

## Compassion in a Hate-filled World

We are all equal before God; none of us is any better than anyone else.

*In Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28 (NCV)*

We must die to our old selfish ways if we want to be set free from the power of hatred and sinful attitudes.

*We know that our old life died on the cross with Christ so that our sinful selves would have no power over us and we would not be slaves to sin. Romans 6:6 (NCV)*

We're not pre-wired with prejudice; it's learned.

*But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. James 3:17 (GNT)*

It's impossible to hate people and love God.

*If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. 1 John 4:20 (GNT)*

God calls us to be bridge-builders, not bigots.

“We cannot legislate brotherhood. Don't put your trust in the left wing or the right wing. The system that keeps us locked into our roles can only change because of people who are changed on the inside.” E. B. Hill

*All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. 2 Corinthians 5:18 (GNT)*

Compassion requires a risk and a reach.

*Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived. Galatians 6:2-3 (Message)*

Compassion is shown through active works of love.

*What matters is faith that works through love. Galatians 5:6b (GNT)*

“To love at all is to be vulnerable.” C. S. Lewis

*Talk About It*

1. When is a time that you unexpectedly experienced love/care/compassion from someone?
2. When is a time you felt rejected?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest), what number would indicate the level of your faith this past week? What's the reason you think that?
4. How prejudiced would you say you were when you were young? What do you think of that now?
5. What do you think is needed to overcome hatred and bitterness in the world? What is the reason you think that?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the belief that we are all equal before God; none of us is any better than anyone else? Why?
7. When you were growing up, who were you taught that you were better than or superior to? What do you think of that now?
8. Do you think that when we begin to see people through Jesus' eyes that radically changes how we relate to them? What does that mean to you and why?
9. In what ways do you think you need to die to your old selfish ways if you want to be set free from the power of hatred and sinful attitudes?
10. What do you think of the Bible's teaching: "If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars"? How would you explain that to someone else?
11. What would you risk if you were to truly show compassion to someone who was different from you racially? Politically? Socio-economically?
12. What are some social or cultural barriers to unity among Christians at this time?
13. What are two specific ways you will commit to show Godly compassion through active works of love in the next month?