



Individual Devotional Study Guides Week #3

Using the Devotional

Each week is designed to help you focus on the 7 final statements of Jesus on the cross. For seven weeks starting on February 12th, you will have a daily devotional and exercise that will take you through a variety of spiritual disciplines to help you grow spiritually. Here is what your week will look like:

Monday - Main devotional

Tuesday - Reading and
Listening. (Lectio Divina)

Wednesday - Question /
Reflection / Application.

Thursday - Devotional
Prayer guide.

Friday - Reading and
Listening. (Lectio Divina)

Saturday - Question /
Reflection / Application.

Sunday - Guided Journaling
and worship in community

What is Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina is a way of studying and praying the Scriptures so that the Word of God may penetrate the heart and lead to acquiring God's perspective and love for the world. Through Lectio Divina, a person gradually let's go of their own agenda and becomes open to what God is communicating to them. Developed in the 12th century by Guigo, a Carthusian monk, Lectio Divina, a Latin term meaning "divine reading", consists of four steps.

The **first stage** is lectio (reading). One reads a passage in the Word of God in an unhurried manner several times to become familiar with it. Any text of Scripture may be used, but it should not be too long. (Bible reading plans

with a daily set of passages for a year, while worthwhile in themselves, work against this approach.)

In the **second stage**, meditatio (reflection), one ponders the text and thinks about how to apply it to one's life.

The **third stage**, oratio (response), involves responding to the Holy Spirit, inspired by one's reflection on God's Word. Here one speaks to God from the heart – acknowledging woundedness, asking for forgiveness, giving thanks, praising God, rejoicing, and so on.

During the **final stage**, contemplatio (rest), one rests in silence and solitude. It means listening to God by opening one's heart and soul, and letting go of one's own ideas, plans, and meditations.

Week 3: "Compassion" February 26-March 3

Monday – February 26

Compassion

Individual Reflection

Prayer of Preparation

Heavenly Father,
I offer you my life today. Help me to slow down and listen to You. Please speak into my very being whatever you want me to hear today and transform me more into your likeness from our time spent together. Help me to be obedient to follow through with whatever you ask of me.
Amen.

Statement from the Cross #3

...He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." John 19:26-27

Thoughts of a Fellow Sojourner

What causes a person to risk his or her life to help someone else? As I watched the news about the bombing today, I was heartbroken as I thought about all the people that were impacted by this tragedy. My eyes were flooded with more devastating images than my mind could process. But, then I saw them. Right there in the middle of the chaos, there were a couple of people, normal ordinary citizens, who couldn't just run away without helping. When everyone was being told to leave the area in case there were more bombs, these two-people stopped to help the injured. The image that caught me was when they both took off their jackets to either help prevent shock or possibly bind up a wound. No matter the case, these two people gave hope during tragedy. But, I bet if you asked them, they would say that there was no other option for them. They had to help because something inside them drove them to help. That something inside is called "compassion." The Greek word for compassion, *splanchna*, actually refers to being moved by a situation or circumstance from the center of our essence. In other words, compassion is that feeling in our gut that drives us to care for others in need.

Even as Jesus was hanging on the Cross, he was moved from the depths of his being to care for his mother. In spite of his own anguish and pain, he was filled with compassion for the woman who had been chosen to give birth to him and then raise him to adulthood. As she stood watching his crucifixion, Jesus spoke words that would place her under the care of one of his closest friends. What she heard and experienced was compassion.

Moment of Reflection

Take some time in silence for reflection, meditation, or simply to listen to what God wants to speak into you.

Written Response

Close your time by writing to God a response or plan for application.

Prayer of Consummation

*Lord Jesus,
Even while hanging on the cross, abandoned by those You came to save,
Your compassionate hand never ceased in reaching to those in need.
Thank you Jesus for Your unfathomable act of
compassion on the cross. Teach us how to show
Your compassion to others;*

*Lead us where Your compassion is most radically required;
Open our eyes to whom we may reach out Your compassionate hand to
in our very lives this day; Amen.*

Tuesday – February 27

Compassion

Individual Reflection

Lectio Divina: (**Lectio Divina** is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.)

1. Read John 19:25-27 slowly a few times (Lectio)

25 Jesus' mother stood near his cross. So did his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 Jesus saw his mother there. He also saw the disciple he loved standing nearby.

Jesus said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." 27 He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, the disciple took her into his home.

2. Ponder the text (Meditatio)

Who really is my mother? Who really is my brother?

What does it mean to have a new family in Christ? What is my place in this new family?

