

THE  
DISCIPLESHIP  
PLACE

Jesus the Master Teacher



**SESSION 3**

Why Teach? To Share Your Passion for  
God's Word and Your Servant's Heart

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# Why Teach? To Share Your Passion for God's Word and Your Servant's Heart

## SESSION OVERVIEW

**What Does a Passion for God's Word Mean?**

**How Do You Share Your Servant Heart?**

**How Did Jesus Share His Compassionate Servant Heart? An Example**

**Application**

**Exam**

**Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant**

## LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- define what it means to share your passion for God's Word
- describe tangible ways you can share your servant's heart
- identify people in your life who have shared their compassion and servants' hearts with you and others

# Why Teach? To Share Your Passion for God's Word and Your Servant's Heart



## INTRODUCTION

### JOURNALING

In this lesson, just as in the previous and following lessons, it is suggested you keep a journal. I purposely keep my stories of events in my life in a journal so I never forget God's blessings in my life. Your reflections on God's truth and grace are meant to be shared and as a teacher, you need to tell some of your story to illustrate God's goodness. Journal prompts are provided at the end of the lesson but feel free to record your thoughts and share those that you want with your mentor, your students, or your Christian friends. Reflect and write . . . Remember God's many blessings!

### AN INEXPERIENCED TEACHER, AN ORANGE PINTO, AND A SERVANT'S HEART

Steven Carpenter began teaching the Bible in his early fifties. He knew nothing about curriculum, instructional techniques, models of teaching, or logical reasoning; and he only had a high school education. Trained as a mechanic, he had been a Christian for 10 years, devoured the Bible on a daily basis, and was passionate about his relationship with God. Steven was my Bible teacher.

I was a single mom and teacher, I went to weekly Bible study class, and I owned (with the bank) a broken-down orange Pinto. From the very beginning, I critiqued (to myself) Stephen's teaching technique. He didn't begin with a focus, he didn't have points I could follow, his notes were unclear, he never asked us questions, and his grammar was poor. After five weeks, I was considering going to another group study with a "more educated" teacher. That is when Steven called me.

Steven said he and his wife, Janice had been praying for me. He said they wanted to invite my 3-year-old daughter and me to an early dinner at their home. And, he added he hoped I could get there in my "orange mode of transportation." I quickly accepted their invitation. Steven and his wife greeted us with a beautiful dinner (much better than our typical pot pies and boxed macaroni), an open promise to watch my daughter several days a week (I could only afford three days of preschool), and free maintenance on my orange Pinto, for as long as it lasted! From that day until we moved, Steven and Janice adopted us, loved us, cared for us, prayed for us, and most importantly shared their passion for God's Word with their servant hearts.

Immediately, my critical spirit disappeared, but not because his teaching techniques improved. Instead, I felt his passion for the Word of God as he and his wife became Christ to me. Together they demonstrated the servant attitude of Christ, they acted out the scripture, and they became the good news of the gospel.

So, how does this story relate to the question, “Why Teach?” Steven taught me the importance of being a compassionate servant of God, a teacher that shares a passion for His Word with a servant’s heart. I learned that an attitude is more important than teaching techniques; actions are more important than organized outlines; and that a gift of yourself to someone with needs is more important than all the education or information that can be taught. I do not remember one word of a Bible study Steven presented or Janice expressed in our many conversations. What I will always remember is their compassion for me. I am forever blessed by Steven and Janice, servants of Jesus Christ!

## WHAT DOES A PASSION FOR GOD'S WORD MEAN?



### NOTES

What does passion mean? The first definition in the dictionary simply states, "Passion (n) describes the suffering of Jesus Christ." Certainly the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our belief and of critical importance to a teacher of God's Word. For the purposes of this lesson, however, I want to use a second definition, i.e., passion (n), an intense emotion or enthusiasm, the object of enthusiasm; a desire or fervor or strong appetite. How exciting it would be if we could all be teachers who have a desire, fervor, a strong appetite, or a passion for the Word of God and could demonstrate that passion to our students!

Passionate teaching does not mean you yell chants like you do at a football game, you cry or sob emotionally, or you suddenly do cartwheels in front of your students (although that might wake up some of them!). It does not mean you fake an emotion you do not feel or pretend to always have an appetite for daily scripture reading and prayer. What it does mean is you convey how important the Word of God is in your life, and you talk about how the Word guides, comforts, encourages, convicts, and teaches you. People will convey passion in their own ways, but genuine enthusiasm for the Word will be obvious to your students and can make a difference in their lives.

So how do you teach WITH passion? Compassion is a word that means WITH passion for others. As defined, compassion is an important attribute of a teacher of God's Word. If we are to teach God's Word WITH passion, it makes sense we should be caring and compassionate to others. Jesus taught WITH passion and modeled compassion in His teachings.

When Jesus heard that His friend Lazarus had died and found his sister Mary weeping: *"Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled . . . Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, 'See how He loved him'"* (John 11:33, 35-36)!

As Jesus prayed in the garden before His death: *"Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:43-44).

