughts about his decision to go ahead with his plans?

4. What was Bob’s struggle?

5. What form of action did Bob’s compassion take?

6. Why would Bob and Joe feel happy about changing their plans?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

1 Peter 3:8

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

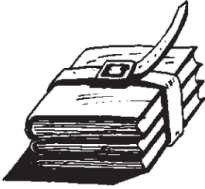
Let Me Be A Giver

*God, let me be a giver, and not one
Who only takes and takes unceasingly;
God, let me give, so that not just my own,
But others' lives as well, may richer be.
Selected*

DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

Not Time Enough



Carol really wanted to go to her friend's house after dinner for a couple of hours, but she did not know how she could finish her homework and her chores all before dinner! While doing her homework, she said to her sister Patty, "If my math problems just didn't take so long to do, I'd be finished with my homework by now. I have ten more problems to do, and I still need to fold the laundry and set the table for dinner. If I don't get these math problems finished, Mom won't let me go to Sarah's tonight, and I so wanted to go! Oh, Patty, what can I do?"

Patty was much quicker at math, and had finished her schoolwork nearly an hour earlier. She had already spent time jumping on the trampoline and had spent the last fifteen minutes enjoying a new book. She looked thoughtfully at her younger sister. It was really not Patty's problem, but she did feel sorry for her sister. All Patty's chores and school work were finished, and she had free time until dinner to do whatever she wanted to do. However, she knew her sister really wanted to see Sarah, and especially Sarah's new kittens. What should she do?

"Oh, Carol! Just finish your math problems, and I will fold the laundry and set the table. Perhaps you will finish in time and still be able to go."

"Oh, Patty, will you? Thanks so much!" She jumped up and gave her sister a hug and settled quickly back down to her math. Patty hummed a sweet little hymn as she folded the laundry for her sister.

1. What was Carol's problem?

2. What were some of the choices Patty could have made in reference to Carol's problem?

3. How did Patty's decision reflect compassion?

4. How did Carol react to Patty's offer of help?

5. How do people usually react to offers of help in times of need?

6. What form of action did Patty's compassion take?

7. Why do you think it is such a hard decision for people to put actions with compassionate feelings?

WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO



It is not much that we can give
In doing good to others;
But we in joy and peace can live,
With sisters and with brothers;
To playmates all we can be kind,
And fill their hearts with gladness;
Our parents' wishes we can mind,
And crown their lives with gladness.

And more than all, we can obey
The precepts of our Saviour,
And prove our love to Him each day,
By goodness of behavior.
So whether short or whether long
The life that is assigned us,
A mem'ry like a pleasant song
We all may leave behind us.

Kate Cameron





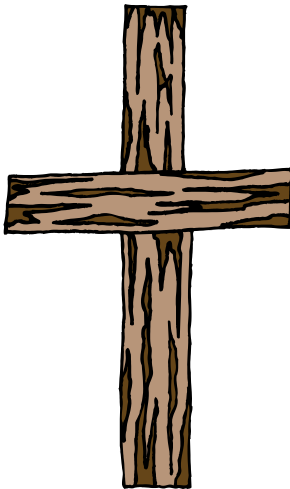
SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

Matthew 14:14

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?



***See, oh see, what love the Saviour
Also hath on us bestowed;
How He bled for us and suffered,
How He bare the heavy load.
On the cross and in the garden
Oh, how sore was His distress!
Is not this a love that passeth
Aught that tongue can e'er express?***

Havergal

INSTRUCTIONS IN COMPASSION

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.” —Luke 10:33

Do you remember the story Jesus told in response to the question “And who is my neighbour?” A man was robbed, hurt, and left for dead. A religious man, a priest, passed right by him. He was careful to pass on the other side of the road, perhaps so that he could not really see his wounds. Silly people often think that hiding from the needs of others will give them a clean conscience, but it will certainly not give them a clean heart! Next came along a Levite, a minister in the temple; he at least looked upon the injured man, but he, too, passed by him. Lastly, a Samaritan, a common man of a foreign country, came by. He looked; he had compassion; he stopped in his journey to bind up the man’s wounds; he gave him a ride to an inn and took care of him. Even more, with his own money, he paid the innkeeper to care for the man. Then he went on his way. Jesus said to His questioner: “Go and do thou likewise.”