3. Speak to God (Oratio)

Make Colossians 3:12-14 personal:

*Therefore, as God's chosen child, holy and dearly loved, I will clothe myself with **compassion**, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. I will bear*

*with my Christian brothers and sisters and I will **forgive** whatever grievances I might have with someone. I will **forgive** them as the Lord has forgiven me. And over all those virtues I will put on **love**, which will bind us all together, as one family, in **perfect unity**.*

4. Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

What grievance do I have against another that I need to let go? Who is hurting in my church family that I need to go to and love?

Who outside my church family needs the love and compassion of Christ?

Speak Lord, for your servant in listening.

Wednesday – February 28

Compassion

Individual Reflection

Intro:

Compassion is what drove Jesus to the earth. His compassion for the world and everyone who has ever lived on it. He knew we were separated from God by our sin, but through the compassion in his heart, he set aside everything he had to come and die a death that he did not deserve. Compassion is the reason Jesus was on earth, and as his disciples we are called to carry on that same ideal.

Items needed:

A person in need of compassion.

Directions:

We all go through life and a lot of us have the same routine every day. Sometimes we get so much into the routine that we don't see what's actually happening in the world around us. Almost every day, we walk by people in need. It could be a homeless person on the street or the single mom who works three jobs to feed her family. We all know someone in

need. Today, ask God to open your eyes to the people in need around you. Then, as he opens your eyes to them, do what it takes to show them compassion. Don't worry about the factors involved. Just do what you can meet their immediate needs as you show them the compassion of Jesus.

Thursday – March 1

Compassion

Individual Prayer Guide

John 19:26-27 — *"When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, 'Dear woman, here is your son.' And he said to this disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from then on this disciple took her into his home."*

Compassion was part of Jesus' nature. His whole life spoke of compassion, whether he was healing the sick, touching people suffering with leprosy, or playing with children. Jesus was able to find a way to have compassion, no matter who he dealt with. That being said, it is no surprise that in this account from the gospel of John, Jesus uses some of his last minutes of life to extend compassion upon the most important woman in his life. If Jesus had died, his mother Mary would have been elderly, poor, and unable to survive.

With what little strength he had left Jesus took compassion on her and made sure she was taken care of. We can even take this a step farther and say that Jesus' entire life was an act of compassion. He was God incarnate, God in the form of a man, He was God extending compassion to the entire world. His entire life was an expression of it and as a result, if we follow him, it should characterize our lives as well.

Prayer:

Compassion was a driving force behind Jesus' mission in the world. Some would even say it was the driving force. Where is compassion in your life? What motivates you too compassion? Have you ever felt compassion? This prayer is one way of exploring the impact of compassion on your life.

1. Sit in silence. Focus on the idea of compassion. Pay attention to how it makes you feel. Comfortable? Uncomfortable? Scared? Sad? Hang on to that emotion.

2. Acknowledge God's presence. Thank him for joining you and for the compassion he extends to you daily.
3. Ask God what role compassion should be playing in your life. Do you need to have more of it? Do you need to extend it to a specific person? Is there a specific way God is moving you towards compassion? Pay attention to whatever comes to your mind first. Trust your Gut.
4. Now ask how God might have you show compassion in that particular situation. When something comes to mind, write it down and run with it. Jump off the bridge and see what happens.
5. Ask God for the grace needed to embrace compassion in your life.

Friday – March 2

Compassion

Individual Reflection

Lectio Divina: (**Lectio Divina** is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.)

Read Matthew 9:36-38 slowly a few times (Lectio)

36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Ponder the text (Meditatio)

Ponder God's compassion on your life

How do compassion and harvest tie together? What other words jump out to me?

Speak to God (Oratio) Everyday someone is dying, Everyday someone feels loss, There's news of a disaster, Someone's spirit has been crushed. Our Lord does not need headlines To tell Him what to heed,

He sees the solitary

And knows their very need He sees the mother crying, Are heard before they're said, He feels the hearts, afflicted, By sadness, pain and dread. This all-caring Father

Full of mercy, depths of love, His very nature is compassion To the many, to the one.

Linda Owen

Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

Be still and listen for God's voice.

What is He saying to me about compassion?

Who is God calling me to have compassion for today?

Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.

Saturday – March 3

Compassion

Individual Reflection

Intro:

Today you're going to be extending compassion to someone in a little bit different situation. There may be people in our life whom we deem unworthy of compassion. It might be someone who only thinks about himself or herself, or maybe someone we see as "lazy." More than likely, each of us has people we choose not to engage or even to avoid. Ask God to help you see who these people are and to see them the way he does.

Items needed:

A person who we see as “un-worthy” of compassion or a person who appears to not need it.

Directions:

Today’s challenge is to engage and extend compassion to someone who you may think doesn’t necessarily deserve or need it.