The Scriptures also addresses the importance of Christ's disciples to care passionately for others.




**NOTES**

*“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of other” (Philippians 2:3-4).*

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).*

*“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36).*

Without a doubt, Jesus was compassionate and as His followers, we should demonstrate that same compassion to others.

In numerous educational research studies, students of all ages from a variety of countries and cultures and from many different disciplines were asked what made a great teacher. Overwhelmingly, students responded that great teachers cared for them, “taught with their hearts, not only with their minds,” and were empathetic to their needs. In other words, even students of “worldly” teachers respected and desired teachers who demonstrated compassion or spoke with passion about their topic. As teachers of the Word, we have every reason to be passionate when we demonstrate compassion to our students.

Truthfully, it is impossible to have equal compassion for every person in your group of students. Yes, you can try to see needs and address them, you can care for them as God directs, and you can pray for them fervently and specifically. Compassion is not quantifiable; in other words, there is no score that shows the number of people who receive your “compassion gift.” Rather, it is an attitude of caring for those in need. It is reaching out and taking hold of the one that happens to be nearest to you. Perhaps the way you can best teach with passion for others is to introduce students to the One who knows their needs better than any human can, the One who cares more deeply for them than anyone else, the One who is compassionate to everyone—Jesus Christ, the Word.

A Methodist minister, Frank Graeff, was faced with a series of personal struggles. As a result, he suffered from depression, intense physical pain, and he even began questioning if God cared for him. In 1901, he read the words of Peter “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you,” (1 Peter 5:7), and transferred them into a song (*The Gaither Homecoming Bible* pg.1612-1613, 2012, Thomas Nelson, Inc.) that expresses a compassionate Jesus better than I possibly could.

**NOTES*****Does Jesus Care?***

*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained  
Too deeply for mirth or song,  
As the burdens press, and the cares distress  
And the way grows weary and long?*

*Does Jesus care when my way is dark  
With a nameless dread and fear?  
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,  
Does He care enough to be near?*

*Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed  
To resist some temptation strong:  
When for my deep grief there is no relief,  
Though my tears flow all the night long?*

*Does Jesus care when I've said "goodbye"  
To the dearest on earth to me,  
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks,  
Is it aught to him? Does He see?*

*Oh yes, He cares, I know He cares  
His heart is touched with my grief.  
When the days are weary, the long night's dreary.  
I know my Savior cares. (Graeff, 1901)*



## HOW DO YOU SHARE YOUR SERVANT HEART?



### NOTES

Jesus modeled compassion and the heart of a servant. When a dispute occurred among His disciples as to which of them was the greatest, Jesus responded quite forcibly, “Kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles. It’s not going to be that way with you. Let the senior among you become like the junior; let the leader act the part of the servant. Who would you rather be: the one who eats the dinner or the one who serves the dinner? You’d rather eat and be served, right? But I’ve taken my place among you as the one who serves... be strengthened as you take up responsibilities among the congregations of God’s people” (Luke 22:24 – 27, 30, The Message). Clearly, we are to have a compassionate and servant heart for our students.

So, how do we share our compassion for others with a servant heart? As already noted, educational researchers report that caring and teaching from the heart is an important attribute of a great teacher. These same researchers recommend four methods to demonstrate a teacher’s care for students. In the following paragraphs, these recommendations are listed along with a description of them as they pertain to Bible teachers. The last recommendation is one I added to the list because of its specific importance for teachers of God’s Word.

- **Get to Know Your Students and the Lives They Live.** Your adult students have a great variety of life experiences, needs, wants, joys, and trials. Their lives include diverse families, workplace friends and enemies, current and past friends, and community neighbors as well as acquaintances and friends in your church community. To be able to care for them, you need to get to know your students. This can be done in many ways using creative strategies. The following list gives some practical suggestions I have found very helpful. Please know this is not an all-inclusive list; use your creativity and discretion to match your ideas with your students’ needs.
  - Meeting for coffee at your favorite coffee shop
  - Celebrating “decade” birthdays with church and family friends
  - Inviting students to your home for holiday dinners
  - Asking students to present a five-minute “This is My Life!” show
  - Sitting in a hospital waiting room with family members who have an ill relative


