

Compassion Reflection Paper

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One of the greatest examples that we learn from Jesus is compassion. Throughout the Bible, we learn about the many compassion-driven miracles that Jesus made when he walked the earth. To the world, compassion may look like acts of kindness or being a good person, but to believers of Christ, there are innumerable ways to show and practice compassion.

Reading the book *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* by Nouwen, McNeil, and Morrison, helped me understand more deeply the meaning and importance of compassion as a Christian and as a social worker. I learned that as humans, we allow our selfish ways to get in the way of being compassionate to others. In the Bible, we see many ways in which Jesus showed compassion when he walked with his disciples, and as a Christian sometimes I tend to let the world influence the way I show compassion, rather than following Jesus' footsteps.

In the book, Nouwen et al. (2005) mention that "God does not want to be known except through servanthood and that, therefore, servanthood is God's self-revelation" (Nouwen et al., 2005, pg. 26). This is something that stood out to me because sometimes as Christians we are under the impression that to please God and to live a righteous life, we must attend church, give our tithes, and live according to what religion says we should, but tend to forget that we are called to be good servants through compassion and serve other, the same way that Jesus did for those who sought him. God calls for us to be good servants and help others. I think that this is something that we should all practice because it is the only way that we can help those that are in need.

In addition, to be compassionate we also need to be obedient. Obedience is important to me because, through my Christian walks, I have come to see obedience as more than just following orders or commands but connecting with God and hearing his voice in my life.

Because I have learned to be obedient, I can see God's purpose in my life and see it being fulfilled in His timing rather than mine. Nouwen et al. (2005) argue that Jesus is "the obedient servant who hears the call and desires to respond even when it leads to pain or suffering" (Nouwen et al., 2005, pg. 37). If Jesus was obedient to the Father, why would I not be obedient especially when compassion is what it is being asked of me.

Now that I have an understanding of what compassion means and looks like, I feel an intense desire to help others. As a social worker, I feel like knowing the meaning of compassion, and practicing it, makes us look more like God and less like the world. Furthermore, I believe that compassion is the core value of social work because it helps us connect with the clients and promote emotional well-being. When we show compassion, we let others know that we care and that they are not alone.

One aspect of compassion that I learned from the reading and that it has been helpful to me as a social worker, or even as a friend or family is that "what counts is that in moments of pain and suffering someone stays with us" (Nouwen et al., 2005, pg. 11). This made such an impact in the way I show compassion and support to others because I always struggled with words to say when someone is hurting, but now I understand that sometimes just being present and letting others know that we are there with them through the pain and struggles and in practice, this has helped me to learn to be more present.

Additionally, there are many ways that a social worker shows compassion, like tuning in to listen to the client's needs and struggles. Other ways are asking questions and showing interest in the clients' lives and what they have to say to make them feel like they matter. I show compassion as a social worker by being flexible to accommodate the clients based on their needs and accessibilities. Also, I listen to them and allow them to express themselves without feeling

judged, and I also provide them with words of encouragement and empower them to see their full potential.

As a Christian social worker, knowing what compassion means to the body of Christ, I can see that we are all made in the image of God and that no one is above or below us. I can see people through the eyes of Jesus as beautiful creations of God that need love and support. To prepare myself to see my clients, I always pray for them and myself, asking God to give me compassion and empathy for those who come to see me. I like to pray for my clients and their current situations when the sessions are over because I know that there is power in prayer and that by praying for them, I am practicing the compassion that Jesus had for others when he healed the sick and even when he was crucified and he prayed to the father “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (“Luke 23 | NIV Bible | YouVersion,” n.d.) Even through his pain and sorrow, Jesus showed compassion to us and that is why we need to learn from his examples and allow his compassion to be shown through us to help others heal.

The reading *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* by Nouwen, McNeil, and Morrison, was very effective in exploring a deeper meaning of compassion and allowing us the readers see the many ways in which Jesus showed compassion to others and served us as a great example. It also helped us understand that we are called to have compassion for others which comes through obedience and servanthood.

References

Luke 23 | NIV Bible | YouVersion. (n.d.). In *www.bible.com*. Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/LUK.23.NIV>

Nouwen, H. J. M., McNeill, D. P., & Morrison, D. A. (2005). *Compassion : a reflection on the Christian life*. Image Books/Doubleday.