Here again, Jesus teaches us that compassion consists of action—not good intentions. From this story we can learn several things.

1. Our neighbor is anyone who crosses our path. It is not only another Christian. It can be a perfect stranger.
2. We are not told to decide if our neighbor is worthy of our help.
3. If our neighbor has a need, we should be *moved* with compassion to help.
4. “I must be on my way.” “I am too busy to stop and help.” “I need my money for other things.” “I am already religious; someone else should help.” “I will pray for God to help him.” These are all excuses that will not be accepted by God.

As we have said before, feeling badly for someone is not enough. Actually, very often when we say that we “feel badly” for someone, we are not being truthful with ourselves. We simply say it to soothe our consciences. We do not feel badly at all, or we would do something. Our actions will tell the truth no matter what words we say. When we feel badly for ourselves we waste no time in looking for a remedy.

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say

unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” —James 2:15-17. Here we find another verse that not only defines compassion, but states from Scripture exactly what we have been saying. If we see our brother or sister in poverty, hungry, hurt, or cold, and all we say is “Oh, I am sorry. May God bless you,” what good does “feeling sorry” do for them? Absolutely nothing! Our true feelings are those upon which we act. Providing food, clothing, and help when our neighbor is in need—being moved with compassion—is truly feeling sorry for our neighbor. How often the words “feeling sorry” are an excuse for feeling self-centered!

As you study compassion, you might wonder what you should do, or when you should be “moved with compassion.” To begin, let’s answer the question of “Who is your neighbor?”

Your neighbors are first and foremost your family: your father and mother, your brothers and sisters, your grandparents and your extended family. Next, your neighbor would be the people with whom you come in contact.

Answer the following questions.

1. Is your father ever tired? How can you show compassion for his weariness?

2. Does it seem that your mother has a great deal of work to do? How can you be moved to compassion about that?

3. Do your brothers or sisters have any needs? What can you do to show your compassion for them?

-
4. Your father carries a great burden to pay for all the needs of the family. By what compassionate acts can you save him some expenses?

5. Is your grandmother or grandfather lonely? What should your compassion do about that?

6. Is there a new boy or girl at church who sits all alone? What can you do to show compassion for him or her?

7. Do the visiting missionaries have any needs? Is there some way you could show compassion for them?

A truly compassionate person does not live for himself or herself. A compassionate person looks around, sees needs, and does whatever is possible to meet those needs. An uncompassionate person may look around, but when confronted with the needs of others, usually looks away, or looks back to himself, recounting his own needs and desires. His compassion is suffocated by his desire to please himself. The question for you is: “What kind of person are you—compassionate or uncompassionate?”

Our Neighbors

Somebody near you is struggling alone
Over life's desert sand;
Faith, hope, and courage together are gone;
Reach him a helping hand.
Turn on his darkness a beam of your light;
Kindle, to guide him, a beacon fire bright;
Cheer his discouragement, soothe his affright,
Lovingly help him to stand.

Somebody near you is hungry and cold;
Send him some aid today;
Somebody near you is feeble and old,
Left without human stay.
Under his burdens put hands kind and strong;
Speak to him tenderly, sing him a song;
Haste to do something to help him along
Over his weary way.

Dear one, be busy, for time fleeth fast,
Soon it will all be gone;
Soon will our season of service be past,
Soon will our day be done.
Somebody near you needs now a kind word;
Some one needs help, such as you can afford;
Haste to assist in the name of the Lord;
There may be a soul to be won.

Selected

SEARCHING YOUR HEART

Answer the following questions.



1. List three ways in which you feel you are compassionate.

2. List three ways in which you feel that you display a lack of compassion.

3. When you experience compassionate feelings, do they move you to action?
If sometimes not, why not?

4. Name the sin or sins that keep you from being compassionate.

5. Can you think of three times in which your feelings were followed by action? What were they?

6. What effect can compassionate actions have on the lives of those experiencing problems?

7. Talk these things over with your parents. Ask them to help you become a “compassionate action” person by praying for you and encouraging you to take positive action helping others.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Matthew 9:36

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

A STORY ABOUT COMPASSION—

Polly Maythorne, The Mushroom Gatherer

by Isabella Alden

Of all the clean-looking, well-behaved young girls in our village, little Polly Maythorne certainly stands first. She lives in the cottage down by the brook, and a cleaner cottage is not to be found in the parish.

