

Family TableTalk

Conversation 57

Empathy in Person

read

Matthew 9:36

think

to experience another

How do you define the word “empathy?” Most of the people I recently asked this question responded that empathy has to do with “sympathy.” That’s true. If we can get in touch with how those who are sorrowful feel, we’re well on our way to “empathy.” Some definitions of “empathy” include: “the ability to feel other’s distress,” or “an active attempt person’s reality.” That second definition makes “empathy” a verb, an “action word!”

Jesus embodied empathy. Among all the great (and true) things we can say about Jesus, it would be totally correct to say “Jesus is God’s empathy for us!” Because God the Father sent Jesus the Son, we can be sure God not only knows how we’re feeling at any time, but God also cares immeasurably about all of what any situation holds for us. Today’s scripture uses the term “compassion,” a word closely linked to empathy, to describe the way Jesus viewed those needing his help. Compassion translates to a deep, stirring-in-the-gut feeling of suffering with another that moves us to action.

Hebrews 4:15 tells us “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus sees us, hears us, lives for and with us yet today and every day. That’s good news... for us and for everyone who God knows needs our empathy and compassion.

- How are “empathy,” “compassion,” and “love” intertwined?
- Name a person or two who needs you (personally) to show them empathy and compassion.
- Name one big problem today that Jesus’s example of “empathetic love” could change. What “would it look like” for you to take that action?

apply

Jesus, You know when we’re joyful and when we are sad. You know when we’re struggling and when we’re “cruising.” You know when we’re in between. And You for certain know we need You in whatever state or situation in which we find ourselves. Thank You for coming, living, dying, rising and in all of these, saving us with Your empathetic love that is the example for us all. As we navigate our current situations, help us to know that no matter what, You love us, You know and have that which is best, and You have an exciting, amazing, fulfilling, joy-bringing part of Your plan for each of our lives. Help us to always remember how very much we are loved, and to show others the same! In Jesus Name...Amen!

pray

by Dave Showalter

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