**NOTES**

- “The Newlywed Game” or “The Millionaire” at a class get-together
  - Attending a play or sports activity as a group
  - Offering to help with food or care when students are experiencing illness or a specific difficulty
  - Having a “Guess Who” dinner with baby or child pictures of class students
  - Attending the sports games of students’ children or grandchildren
- **Actively Listen to Students.** For some of us (including me), listening is not an easy task. My habit of “speaking through every quiet moment” is a poor choice for a teacher, especially when I want to demonstrate compassion. You (and I) need to learn to listen to students’ hearts, not just their words. Listen to students as they respond to questions from the lesson or as they contribute an idea or thought. Look at them when they talk and pay attention to their facial expressions or their reaction to specific ideas. Listen as they make requests for prayer. Record those requests and keep up with the status of the request by asking for updates and specific answers to those prayers. Make every possible attempt to remember their names, pronounce them correctly, and use them often.
  - **Ask Students for Responses.** Some students respond to questions or ideas frequently and enjoy word interactions. Others (or most students) will not volunteer frequently and prefer to remain in the background during Bible study time. It is up to you, the teacher, to draw students out and to make them recognize their opinions are important to everyone in the group and that you care about what they think. It is important to begin with simple ideas first. I often prepare for a lesson by thinking about one word or idea everyone could respond to. For example, for a lesson on patience, I ask them to tell when they have “waited” or for a lesson during advent, I ask them to tell a family tradition they have concerning their Christmas tree. Sometimes I just give them one word and everyone needs to respond quickly with a word response. Other times, I ask them to partner up and respond to their partner in similar ways. Whatever you do, please give students time to think about a specific question. I often tell them before the lesson begins to think of an answer to a particular question and to be ready to respond at a set time.

 NOTES

Finally, your response to students' responses is very important. Students do not respond again if you ignore their answer, act like you thought their ideas were superficial or not reasonable, or don't pay attention to what they say. As you teach, explicitly use their idea to connect to an idea within another point in the lesson. Statements like, "Remember what Amanda just said..." or "Jason just said the next point of the lesson in a better way than I had planned... thank you Jason!" or "What do you think the answer would be to Freda's questions?" show them their responses were valuable. This will encourage them to happily contribute again.

- **Reflect on Your Own Experiences with Care.** We know your capacity to demonstrate care with a servant heart is highly dependent on your own experiences. Teachers most often teach like they were taught. Some of us were raised to be independent and encourage others to "Buck up!" We see a need of care as a sign of weakness or inadequacy. Others are actually caregivers who have a spouse, other relative, or a friend they spend each day demonstrating a caring attitude. They understand people need compassion and yet they may be too tired to show compassion to others. Still others may be frightened of caring too much because they have been hurt many times when they cared for others. Each of us have different issues here. Just remember to think about compassion and care for others as an attribute of a disciple of Christ. More importantly, remember you have an advocate and mentor in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit who will teach you to be a servant if you only ask. This knowledge makes all the difference in the world!
- **Remember You are a Redeemed Servant of Christ.** Most importantly, remember that by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you have been redeemed! What a joy it is to serve the Redeemer of your life, the One who gave you eternal life, the One who had compassion on you when you were a sinner, the One who has forgiven you much. As a redeemed servant of Christ, remember you can say with Paul, I am a "bondservant" of Jesus Christ . . . "Christ will be magnified in my body whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:1, 20).

## HOW DID JESUS SHARE HIS COMPASSIONATE SERVANT HEART? AN EXAMPLE

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### NOTES

The example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet is the perfect picture of Jesus' compassionate, servant heart. When I am tempted to complain or feel like a failure as a compassionate servant of Christ, I reread the story found in John 13:1-17. After responding to Peter's statement, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus said something we all need to remember.

*"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you IF YOU DO THEM" (John 13:13 - 17).*

### CLOSING THOUGHT

Please note Jesus did not say, "Blessed are you if you KNOW you should be a compassionate servant." He did not say, "Blessed are you if you TEACH people how to have a servant's heart." He did not even say, "Blessed are you if you PRACTICE being a servant to help PREPARE to be a compassionate servant." He said, "Blessed are you if YOU DO THE THINGS I HAVE SHOWN YOU TO DO. FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE." My prayer for you and me as teachers of the Word is that we will follow His example.

## APPLICATION



### NOTES

Be prepared to share your three application activities with your mentor.

1. Define what it means to you if you share a passion for God's Word with your students. Specifically describe the indicators in your life and the lessons that reveal to your students that you are a passionate servant of Christ.
2. Review the ways you can share your servant heart with your students. List at least three tangible ways that would be easy for you to demonstrate compassion. Tell why they would be easy for you. Select one listed way that would be difficult for you and explain the difficulty. Finally, describe one way that was not mentioned and explain it in more detail.
3. Identify one or two people in your life who have shared their compassion and servant's heart with you and/or others. Write one of them a letter thanking him or her for the gift to you and specifically describe what it meant to you.

### JOURNALING

Consider some of the following when journaling:

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

## EXAM

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**NOTES**

1. For the purpose of this lesson, defines passion as the suffering of Jesus Christ.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. To teach with passion means conveying \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. how important the Word of God is to you
  - B. how difficult it is to truly understand Scripture
  - C. how to use Scripture to win arguments
  - D. all of the above
3. Getting to know your students will require being a part of their life outside of times of teaching.
  - A. True
  - B. False
4. The best way to draw students out for discussion is to start with difficult questions so they have to think deeply.
  - A. True
  - B. False
5. When a student responds to a question you ask, it is not necessary to respond back to their answer.
  - A. True
  - B. False



## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT

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**NOTES**

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor:

1. Give a copy of your responses to the first application activity to your mentor before you meet.
2. Share with your mentor why you teach or why you will teach in light of this lesson. Ask your mentor to tell why he or she teaches.