














WHO CARES?

TOOLBOX

-  THINK
-  OBSERVE
-  CLOSE-UP
-  WRITE
-  DISCUSS
-  FEELINGS
-  BRAINSTORM
-  REFERENCE
-  PASSAGE
-  ARTICLE
-  BIG IDEA
-  CROSSROAD

 **MODERN-DAY COMPASSION**

On Monday, August 9, 1993, a 31-year-old woman, Sopehia Mardress White, burst into the hospital nursery at USC Medical Center in Los Angeles, wielding a .38-caliber handgun. She had come gunning for Elizabeth Staten, a nurse whom she accused of stealing her husband. White fired six shots, hitting Staten in the wrist and stomach.

Staten fled, and White chased her into the emergency room, firing once more. There, with blood on her clothes and a hot pistol in her hand, the attacker was met by another nurse, Joan Black, who did the unthinkable. Black walked calmly to the gun-toting woman—and hugged her.

Black spoke comforting words.

The assailant said she didn't have anything to live for, that Staten had stolen her family.

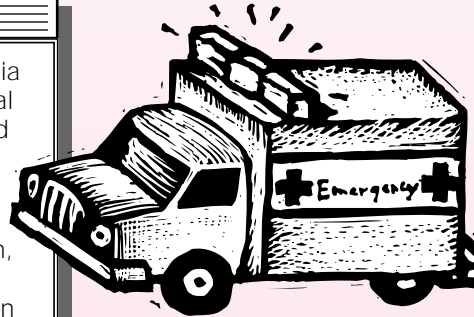
"You're in pain," Black said. "I'm sorry, but everybody has pain in their life . . . I understand, and we can work it out."


As they talked, the hospital invader kept her finger on the trigger. Once she began to lift the gun as though she would shoot herself. Nurse Black just pushed her arm down and continued to hold her. At last Sopehia White gave the gun to the nurse. She was disarmed by a hug, by understanding, by compassion.

Black later told an Associated Press reporter, "I saw a sick person and had to take care of her."

Jesus Christ looks upon us in a similar fashion, as persons sick and broken inside, in need of his care. And it is his embrace that disarms us.

—Tom Tripp, Colusa, California
(from *Leadership Journal*, Winter 1994, p.47)





 **DISCUSS**

How did Joan Black demonstrate compassion?

 **DISCUSS**

What motivated her to respond as she did?




  **WHAT ABOUT YOU?**

YOU are in the hospital nursery at USC Medical Center. The date is August 9, 1993. Suddenly, you hear a loud "popping" sound behind you. Reacting immediately, you quickly turn around. Your eyes become locked with those of a wild-eyed assailant, who is randomly firing a .38-caliber handgun.


What would YOU have done if you were in that situation? Would you have taken action as Nurse Black did?

In your daily life, what factors affect whether you will help someone?

 Few of us will ever find ourselves in an obvious life-threatening situation similar to the one faced by Nurse Black. However, whether we realize it or not, every day we are in the midst of life-and-death situations (in a very real spiritual sense) with those around us who don't know Christ. The outward (or physical) appearance of people can be so misleading that we fail to see "beneath the surface" and observe the true inward (or spiritual) condition of those around us.

 **DISCUSS**

In what situations do you tend to feel or demonstrate compassion for those around you who don't know Christ?
What makes it easy or difficult for you to demonstrate compassion for those around you who don't know Christ?

 Is there anything in my life that keeps me from experiencing compassion for the lost and taking action?

Let's look at how Jesus demonstrated compassion for the lost and what motivated Him to take action . . .



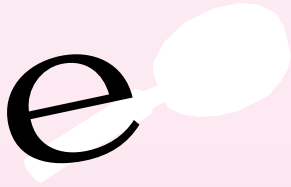
CONTEXT

Jesus had spent more than a year ministering throughout Galilee. His ministry was already attracting large crowds of people.



MATTHEW 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."



OBSERVE

When Jesus looked at the crowd, what did He see?



HARASSED



HELPLESS

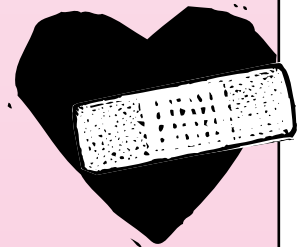


SUMMARIZE

As Jesus saw the needs of the crowd, what did He feel?