Polly's mother is a very thrifty body. You might see her bustle, bustle all day long. It matters not what time you happen to pass that way, there she is with her round-eared cap, with a ribbon tied in a small bow in front, a short-sleeved gown, and a tidy dark apron, with her house as clean as a new pin.

Even her pigs seem to be a more orderly race of grunTERS than usual, for they do not attempt to roll in the dust near enough to her door to cause her any trouble; and when she calls them to their supper, they seem to possess more manners than pigs in general, for they do not push their heads into the trough all at once, so as to inconvenience Mrs. Maythorne when she pours in the contents of her bucket. This arises, I suppose, from the fact of having had some hard knocks formerly, when they were not willing to do things in order.

No doubt but little Polly learned many of her clean, tidy habits from her mother's example, for Mrs. Maythorne was one of those orderly persons who had a place for everything, and everything in its place.

She was a kind mother too, and very anxious that Polly should be a very tidy, useful little body. She was very willing to spare her at any time to do a good turn for a poor neighbor after the school hours were over, so that this little village maiden had no idle time, although she certainly did enjoy life as much as any little girl to be seen within a day's walk of the village. Often she was seen bounding over the meadows and down the green lanes, happy as a lark, dressed in her nankeen bonnet, short red cloak, and black worsted stockings, with very thick boots to keep out the damp; for withal, Polly was not very strong.

In the dewy mornings of autumn it was Polly's custom to rise very early, in order to fill her basket with mushrooms, which she sold in the village, and her mother allowed her a few pence from her earnings to spend as she liked; but I believe it was

never known that she spent it on “bull’s eyes” or “lollipops,” so perhaps this was one reason why her mother entrusted her with it.

At the Sunday school Polly had a very nice teacher, and she soon began to understand how the Bible required her to behave, both at home and among strangers. She was very attentive to the lessons her kind teacher gave her to learn at home; and in the winter evenings, when her father returned from his labor, she was ready, as soon as the supper table was cleared, to read to him, either from the Bible or from some nice library book she had brought from the school.

There was one thing about little Polly’s conduct that was rather mysterious to her mother; but, as she had perfect confidence in her little daughter, she did not make any remark to her about it. The circumstance was this: Mrs. Maythorne had observed, for some little time, that instead of depositing the pence she procured by her mushroom gathering in her money box, as she was wont to do, she put it into her pocket, so that the box did not get so well filled as usual. Yet Polly never seemed to buy anything, nor could anyone hear money rattling in her pocket. “What can she do with it?” thought her mother.

One Sabbath day, a gentleman entered the schoolroom where little Polly was, and asked to be shown a little girl who would most readily learn a chapter in the Bible for a sixpence. Several of the teachers said, “Polly Maythorne will soon learn it,” so she was called forth, and having carefully committed the portion of Scripture to memory in a very short time, she earned the sixpence.

After school, as she was returning home, thinking of her sixpence, all at once she looked very grave and almost sorrowful.

“What is the matter with you?” asked Kate Brown. “Are you not glad to show your mother the sixpence? I only wish I had it to buy some blue ribbon for my bonnet against club day.”

“I do not want any blue ribbon,” replied Polly, “and of course I shall tell my mother about it; but I don’t want to put it into my money box, although a warm winter bonnet would be a good thing.” Just then they came to the house, and Polly went in to tell the tale of the Scripture and the sixpence.

“Well, Polly,” said her father, “that will be a good lift toward your bonnet.” Polly hung down her head. “Run and put in into your box, my girl,” continued he, “and come to your tea.”

“To tell the truth, Father,” said she, while a blush arose on her cheek, “I don’t

wish to put it in there.”

“Very well, my dear,” said her father, “you may do as you like with it; I don’t believe you will do anything wrong.”

Polly seemed to be relieved of a burden all at once, and very soon the sixpence was out of sight at the bottom of her pocket, and she sat down to her tea, saying no more on the subject.

