

## *Acts of Compassion* group study

### **Session 8** **Bringing it back**

#### **1. Preparation: Read Chapters 18-20 in *Acts of Compassion***

#### **2. Opening prayer**

Ask God to help you begin something new in your life such as showing kindness in every relationship and being more aware of times when you can show someone compassion.

#### **3. Warm-up question**

What is one of your favorite road trips or vacations? When did it take place?

#### **4. Chapter summaries and key points**

Chapter 18—Compassion and happiness

Research confirms that doing acts of compassion can make us feel happier.

- Acts of compassion help us look for what's positive in situations as well as view our own life issues with more grace and understanding.
- Simply thinking about doing an act of compassion can make you feel happier.
- Strive each day to make your number of positive and compassionate interactions outnumber the negative ones.

Chapter 19—Compassion stories

Stories came from all types of organizations and individuals. In all of the stories, you can see the power of kindness and the lasting benefit for the person who received it.

- Ways that compassion improved someone's life.
- Compassion among friends and through connecting.
- When compassion helps lots of people.

Chapter 20—Compassion for life

Think about *why* you choose to live as a compassionate person. Perhaps you want to show gratitude, bring joy to others or demonstrate God's spirit within you.

- Linda's mother learned names of caretakers in nursing home.
- Work on sneaky ways to show compassion to difficult people.
- Build a sense of empathy and caring for all people you cross paths with in life.

#### **5. Scripture reading *Philippians 2:1-2***

What we have received from God, we are encouraged to share with others.

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,<sup>1</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.<sup>2</sup>*

#### **6. Discussion questions**

When was a time in your life where you showed compassion and it made you feel happy?

What are some of the biggest reasons *why* you want to be more compassionate?

Recall a time when an act of compassion (yours or someone else's) was especially important or meaningful to you. Share the story about this.

During the weeks of this study on compassion, who has touched your life in a warm and caring way? This could be someone in this group or in your regular daily life.

What's the most important thing you learned from this study and how will you apply that to your life?

### **Actions for this week**

Spend some time reviewing all of the lessons from this group study. Pick out a few of the most important things you've learned and record them on a note card or in a document on your computer. Determine ways you can build an identity of being a compassionate person.

Do each of the reflection exercises at the end of the book. Use them to deepen your understanding about compassion and ways to show it to others as well as yourself.

### **Closing prayer**

Ask God to give you a spirit of being a compassionate person and to help you show kindness, love and caring to everyone who crosses your path in life.

### **Additional scriptures**

If time permits, have someone read these scriptures, then talk about how compassion is described in each of them.

As God has cared for us, so we care for others: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

The timing of God's compassion for us: Isaiah 30:18

Important times to be there with others: Romans 12:15