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INTRODUCTION

the edge

What stirs you up?

What grabs your heart?

What compels you to action?

When you see reports from nations torn apart by war, or the massive human devastation of an earthquake...does something move inside of you?

When you feel the needs of others so deep in your gut that you start wondering, “what can I do?” you are on the edge—the edge of compassion.

The edge can offer a great vantage point, but you can’t just remain at your look out spot taking in the view. Compassion steps off the edge, and takes the plunge into a world of hurt, so that others can have some relief, and have some hope.

It’s what Jesus did, and it’s what He’s calling you to do.

You’re on the edge. What’s next?

How to use this journal:

This journal is made especially for use during your short term mission trip. There are 10 days of material to be used during your trip, and then an additional 3 days to help ease you back into real life when your trip is over. While on your trip you'll probably be waking up early and staying up late, but making room for some focused time with God each day is vital. God wants to pour His life and love into you, so that you can give it out to others. Don't miss out on all He wants to do in you and through you!

Each day includes:

Scripture to read and think about.

Some days the verses are written out for you, other days you'll dig into your Bible for yourself. Take time to read the key scriptures over a couple of times and really absorb the meaning.

Questions or activities to complete.

The questions and activities given each day will help you to better understand the meaning of the day's scripture and how it applies to your life and ministry.

Space to write.

This book intentionally contains lots of white space for you to journal your answers to each days questions, your thoughts and prayers, and anything you sense the Lord is saying to you. Getting things down on paper can help solidify the work that God is doing in you on your trip.

Daily Debrief.

Answer these questions at the end of the day to help you process your missions experience. If possible, discuss your answers with your teammates.

God wants to
pour His life
and love into
you, so that
you can give
it out to
others.

PRE-TRIP

getting ready to go

There's way more to getting ready for your mission trip than packing your bags. In the weeks before your trip, take some time to do a few or all of the following extra preparations:

Take a mini-retreat.

If possible, plan a day or even just an afternoon away for you and God. Use the time to complete some of the assignments listed here. Spend a lot of time in prayer just asking God how he wants to prepare you for what's ahead.

Read and think about these key scriptures.

Spend time journaling ways you think the truth they contain will apply to you, your team, and your ministry. If you're able, get together with other teammates and share your thoughts.

- Romans 12
 - Ephesians 6:10-20
 - Isaiah 58:6-12
 - Psalm 67
 - Philippians 2:1-18
-

Be purposeful about praying for what's ahead.

- Gather prayer requests from your team mates about things they'd like prayer for as they prepare for the trip.
- Do some research on the location you're going to visit. Do some research on the internet, or talk to others that have been there to find out needs you can be praying about. The book *Operation World* (Johnstone) can be a helpful resource to find out more about where you are going.
- See if your team leader has the names of specific people or ministries you'll be working with in your trip location. Begin

praying for those people. Pray that God would use you to be a blessing to them

Start thinking outside your bubble

On your mission trip you'll see up close that not everyone thinks like you, lives like you, looks like you, talks like you, or believes like you. Looking at some of the differences between people and cultures before you go will help prepare you for what's ahead.

- Go to an ethnic restaurant (Taco Bell doesn't count) and order something you've never eaten before—then eat it!
 - Talk to someone from another culture. Ask them about what differences they see between American culture and their own.
 - If you're going someplace that speaks a language other than your own, learn a few key phrases.
-

Get the right attitude

There's nothing like the intensity of a mission trip to bring out the best and worst in a person. Start praying about and practicing these attitudes that will be so important in making your trip a success:

- **Selfless:** how can you put other's needs above your own?
- **Servant:** who can you serve today that will take you out of your comfort zone?
- **Flexible:** how patient are you with unexpected changes and obstacles in your day?
- **Teachable:** how ready are you to learn different ways of doing things and looking at situations?

DAY ONE:

god with us

***"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel"
—which means, "God with us."
Mathew 1:23***

Compassion
may start
out as a
feeling, but
it's not really
compassion if
that's where
it ends.

Compassion is way more than just feeling bad for someone, or putting your pocket change in a bucket at church. It's even more than all the "good things" you'll do on this mission trip. As we dig into the Word and listen to the Lord over the next several days, we'll be developing a greater understanding of what compassion really is, and hopefully a passion to live it out. Because compassion may start out as a feeling, but it's not really compassion if that's where it ends.

Let's plow through a couple technicalities regarding the word "compassion" to get us started:

The English word compassion was originally formed from 2 Latin words...one that means "to be with someone" and the other "to suffer." *Why the Latin lesson?* Because it's important to understand that compassion, at its core, means *to be with someone in their suffering*.

There are few things more precious than when one person sticks by another. Not much can make a relationship grow deeper faster,

than when two people suffer through something *together*. Think of a time when someone was by your side through a rough situation or season. It might not have been their problem, but they chose to be by you, and you knew they felt the pain of it all right along with you. Maybe it was a parent as you endured getting your first set of stitches, or a friend that deflected some outrageous rumors. Maybe it was someone who didn't really say a whole lot, but just stayed with you through a big loss. Compassion chooses to enter into the suffering of others.

Take some time to read and think about Matthew 1:23.

How does the name "Immanuel" reflect the idea of compassion?

Now read Philippians 2:5-8. In what ways did Jesus enter into our sufferings?