“Dear me, Polly,” said Mrs. Maythorne, “I quite forgot to tell you that poor old sick Betty, up in the hollow, has sent for you to go and read a little book to her that some gentleman gave her yesterday.”

“Oh, that I will,” quickly answered little Polly, “and may I go *now*, Mother?”

“Why, you are in a bit of a hurry, child; you will certainly have some more tea.”

“No, thank you, Mother,” and away she ran as quick as light.

“That’s an odd child,” said her father, as she passed out. “I can’t think what pleasure she can feel in going up to that dirty room by the old woman’s sickbed so often.”

Polly was soon seated by the poor woman’s sickbed, reading her book to her, and the dim eyes of the sufferer were lit up more than usual as she listened to the gentle voice of the village maiden, who was in reality her friend and teacher. When Polly had got about half through the little book, a knock was heard at the door, and the gentleman entered who had given Polly the money at the school. Polly glided by him as he came in, and was soon seated by her father in her own cottage.

“Did I not hear a young voice reading to you as I came in?” asked the gentleman.

“Oh, yes, sir; it was little Polly, down by the brook. She is like an angel to me. She tells me all she learns at the Sabbath school about the Bible and the way to Heaven, and she keeps me from starving by bringing me some of her earnings. Here is sixpence, which she has just put by my pillow, telling me she came honestly by it.”

Here the secret was revealed as to the use Polly made of her spare pence. She cared for the widowed in her affliction, and felt more pleasure in giving her money to this poor old Betty than she would in buying a blue ribbon, or a new winter bonnet, or sweetmeats.

Now, tell me, dear children, will you not follow the example of little Polly, the mushroom gatherer, and try to do good with the spare pence you get? Only think how much more happy you will feel in the memory of having done good to some

poor person in distress, than to have spent all you get upon yourselves.

But this is not all. Little Polly loved Jesus Christ, and she wished every day to *show* that she loved Him by obeying His commands, and following His example. And I daresay my readers, remember that while He lived in our world He went about doing good. Not that Polly expected to go to Heaven just because she was a kind girl, no, no, she knew her Bible better than that. She knew that she must be washed in the precious blood of Him Who died on Calvary, or all would be vain; but she desired just as much to live *to His glory on earth* as to live with Him in glory in Heaven.

Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. How did Polly show compassion to the poor widowed Betty?

2. What things did Polly want to do every single day to show she loved the Lord Jesus Christ?

*But whoso hath this world's good,
and seeth his brother have need, and
shutteth up his bowels of compassion
from him, how dwelleth the love of
God in him? —I John 3:17*

A STORY ABOUT COMPASSION—

BESSIE AND THE PEACH

Selected

“Bessie, here is a peach for you, the finest I have seen this season,” said Mr. Kohler to his little daughter.

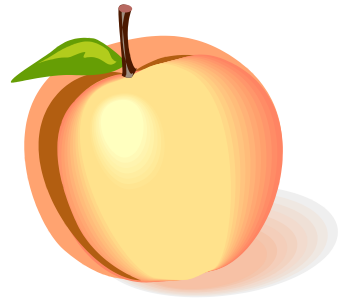
It was very beautiful—so ripe that it looked just ready to burst through the thin skin, and a painter might have attempted in vain to rival the color. It was very tempting, for it was the first one Bessie had seen this summer; yet she stood with it in her hands, seemingly lost in thought.

“May I take it to cousin Mary? She is sick, and nothing tastes well to her, and she has been wishing so much for a peach.”

“Yes, if you like.” And away flew Bessie on her errand of love. She went softly into cousin Mary’s sick chamber, laid the peach before her, and quickly glided from her room.

As the parched lips were moistened by the delicious juice, the little sufferer declared that it made her feel “almost well.”

Now that little act of kindness made Bessie much happier than eating the peach would have done.



Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. Why did the giving away of the peach bring more happiness than the eating of it would have provided?

2. Have you ever done something similar to what Bessie did? Describe it and how it made you feel. If you have not, do something and describe how it feels.



