**Live in Community**



Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Expect the Unexpected**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. ([Proverbs 3:5–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Pr3.5-6))

*We all make plans—plans for where we’re going and what we want to do. But life is more often a story of unexpected interruptions. Our faith helps us to recognize God’s hand at work in unanticipated ways. By faith we learn to embrace life’s interruptions as the place God so often does miraculous things. We learn to respond with compassion and faith when things seem impossible.*

**Session Overview**

**Respond with Compassion**

**Biblical Encounter:** Jesus Interrupts a Funeral Procession ([Luke 7:11–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.11-17))

**Outcome:** Respond compassionately when faced with others’ needs.

*In this session, we’ll see the compassion of Jesus on full display. As Jesus entered the village of Nain, He came upon a funeral for a widow’s only son. Jesus, moved with compassion, stopped the crowd and performed a miracle. When we come across hurting people around us, we can respond like Jesus by being a compassionate and healing presence in their life.*

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| First time leading *Live* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**  What keeps our compassion from becoming action? |

Think about situations in your life that moved you to compassion but didn’t lead you to take action. Why didn’t you act? Lots of things can get in our way. Sometimes we feel inadequate to meet the need. We may feel overwhelmed by how many needs we encounter. Or perhaps we simply don*’*t have the time or resources to meet the need. But none of these reasons are impossible to overcome.

If we’re going to point people to Jesus, we can’t simply feel compassion for them without meeting their needs. The power of Jesus’ compassion wasn’t in the emotion itself, but in His actions that followed. Having compassion for hurting or lonely people is only the first step. We can ask the Holy Spirit to show us what actions we should take to meet people’s needs and show His love to others.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: How are you most likely to respond to unplanned opportunities to show compassion?



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| **QUESTION**  How are you most likely to respond to unplanned opportunities to show compassion? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

For much of His ministry, Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee teaching and performing miracles. He was familiar with this region because His hometown of Nazareth was there. Today, we’ll see the compassion Jesus felt as He entered the town of Nain, just a few miles from where He grew up. While there, Jesus encountered the unimaginable grief of a mother at her only son’s funeral. We’ll see how Jesus turned His compassion into action.

**Did You Know?**

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| *In the biblical world, one of the most difficult positions socially for a woman to find herself was to be a widow. As the ancient world didn’t have any true forms of social welfare and professions for women were few and far between, a woman was often left with only a few options after the death of her husband. If she was young enough, she might remarry. If her children were old enough, a widow would then rely on her children to provide through either her son’s income or her daughter’s marriage price. However, if a woman lost both her husband and her children, she had very little hope apart from begging.* |

**Jesus Was Filled with Compassion**

Read [Luke 7:11–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.11-13).

This is one of those moments in the New Testament when we can easily see why people loved Jesus so much. When He saw that a woman who had already lost her husband had now lost her only son, the Bible says Jesus’ heart was full of compassion. It broke His heart to see her in so much pain, and He immediately said, “Don’t cry!” That command must have seemed out of place to the others at the funeral. But they had no idea that Jesus was about to step into the mother’s pain and perform a miracle.

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| **QUESTION**  Suppose you had come upon this funeral procession. How would you have reacted? |

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| **QUESTION**  What do you think people thought when Jesus stopped the funeral procession and instructed the grieving mother not to cry? |

**Jesus Acted on His Compassion**

Read [Luke 7:14–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.14-15).

It’s one thing to have our heart filled with compassion for someone in need. But feeling emotion is only one step. We can be sensitive to God’s Spirit, so we know when to act on our emotion and take the opportunity to express our compassion. Jesus didn’t just watch the crowd cry in pain. He stepped in to do something about it. In this case, He performed a jaw-dropping miracle. We know a miracle isn’t always going to happen, but that doesn’t mean our actions can’t be used to do incredible things in the life of someone in need.

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| **QUESTION**  If you could have talked to the widow following this encounter with Jesus, what questions would you have asked her? |

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| **QUESTION**  Not every miracle is as dramatic as someone being raised from the dead. What are some other ways we could be a healing presence in the life of someone in a hard situation? |

**The Crowd Spread the News about Jesus**

Read [Luke 7:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.16-17).

As the story ended, the need to act switched to the crowd who had witnessed Jesus’ healing power. Their response was to tell everyone about it. They were overwhelmed to have seen a miracle. Who wouldn’t be? And they couldn’t stay silent about it. Jesus didn’t just bring healing that day—He also brought hope. And the message they shared about this prophet named Jesus spread that hope like wildfire to those around them.

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| **QUESTION**  Do you know someone who consistently shares the hope of Jesus with others? What can you learn from that person? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are some of the miraculous things Jesus has done in your life? Do you know someone who needs to hear what Jesus has done for you? |

**Reflect**

**Respond compassionately when faced with others’ needs.**

Hurting people all around us desperately need the hope and healing Jesus provides. Their needs must call us to compassionate action! Every encounter may not end in an eye-popping miracle like a young man being raised from the dead, but that’s not what most people need either.

