



Sacrifice and Generosity in Compassion

Living in the Image of God Module 02 Session 04

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Living in the Image of God

- God creates every person to represent him in interactions with others
- Be for others what God would be for them if he lived with us in human form
- He provides resources for people to perform the responsibilities and blesses those that do
- Program seeks to understand the meaning, resources, and human responsibilities and benefits of *Living in the Image of God*

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What We Will Learn

- Compassion entails sacrifice: denying self something of value to provide for a needy
- Examples from David and Ruth
- Compassion entails generosity: providing willingly and voluntarily and motivated only by “hunger and thirst for righteousness”
- Paul defines generosity in compassion in a message to Corinthians

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Sacrifice in Compassion

- Opportunity cost of goods or service provided to address a need in a call to compassion
- Value of goods or service that a person denies to self in order to provide for a needy
- Credit for a giving that costs nothing to the giver belongs to another that bears the cost
- Example from David: an altar for atonement
- Example from Ruth: persistence with Naomi

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David Builds an Altar

- David needed to build an altar at a specific site to end a plague against Israel
- The owner offered the property and other goods free-of-charge to David
- David refused the free-of-charge offer and paid for the property
- “I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing”
- 2 Samuel 24:18–25

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2 Samuel 24 (NIV)

18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, “Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

19 So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad.

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20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

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22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.

23 Your Majesty, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the Lord your God accept you."

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24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

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25 David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

- David sustained a cost to build altar and make offerings on behalf of Israel
- The plague on Israel ended

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- Naomi's husband and two sons died in Moab
- Naomi released her Moabite daughters-in-law to depart from her and seek new life
- Ruth recognized Naomi's need for family and insisted she will remain with Naomi for life
- Abandoned foreseeable opportunity and opted for uncertain future with Naomi
- Ruth 1:8–9 and 16–17

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8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me.

9 May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud

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Ruth 1 (NIV)

14 At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

15 “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”

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Ruth 1 (NIV)

16 But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.”

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Generosity in Compassion

- Generosity in compassion means giving willingly as your heart leads you
- Give generously: according to your ability to address the need
- Give cheerfully: to convey to the beneficiary a message of God’s love and care
- 2 Corinthians 9:6–7

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2 Corinthians 9 (NIV)

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

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What We Learned

- Compassion entails sacrifice and generosity
- God expects your effort will cost you something of value that you deny yourself to alleviate another’s need
- Will be voluntary and constrained only by your ability to address the need
- Motivated only by your desire to convey God’s love and care to another

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Sacrifice and Generosity in Compassion

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Compassion entails sacrifice and generosity. Sacrifice is the value of goods and service that a person denies self to alleviate another's need. Generosity implies a person's effort in compassion is voluntary, constrained only by his or her ability to address the need, and motivated only by a desire to convey God's love and care to the needy.

This bible study seeks to expand our understanding of compassion through a discussion of the role of sacrifice and generosity in providing goods or service to alleviate another person's suffering. Compassion entails sacrifice, which means that a person will deny himself or herself something of value in responding to alleviate the need of another. Furthermore, compassion entails generosity, which means that a person's effort in a call to compassion has to be voluntary, constrained only by his or her ability to address the need, and motivated only by a desire to convey God's love and care to the person in need.

We discuss an example from David and one from Ruth to understand the nature of sacrifice in compassion. Also, we discuss from Paul's message to the Corinthians to understand the implications of generosity in compassion.

Sacrifice in Compassion

In a call to compassion, sacrifice is the opportunity cost of goods and service provided to alleviate the need. That is, sacrifice is the value of goods and service that the provider denies to himself or herself in order to provide for the needy. In the example we discussed previously under **Call to Compassion Example—Good Samaritan**, the Samaritan sustained costs of time and materials to provide first aid and transport the robber victim to an inn. Furthermore, he sustained additional cost in direct cash payment and promise of additional payment to the inn for expected treatment of the victim.

If the goods or service cost nothing to the provider, then some other person likely bears the cost and will receive the credit. We discuss two examples to illustrate the nature of sacrifice in compassion: one example from David and one from Ruth.

Example 1: David Builds an Altar

In a message to David through Prophet Gad, God told David to build an altar at a specific site to end a plague against Israel: "On that day Gad went to David and said to him, 'Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite'" [2 Samuel 24:18]. David was the king of Israel and wanted to build the altar as God commanded in order to alleviate his people's suffering. Araunah the Jebusite offered the property free of charge to David, along with other items David needed for the altar and offering [2 Samuel 24:22–23]: "Araunah said to David, 'Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. Your Majesty, Araunah gives all this to the king...May the Lord your God accept you.'"

However, David refused the free-of-charge offer and insisted on paying for the property: "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing" [2 Samuel 24:24]. He paid for the property and materials: "So David bought the

threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them” [2 Samuel 24:24]. He built an altar there, made offerings, and prayed for Israel. Thereafter, the plague on Israel stopped.

Example 2: Ruth Chooses to Live with Naomi

The account of Ruth’s relationship with Naomi begins after Naomi’s husband and two sons died in Moab. Thereafter, Naomi released her Moabite daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth to depart from her and seek new life. They both resisted initially but Orpah was later persuaded, accepted the release, and left [Ruth 1:14]: “At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.”

Ruth insisted on building life with Naomi because she recognized Naomi’s need for family and committed to doing what she could to alleviate Naomi’s suffering: [Ruth 1:16-17]: “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.”

As we discuss under **Ruth Joins Naomi—Faith Human Effort and Compassion**, Ruth’s choice to stay with Naomi meant a personal sacrifice. She abandoned the opportunity for an alternate life with reasonably foreseeable future and opted instead for life with the mother of her dead husband with the associated uncertainty of potentially living as a spinster in a foreign land.

Generosity in Compassion

In responding to a call to compassion, generosity means that a person’s effort to alleviate the need is voluntary, constrained only by his or her ability to address the need, and motivated only by a desire to convey God’s love and care to the needy. Paul discussed generosity in his letter to the Corinthians [2 Corinthians 9:6–7]: “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Summary of What We Learned

Compassion entails sacrifice and generosity. Sacrifice is the value of goods and service that a person denies self to alleviate another’s need. Generosity implies a person’s effort in compassion is voluntary, constrained only by his or her ability to address the need, and motivated only by a desire to convey God’s love and care to the needy.