If you're looking for a role model of compassion, you've found it in Jesus. He left heaven to enter your world. He chose to leave the perfection of heaven, to experience the bumps, bruises, temptations and suffering that goes along with life on earth, which eventually led him to the cross. You have a "with you" God who went to great lengths to be with you.

What do you think it might look like to join someone in their sufferings while on your mission trip?

Take another look at Philippians 2:5-8. Take some time to really dwell on it and let it sink in. Ask the Lord to give you a deeper understanding compassion. Thank him for entering your world so that you could have new life in Him. Worship Immanuel, the God who is with you!

We will never really know God as a
compassionate God if we
do not understand with
our heart and mind that
“he lived among us.”
--Henri Nouwen

the **10** edge

DAILY DEBRIEF

today...

How did you see God at work?

How was your faith challenged?

Who blessed you?

What's something new you learned about your location?

How can you bless others tomorrow?

the 11edge

DAY TWO:

everyone needs compassion

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
Psalm 103:8*

If you belong
to Jesus, then
you have
received more
compassion
than you can
wrap your
mind around.

Let's continue looking at the compassion of God and why we are in such desperate need of it! Giving compassion becomes a whole lot easier when we have a good understanding of how much of it we've actually received ourselves. No one is without the need for compassion!

Let's get started by pulling apart a portion of Psalm 103—a song of praise written about God's amazing love and compassion.

Read and think about Psalm 103:1-13.

Take it a little deeper on verses 9-10 and answer these two questions:

What does God have the right to accuse us of or be angry about?

How do we deserve to be treated or repayed because of our sins?

Now look again at the surrounding verses. Rather than accusing us or punishing us, what does God choose to do instead? List what you discover in verses 3-8, and 11-13:

If you belong to Jesus, then you have been the receiver of more compassion than you can wrap your mind around. Jesus entered your world, and took the payment for your sins. He was treated the way you should have been treated because of your sins. The phrases found in verse 8 are repeated seven times throughout scripture. God wants His people to really get it: HE IS A GOD OF COMPASSION. God's compassion toward you is wrapped up in the mercy and lavish love of the cross.

If the grace and mercy of the cross is so central to God's compassion, how do you think that should affect the way you show compassion to those in need?

Spend some time praying, asking God to let the depth of the compassion you've received really sink in. Ask Him to start developing in you a heart of genuine compassion.

If you have time, try writing your own Psalm about how the Lord has shown his love and compassion in your life. Try using verse 8 as your opening line and go from there.

Praise the Lord, O my soul; who who redeems your life from
the pit and crowns you with compassion.

--Psalm 103:2,4



the **14** edge

DAILY DEBRIEF

today...

How did you see God at work?

How were you challenged to show compassion?

What did you enjoy most?

What made you laugh?

How can you bless others tomorrow?

the 15edge

DAY THREE: **splanchnizomai**

Although it may sound like the name of some highly processed, unidentifiable, meat product, *splanchnizomai* is really a very significant word as you study compassion. *Splanchnizomai* is a Greek word that came from another Greek word meaning *spleen, intestine or bowels*.¹ (Maybe it is an unidentifiable meat product!?) *Splanchnizomai* means to be moved deep within us (in our gut!) by the suffering or pain of others (in Jesus time they would have referred to the bowels much like we refer to the heart as the center of our emotions, etc).

STAY WITH THIS. It's all about to make a lot of sense.

When the New Testament was originally written in Greek, the word *splanchnizomai* was only used 12 times in the whole thing. Nearly every time it is used it is referring to Jesus or God, and in English is often translated, "moved with compassion".

Look up the following scriptures, which all contain the phrase, "moved with compassion" (or something similar). Record whatever it was that caused Jesus to feel compassion and what he did as a result. Really try and put yourself at the scene, imagining how each character might have felt. Be amazed at Jesus' miracles, but look closely at his words and small actions as well. (We'll be looking at several of the other passages in the next couple days.)

Matthew 9:35-36

Matthew 14:13-21 (Mark 6:34-43 tells the same story) Note: what had happened just previous to this event is that Jesus' friend and relative, John the Baptist had been killed. Keep in mind the pain Jesus' must have been in and still showed compassion to so many!

Matthew 15:29-38 (almost a repeat of 14:13-21, Mark 8:1-10 tells the same story)

Matthew 20:29-34

Deep in his gut, Jesus was moved by the needs of others, and what he felt on the inside led to compassionate, God-powered action on the outside. What's exciting about these stories is not only that Jesus displayed his power to heal and do miraculous things, but that he was moved so deeply by the pain and suffering he saw that he had to do something about it. God is so very, *very* aware of the needs in this world. He is aware your pain. He is aware of the hurting people you may be ministering to.

What are some of the hurts you are seeing among the people you are ministering to this week?

How does it help to know that God is “moved with compassion” when he sees those same needs?

How do you think the way Jesus showed compassion in these passages should influence the way that you minister on your mission trip?

Spend some time praying, asking God to continue to develop that “*splangchnizomail* sort of compassion that takes action” in you.

¹Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, electronic e-Sword edition

The world is a dangerous place. Not because those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.
--Albert Einstein



DAILY DEBRIEF

today...

How did you see God at work?

How was your faith challenged?

Why are you thankful?

What was hardest for you?

How can you bless others tomorrow?

the 19edge