



These Digging Deeper questions can be used the week following the Sunday message. You can use these questions for personal growth and development, or as a guide for your family or Connect Group discussions.

Message Recap:

Read Mark 1:29-34

Despite all of brokenness of humanity, God looked down on us and didn't condemn, but instead felt compassion. He knew that the only way that we could understand his love for us was to send his Son down to Earth so we could see and feel it. And just as God has done, so did Jesus. As a perfect man and the Son of God, he could have easily judged the wickedness that he witnessed, but instead he felt compassion and empathy. Jesus met people where they were and empathized with their brokenness, reaching out his healing touch in love. And that very same thing is what we are called to do as well. We were not always called into a grand mission of healing diseases or performing great miracles, but instead we are called to the daily touch of healing on the spirit of everyone we encounter.

Pray

Lord, as humans we find it difficult to empathize with everyone. Though it may be built innately into human nature, we are often turned cold to it by our experiences and choices. Help us to not ignore the tug of empathy when we feel it, and help us to not turn our eyes away from those who need to be seen. Give us the strength to stop, to feel, and to love in a real, world-changing kind of way so that the world will see your healing grace through us.

Getting Started

- When was the last time someone shared some really good news with you? How did you respond?
- What do you think the difference is between empathy and sympathy? Why is empathy key to living as a Christian?

Digging Deeper

1. When was the last time that you truly empathized with someone's difficult situation? Did it change your response?
2. Why do you think that humans were innately programmed to be empathetic?
3. Despite being programmed, what kinds of things make it difficult for you to be empathetic? What holds you back?
4. Read 1 John 3:16-18. If we do not show compassion or empathy toward others, then we cannot claim to have God's love. Why does the love of God translate into an empathetic outlook?
5. What are some practical ways that we can get more in touch with our empathetic side so that we are more compassionate towards the people we encounter?
6. What are a couple simple ways this week that you can show God's empathetic love to someone you've historically had a hard time empathizing with?

Living Jesus

A famous Native American allegory talks about how we all have two wolves inside of us; one representing evil, and one representing good. The wolf that we feed is the one that wins. It is the same with God's love and our selfish human nature. We must feed the compassion and grace and use it to fuel God's love in and through our lives. Jesus showed empathy to everyone he encountered, and he calls us to do the same. What part of you are you going to feed? Only you know how you're currently doing, and it is between you and God on how you feel about that. You can continue to pretend that it's not important and make excuses, or you can step out of your "safe zone" and start getting more in touch with your empathetic side.

What's Your Story?

How are you sharing the good news? Encourage others by sharing your story! >> **Go to SevernRunner.info and choose the Stories tile. Then follow the link provided to share your own story; we will even connect you with a writer to help you tell your Jesus story.**