Working for Jesus

“Ye have done it unto me.” “Ye did it not to me.” —Matthew 25:40, 45

Our Lord Jesus Christ has given us opportunities of showing whether we love Him or not. He tells us that what we try to do for anyone who is poor, hungry, or sick, or a lonely stranger is just the same as doing it to Him. And when the King says, “Come, ye blessed,” He will remember these little things, and will say, “Ye have done it unto me.” But He tells us that if we would do nothing for them, it is just the same as if He were standing there and we would do nothing for Him. And He will say, “Ye did it not to me.”

One of these two verses will be spoken to you in the great day when you see the King on the throne of His glory. Which shall it be? What are you doing for Jesus? Are you doing anything at all for Him? Perhaps you say, “I have no opportunity.” Did you ever try to find one? Did you ever ask Him to give you opportunities of doing something for Him? Or is it only that you have never yet cared or tried to do anything for Him? Be honest about it. He knows. And He will forgive.

But now, what is to be done? Begin by asking Him to show you. And then, keep a bright, sharp lookout and see if you cannot find an opportunity very soon

(and perhaps many) of doing something kind for His sake to some poor or sick or lonely one. Set to work to think what you could do!

It seems to me so very kind of the Lord Jesus to have told us this. For He knew that those who really love Him would want to do something for Him; and what could we do for the King of glory in His glorious Heaven? So it was wonderfully thoughtful of Him to give us His poor people to care for, and to say, if we have only been kind to a sick old woman or hungry little child, “Ye have done it unto me!”

*I love my precious Saviour
Because He died for me;
And if I did not serve Him,
How sinful I should be!
God help me to be useful
In all I do or say!
I mean to work for Jesus,
The Bible says I may!*

Frances Havergal

DECISIONS TO MAKE

Decisions are choices that we make. We are responsible for them. We can blame no one else but ourselves when we make wrong decisions. Our aim or goal should be to make good, godly decisions. Won't you now decide to—



1. Keep your eyes open to see the needs of others.
2. Not just “feel sad” when you see a person with a problem, but see if there is anything you can do to help him.
3. Pray for God to show you what more you can do for others.
4. Take action on whatever needs you see.

THINGS TO DO

It's one thing to study a character trait, learn definitions, and ponder Scriptures. It is another thing to put those ideas into action and make them a part of your life. Following is a list of things that you can do to build the habit of compassion into your life. Complete as many items as you can (no fewer than four) from the following list.

1. Notice a need and meet the need.
Need _____
Action _____
2. Meet another need.
Need _____
Action _____
3. Meet another need.
Need _____
Action _____
4. Meet another need.
Need _____
Action _____
5. Write a note of cheer to someone who is sick.
6. Share an encouraging word with someone who is sad.
7. Memorize a "compassion" verse.



Remember . . .

When you see another person struggling or hurting—

- ✓ **Never** just say, "Oh, that's too bad."
- ✓ **Never** say, "Someone should do something to help him," and not try to do anything yourself.

Do say . . .

- ✓ "What can *I* do to help that person?"
- ✓ Ask, "Is there anything I can do to help?"
- ✓ Ask, "What would you like *me* to do?"
- ✓ Ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?"

Can you find these words in the puzzle?

