

SHOW US THE FATHER

PSALM 103:13-14

# COMPASSION FOR THE HURTING



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

Fathers, what do you feel when you see your child crying? What do you feel, when you are in ER with your injured daughter. What do you feel, when your child is bullied? What do you feel when your grown-up daughter has a miscarriage? What do you feel when your adult son loses his job? In all these situations you feel compassion, don't you? You see their suffering, in some senses feel their suffering, want to reduce their suffering, and do all you can to relieve their suffering. Compassion is a beautiful characteristic in a father. To receive a father's compassion is such a healing experience. The opposite is extremely hurtful and deeply harmful.

Now listen to this verse: "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him" (Ps. 103:13). Isn't that a stunningly wonderful truth? Think of the time that you felt greatest compassion for your children. So the Lord shows compassion to his children. **How does our heavenly Father show compassion to us?**

## BACKGROUND

It's not easy to understand God. That's why he uses illustration and analogy so much. In verses 11-14, God comes down to our level and uses three comparisons to teach us about who he is:

- **Comparison 1:** The height of God's love. "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him" (11).
- **Comparison 2:** The distance of God's forgiveness. "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (12).
- **Comparison 3:** The depth of God's pity. "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him" (13).

The third comparison that teaches us the depth of God's pity is connected to God's awareness of our weakness. "For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him" (14-17).



Where can I see my heavenly Father's compassion?



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# 1. SEE YOUR FATHER'S COMPASSION IN THE BIBLE

## See your Father's compassion in Israel's life

In addition to innumerable compassionate acts and compassionate laws, God gave specific verses to Israel.

The Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them (Exodus 3:7-8)

For if you return to the Lord, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him (2 Chron. 30:9).

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted (Isa. 49:13; see also Isa. 54:10; 63:7)

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender (Hosea 11:8)

## See your Father's compassion in Christ's life

We see the Father in Christ's multiple acts and words of compassion (John 14:8-9).

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick (Matt. 14:14)

Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him (Matt. 20:34)

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." (Mk. 1:41)

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." (Luke 7:13)

Jesus wept...Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb (John 11:35, 38).

I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat" (Mark 8:2).

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Worship our compassionate God.** Think of how many times "compassion" and synonyms for compassion appear in the Psalms. This is one of the major reasons we are given to worship God. Ponder the tender sensitive heart of our God and let this evoke warm worship towards such a remarkable God.

GOD REVEALS HIS COMPASSION  
IN HIS REVELATION FOR ADORATION

I see God's compassion in Israel's life and Christ's life.  
What about in my life?



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## 2. FEEL YOUR FATHER'S COMPASSION IN YOUR LIFE

When does a dad feel compassion for his children? In the same way and to an even greater degree does our heavenly Father feel compassion for us.

**When we are small.** Most dads will never forget the first feelings they had when they saw their children for the first time. Until you are a dad, you really can't feel this pity for children. God has such compassion for us no matter our age.

**When we sin.** We are much more patient with the sins of our children than we are with adults. We understand their weakness and folly. We may feel both anger and affection. God has similar compassion for us when we sin.

**When we slip.** As dads we learn to distinguish between deliberate sins and accidental slip-ups. We see our children make unintentional mistakes that hurt them. Sometimes we know they are making mistakes but we have to let them so that they learn for the future. God has similar compassion for our slip-ups.

**When we're scared.** Don't you hate it, dads, when your child comes into your room trembling because of a nightmare? "It's OK! I'm here. I'm with you. It wasn't real," we assure them. How many times do we hear God saying in Scripture, "Don't be afraid." He sees our fear, is moved by our fear, and moves to remove our fear.

**When we sag.** How do you feel, dads, when your little one cannot keep their eyes open, when they cannot walk another step? You don't shout at them and demand more do you? No, you pity them and want to carry them or carry them to bed. God is similar when he sees we are tired.

**When we suffer.** Most dads cannot bear to see their children fall and hurt themselves. Their cries of anguish rip our hearts. Similarly when God sees, our physical, emotional, mental, relational, spiritual sufferings, his heart goes out to us.

**When we sleep.** How do you feel, dads, when you see your children sleeping? No matter how much of a rascal they've been through the day, we cannot but melt when we see them sleeping, we stroke their heads and smile. God shows similar compassion to us when we sleep each night, and especially as we go to sleep in death.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Receive your Father's compassion.** Don't ignore it, or shrug it off, or try to live independently. But welcome it to comfort and strengthen you for daily life and service. We receive it by faith. We believe it to feel it.

**Reflect your father's compassion.** This is not just for dads, but for us all (Col. 3:12; Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 3:8). We have multiple opportunities in our lives to show the compassion of our Father.

FAITH IN GOD'S COMPASSION  
HELPS US FEEL GOD'S COMPASSION



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



## SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**Gospel.** When we seek God's salvation, he shows us compassion (Matt. 7:7-11). He does not cruelly hide from seekers but loves to be found by seekers. He loves to give good gifts to seekers, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Service.** Having received our Father's compassion we can reflect our Father's compassion in our family, in our church family, in our neighborhood, in our workplace, in our social circle, in our outreach (Matt. 18:33).

**Prayer.** Compassionate Father, help me to see and feel your compassion so I can show and express your compassion to the hurting.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What other verses and incidents reveal God's compassion?
2. What characters in the Old and New Testament show compassion to others?
3. Who did you show compassion to in the last week? Who will you show compassion to in the coming week?
4. How can you help your children see our heavenly Father's compassion through your fathering?
5. What role does compassion have in evangelism?
6. How would you help someone who got the opposite of compassion from their father.

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