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THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH

What we want students to learn: That God is full of compassion for those in need.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To trust that they can depend on the Lord during times of need and distress.

Scripture Focus: Psalm 86:15; Exodus 34:1-7; Isaiah 49:13; 2 Samuel 24:14; Psalm 121:1-2

Overview: None of us have to look very far to see that people, including ourselves, are hurting. The circumstances and severity of the trouble vary from person to person, but we all deal with heartache, pain, and distress in life. The question is: What do you look to in times of trouble and distress? Do you just chalk it up to being part of life or do you draw your hope from someone or something? Scripture teaches us that we can look to the Lord during these times because He's full of compassion. Compassion refers to the mercy and goodness He shows to those in need. In Lesson 35 we'll see that compassion towards those in need is a part of God's character. In Lesson 36 we'll see how Jesus is the full revelation of God's compassion. Finally, in Lesson 37 we'll look at how we are called to show Christ-like compassion on a daily basis.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **God's Compassion** lesson 35 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 35, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

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THE DETAILS

Exodus

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Exodus, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Timeframe:** The dating of the Book of Exodus is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows for sure when the Exodus occurred, whether it was in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing would have occurred around those general dates.
- **Purpose:** Exodus means "a going out" or a "departure." Exodus was written to be a record of God's great rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt, and His commands to His people guiding them to live for His purposes in the midst of a new land.

Psalms

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remains unknown.
- **Timeframe:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e., Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e., Psalm 119).
- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e., Psalm 51).

2 Samuel

- **Author:** The author of 1-2 Samuel is unknown. While it's certainly possible that Samuel wrote some of what's recorded in these books, the mention of his death in 1 Samuel 25 means that he didn't write all of it. The books are given the title of "Samuel" because of his prominent role in the establishment of the monarchy.
- **Timeframe:** It's difficult to say for certain when 1-2 Samuel was written. It's very possible that they were written and edited over a period of time. More than likely they were established in their final form around the 10th century BC.
- **Purpose:** The main theme of these books is God's choosing to accomplish His purposes through the lineage of David and to set up Jerusalem as the location for the temple. There are many "ups and downs" throughout 1-2 Samuel, and David goes through times of obedience and rebellion. He experiences blessings and consequences for sins.

Isaiah

- **Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz wrote the book of Isaiah.
- **Timeframe:** The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 B.C., though some parts of the book would have been constructed at a later date.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

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THE MAIN POINT

You'll begin the lesson by helping students see that compassion towards those in need is a part of God's character. You'll do this by teaching the Exodus 34 and Psalm 86 passages. The point to make here, in the beginning, is that compassion is a part of who God is; it's a part of His character. The Exodus passage shows that God's compassion is for more than just physical or emotional distress. He was willing to have compassion towards those who had blatantly turned against Him.

Then, you'll use the 2 Samuel 24 and Psalm 121 passages to help students understand that God's compassion allows us to look to Him during times of trouble. Whether the turmoil and pain we experience are physical, emotional, or spiritual, we are called to look to the Lord for help and strength. Finally, you'll show students that God's compassion will ultimately lead to a time where pain and trouble no longer exist using the Isaiah 49 passage.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for students to begin thinking about compassion as a part of God's character.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to arrange to show the images on the "Hurting" PDF, located in your lesson 35 folder. You can either print it, drop it into your presentation software, or display it on your laptop or tablet.

FIRST, begin the lesson by explaining that you're going to be looking at a three-lesson study of God's compassion and how it impacts our lives. Remind students that people are hurting and struggling all around them. Explain that people are having family trouble, money trouble, and friend trouble. People are dealing with serious illnesses or may have been impacted by some sort of natural disaster. Remind them that there are people wrestling with depression and don't feel loved or like there's any way out. These people are all around us, and if we're honest, we're all struggling to some degree.