action

doing

neighbor

supportive

caring

feeling

pity

sympathetic

compassion

kindhearted

responsive

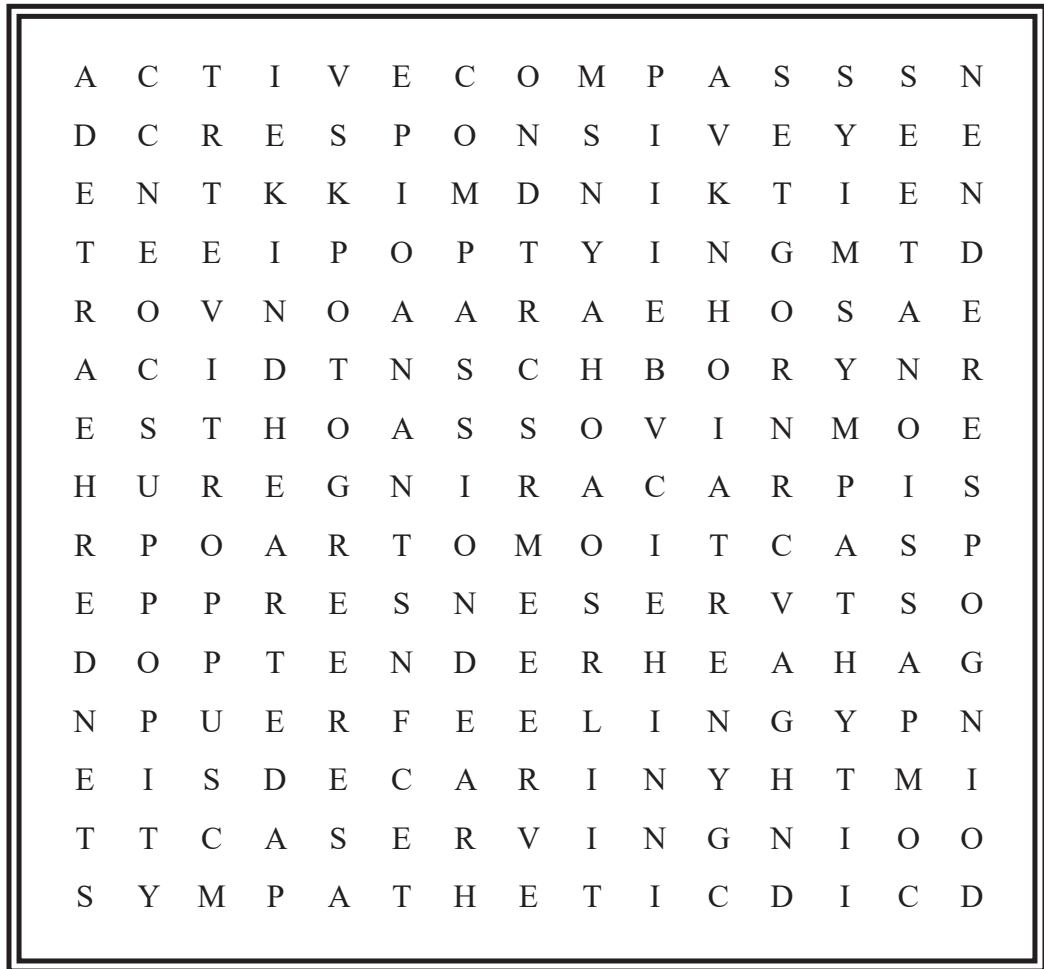
sympathy

compassionate

kind

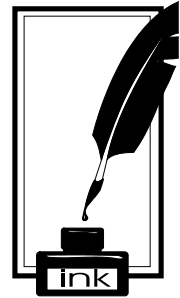
serving

tenderhearted



KEEPING A JOURNAL

Many people say that it takes thirty days to create a habit, and that is just what we are trying to do—create the habit of compassion! The next thirty pages will be set aside to record your progress in making the character trait “Compassion” an integral part of *your* character. At the end of each day ask yourself the following questions, and write down the answers, and anything additional concerning your “compassion” trait.



Following are a few *reminders* or *goals* to help you begin focusing on compassion each day.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write the word “compassion” in large letters, and place it where you will see it the first thing in the morning when you awake.
2. Upon awakening and seeing the word “compassion,” say a prayer asking God to help you notice the needs of others throughout the day, and to show you what *you can do*.
3. Purpose in your heart to *act* to meet the needs of others.
4. Using index cards or small sheets of paper, write the word “compassion” on them, and put them in places in the house where you will see them.
5. Place one of the cards in your Bible; place others in your school books or reading books.
6. At noon or lunchtime, go to your room and kneel down and pray and ask God to continue to help you to be truly compassionate.
7. At dinnertime, have another private prayer time with God and ask for continued help in establishing the habit of compassion.



Day 1 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 2 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 3 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 4 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 5 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 6 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 7 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 8 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 9 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 10 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 11 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 12 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 13 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 14 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 15 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 16 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 17 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 18 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 19 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 20 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 21 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 22 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 23 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 24 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 25 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 26 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 27 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 28 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 29 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?

Day 30 Date _____

1. Was I compassionate or selfish today? _____

Explain: _____

2. What was one chance to be compassionate that I completely missed?

3. What was one time that I felt badly for another but did nothing?

4. What sin or sins kept me from showing true compassion?

5. What were two times that my actions confirmed my compassion?

6. How did the recipients of my actions feel afterward?