As we see people’s needs and are moved with compassion, we have to remember that everyone's greatest need is to be spiritually brought to life. This isn’t a miracle we can work in our own power any more than we could bring someone back from the grave. But if we’re willing to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s direction, stop when we see someone in need, and offer them the kind of compassionate action that Jesus did, we may get to witness Jesus’ power in their life!

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**  How does Jesus’ willingness to act on His compassion cause you to rethink your willingness to go out of your way to help others in need? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are some of the obstacles that keep you from feeling compassion for those who are in need—or acting on that compassion? |

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| **QUESTION**  How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about being more active in helping those who are in need? |

**Activate**

As followers of Jesus, we should be moved with compassion toward others. Like Jesus, we also must do what we’re able to about the suffering around us. Although we can’t meet every need like Jesus can, we must be open to the needs God wants each of us to meet.

**Challenge**

Allow the Holy Spirit to show you one or two needs you can meet for those around you. Take a moment to pray and reflect. The Holy Spirit will bring people and situations to your mind as you focus and wait on Him. Then write down what you feel the Spirit is directing you toward. As you pray, allow your heart to be filled with the compassion of Jesus, and then put those emotions into action.

**Prayer Requests**

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| *Note any requests from the group and pray together. Also remember to pray for them during the week.* |

People are in need everywhere we look. We can be overwhelmed. Remember, God isn’t calling us to do everything for everyone. But we shouldn’t use that as a reason for not stepping out in faith to bring hope and healing when the Holy Spirit leads us. The more we read God’s Word, the more we become like Jesus. So, we’ve provided devotions to help you cultivate the compassionate heart of our Savior.

**Live on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: Jesus Interrupts a Funeral Procession**

Read [Luke 7:11–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.11-17).

Look back over Live in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**  What is God saying to you about you responding to others with compassion? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: Compassion Doesn’t Always Require Our Resources**

Read [1 Kings 17:7–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Ki17.7-16).

We aren’t always going to have the means to meet the needs of everyone around us. The good news is that we can still respond in compassion. To be clear, we need to use resources we *do* have to help the hungry and hurting. But when we cannot end someone’s suffering on our own, we must pray and know that God is responsible for what happens in the end. We won’t always see dramatic miracles of provision like Elijah did, but we will see God work in the hearts of those in need.

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| **QUESTION**  Why is it so important to rely on more than our own resources when we’re confronted with needs around us? |

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| **QUESTION**  What would have happened if Elijah had passed by this woman simply because he didn’t have what she needed? |

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| **QUESTION**  Who are some people you might have overlooked because you couldn’t meet their requests for help? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: Compassion Does Require Mercy**

Read [Luke 10:25–37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.25-37).

Mercy means that we don’t get what we deserve. Jesus shows us mercy and teaches us that we must do the same. To meet the needs of our broken world, we must become merciful toward others as the Spirit helps us. Lacking mercy can short-circuit our ability to be moved with compassion. Though the Samaritan didn’t cause the traveler’s problems, he helped anyway. Remember, Jesus taking the initiative to act opened the door for us to receive His healing and compassion. We can do the same thing for others as well.

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| **QUESTION**  Why can it be so easy for us to withhold mercy from others? How can we overcome this desire? |

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| **QUESTION**  Who are some people you find it hard to show mercy to? How has this impacted your ability to be compassionate about their needs? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: Compassion Is Our Responsibility**

Read [John 5:1–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn5.1-15).

In the middle of this story, we find an interesting question. Jesus asked a man who had been ill for many years if he wanted to get well. This man felt like he couldn’t be healed because he had no one to lift him into the waters of the pool. (Some people believed that the pool had healing properties). The sick man didn’t need the waters; he just needed Jesus—but he didn’t realize that.

We’re going to come across people just like this man as we move in compassion for those in need. Some people have come to believe that their situation can’t change, they can’t get better, and they can’t be helped. But we must remember that their response isn’t our responsibility. Our job is to continue to be compassionate even if our efforts are turned down.

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| **QUESTION**  If we are compassionate toward someone in need and they refuse what we’re offering, did we fail? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why do you think some people believe they can’t get better or be helped? Have you ever been in a place like that in your own life? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: Compassion for Individuals**

Read [Matthew 15:29–31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.29-31).

This story says that Jesus was confronted by a huge crowd of people in need of His healing touch. Matthew tells us that He healed *all* of them. The best way to read this story is to consider everything we know about the life and ministry of Jesus from all four Gospels. We’re justified in understanding that Jesus healed them *one by one*. We never see a miracle story where Jesus healed a massive group by speaking one loud prayer over the multitude. He always interacted with each person individually. Compassion requires us to see every individual as a person and minister to each one in a personal way. That’s the kind of compassion Jesus is calling us to live out.

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| **QUESTION**  Why do you think Jesus emphasized healing individuals rather than helping huge groups of people with one prayer or with the wave of His hand? |

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| **QUESTION**  Why is it so important for us to reach out in compassion to each person as an individual even when the number in need is so great? How might this better demonstrate the heart of Jesus to a person in need? |