COMPASSION



When Matthew writes that Jesus had compassion on the people, he is not saying that Jesus felt casual pity for them. No, the term is far more graphic. Matthew is saying that Jesus felt their hurt in His gut:

- He felt the limp of the crippled.
- He felt the hurt of the diseased.
- He felt the loneliness of the leper.
- He felt the embarrassment of the sinful.

And once He felt their hurts, He couldn't help but heal their hurts. He was moved in the stomach by their needs. He was so touched by their needs that He forgot His own needs. He was so moved by the people's hurts that He put His own needs on the back burner.

—Max Lucado, *In the Eye of the Storm*, Word 1991, p. 54, .



DISCUSS

What action did Jesus take?



WHY?

Why do you think we don't often view people the way Jesus does?



RICK'S STORY

Todd and I were football teammates, but never close friends. Todd was someone I looked up to. He was one of the sharpest guys I knew in college. He had everything going for him—intelligence, movie star looks, good family background. He was also dating the best-looking girl on campus. He was an all-conference football player as a sophomore. Almost any guy on campus would have loved to have been in his shoes. If he needed Christ, it sure didn't appear that way to me. He was so confident of himself—almost cocky.



One day we had the chance to travel together. I thought I should talk to Todd about Jesus, but I resisted. *Not now. I'll talk to him on the way back*, I thought. *I'll use this time to build a relationship*. But on the way back, I found myself thinking, *Why ruin a good evening. He's probably not interested. Besides he knows I'm a Christian. If he wanted to talk, he'd ask. Anyway, I've got all next year to share Christ with him*.

The next year passed and I never took the time to talk to Todd about Christ. He graduated, was drafted in the second round by a professional football team, and had great rookie season.

Within a year, I received a letter containing an article from the local paper from a friend back on campus. My heart sank. Todd had quit the pro team to become part of a religious cult, walking away from a lucrative multi-year contract.

The story went on to explain Todd's "testimony." Amid his outward success he was inwardly unfulfilled and empty. Success, fortune and fame did nothing to fill the void in his life.

I kicked myself. I had been fooled by an appearance. I had bought into a lie that Todd was different from the rest of us—that he didn't have a spiritual need. Since that day I've never looked at people the same.



DISCUSS

- How did Rick see Todd? Why?
- How did Rick feel about Todd?
- How would Jesus have seen Todd?
- What would He have felt for him?



TAKE A STEP:



MOTIVATIONS

- Guilt—I should help or I'll feel bad.
- Performance—I must meet this need to feel successful or significant.
- Compassion—I'll meet this need because I care.

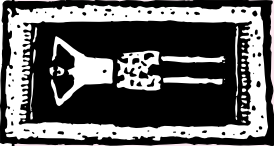


VAN'S STORY

One year, I went to Campus Crusade's spring break conference in Daytona Beach, Florida. The emphasis of the conference is sharing our faith with many of the thousands of college students that come there for spring break. During our first night in Daytona, as my discipleship group of guys and I looked out from the balcony of our motel onto the busy street below, we all couldn't help but be repulsed by what we saw. The blatant grossness and lewdness made us sick. We wondered why we came in the first place! To be honest, at that point, I did *not* have a heart for compassion for the lost students that I saw. My attitude was more like: "Forget about them, God. In the condition they're in, I really doubt that they want to hear about You much less know You."

But then, I remembered why I had come to the conference in the first place: to be used by God to share Christ with others. I remembered that it is not those who are healthy who "are in need of a physician." That night, I spent considerable time in Luke 15, looking at the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son. I saw the value that God places on the lost and the privilege I have to be used by Him to compassionately reach out to others. My perspective for the week was completely changed that night. As I spent time in His Word, God's heart for the lost was renewed within me.

9



TO CULTIVATE COMPASSION FOR THE LOST:

What attitudes do I need to cultivate?	
What actions will I take?	



MY LIST

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |



COMPASSION'S KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is this person's spiritual condition?
2. What actions will I take?

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.