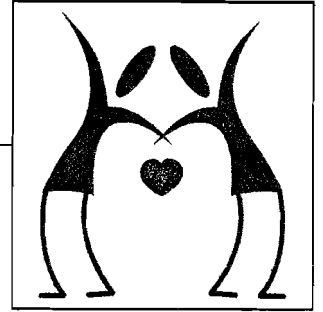


A Heart for People



God's initiative towards us comes from His love. If we are to minister to those around us we must have a genuine love for people. This love must be one of action and not merely thought and word. We can learn about having a heart for people by examining Jesus' relationships, as well as the life of Paul and others who loved sacrificially.

I. God's Heart for People

The Christian life is God living in us, making us more like Jesus. We need to minister in ways that reflect His character. God has a deep love and compassion for His people. This is seen in the Father's caregiving towards us and in the way Jesus related to people during His time on earth.

A. How does Jesus reveal His compassion towards people in the following passages?

Mt 9:35-37

Jn 11:11-10

Mt 14:14

Mt 23:37-38

How can we see Jesus' value for individuals in these interactions?

B. Contrast Jesus response to the people with the responses of others.

Mt 14:15-16

Mt 20:29-34

Mt 22:37-39

C. How would you describe Jesus' heart attitude toward people?

D. Skim the book of Jonah. Contrast God's heart for Ninevah and Jonah's heart.

Which heart is your's most like?

E. What can we learn about God's heart for people from the following verses?

Jdg 2:18

Neh 9:19

Is 49:10-15

Ezek 39:25

When God looks at people, such as the Ninevites He sees beyond their sins, insecurities, and lack of power. God sees channels through which He can work. He sees His creation made to reflect His image. Consider these verses in light of God's value for weak men and women.

I Cor 1:26-31

II Cor 4:7-9

II Cor 12:9-10

Gen 4:10-13

Deut 7:7

II. Other Examples of Compassionate Hearts

The Apostle Paul exhibits a heart for the people that he ministered to in his communication with them and in how he lived among them. This same sacrificial heart is seen in the relationship between Jonathan and David.

A. Read through I Samuel 20. What do you see about the relationship between Jonathan and David? In what ways do these men exhibit hearts for one another?

- B. The Apostle Paul is often described in scripture as teaching, exhorting, and rebuking, those he ministered to. And yet Paul had a deep love for them. How is this love demonstrated in the following verses?

I Thess 2:7-8

I Thess 2:17

I Thess 3:12

II Cor 2:4

Phil 4:1

III. Commands to Be Compassionate and Loving

God instructs us to be compassionate and loving to those who are in Christ and to those who are outside the body of Christ.

- A. What do the following passages teach us about compassion for others?

Phil 2:1

Col 3:12

- B. What are we told about loving others in the following verses?

Rom 13:8-10

Gal 5:13

I Pet 4:8

I Pet 1:22

- C. Who should we love?

Mt 5:43-46

Mt 22:39

IV. The Nature of A Heart for People

Meditate on the following passages and then write a description of what a heart for people looks like. Incorporate the other verses you have read in this study.

I Jn 3:16-18

I Cor 13

II Cor 5:14-20

Acts 9:10-19

Acts 15:36-40

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER:

What is the condition of your heart for people?

Who do you know who deeply loves people? How did they develop this characteristic in their lives?

What happens when we try to minister without have a genuine love for people?