THEN, show the students the series of images included in the "Hurting" PDF. Ask the students to describe their emotions when they see each image. How does it make them feel? We want them to describe their initial response and how it impacts them. When they see each image:

- **What do they feel? Why do they feel that way?**
- **If they saw that situation in real life, how would they react? Would they take any sort of action?**
- **If the people in the images were people that had mistreated or harmed them, would they react differently? Would they respond in a different manner?**

FINALLY, explain that if we're honest, our compassion toward those in need fluctuates based on our mood, busyness, and how we feel about the individual. Sometimes we feel compassion for a brief moment, but it's short-lived. Say:

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- As we walk through this lesson, and this study, we're going to learn that compassion is a part of God's character. It's a part of who He is. What we'll see is how this works itself out in the world and in our lives. Let's take a closer look.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** The goal is for the students to learn that God is compassionate to those in need.
- **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, begin by getting a feel for what the students think "compassion" is. Ask:

- **We've mentioned the word compassion? Define it in your own words.**
 - Answers will vary but lead students to see that it is responding to other's needs, especially with the goal of meeting those needs.
- **How is God compassionate? Give some examples.**
 - Answers will vary. You're not looking for a perfect list here, just trying to get students thinking in the right direction.

Allow them to talk through this a bit. Then, transition by explaining that when we talk about God's compassion, we're talking about the mercy and goodness that He shows to those in need.

THEN, have students turn to Psalm 86. While they're finding it, consider providing some context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Psalm 86:15. Ask for students to respond to this passage. Ask what stands out to them as important. Make sure students understand that the key here is to see God as compassionate and gracious, a patient God, full of love and faithfulness. That's His nature. That's who He is. Then, ask:

- **How is God's character as described in this verse different than our nature and character?**
 - Answer: At our core (apart from Christ) these are not things that define us. We might show glimpses of them at times, but it isn't who we are at all times and in all circumstances.

NEXT, have students find Exodus 34. Again, if you choose, you may provide some context for the book while students are finding the passage. Then, read or have a student read Exodus 34:1-7. Acknowledge the similarities here. But point out that this passage goes into deeper detail than the psalm. Ask:

- **We get a little more info about God's compassion here. What's significant about the first part of verse 7? What comfort can we draw from that part of the verse?**
 - Answer: It says that God maintains love to His people and forgives wickedness, rebellion, and sin. The amazing truth there is that He shows compassion and mercy to those who don't deserve it. The good news for us is that we're in that condition. We've been wicked, we've rebelled, and we've sinned yet He's still willing to show us compassion.
- **Some might say that the second part of verse 7 doesn't sound quite as compassionate. How do we reconcile the two parts of this verse together? How do they make sense together?**
 - Answer: God's compassion doesn't mean He overlooks sin. He does, however, reach out to sinners and calls them to Himself.

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Explain to the students that many people look at the world around us . . . the suffering, pain, and distress that are all around . . . and scoff at the idea that there's a compassionate God that loves and cares for His creation. It is true that bad things happen all around us, things that we can't understand or explain. However, explain that God doesn't leave us alone. Say something like:

- **God offers comfort, peace, and hope in this life while also offering the security of salvation and eternity with him. He does this for people that have openly rejected and turned from Him. That's true compassion and love.**

FINALLY, read or have a student read Isaiah 49:13. Provide the context for the book if you choose. Then explain that this verse sits in the middle of a passage talking about the restoration of Israel. It predicts the ultimate restoration of God's people at Christ's second coming. Explain that in the midst of all the pain and despair, we have a sure hope that there's a day where it will all be made right for those that trust in the Lord. Ask:

- **How does that truth give you comfort and hope in the midst of difficulties?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are some practical examples of ways you can share that hope with others that are struggling?**
 - Answers will vary, but try and help students drive toward doable ways to help those in their lives.

Then, transition into The Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the students to begin thinking about what it practically looks like for them to look to the Lord in times of trouble.
- **Set-Up:** A note card and something to write with for each student.

FIRST, remind students that while the promise of eternity with the Lord gives each of us great comfort and hope, it doesn't mean that all our struggles and problems go away. We still have to deal with the reality of everything going on around us in this life.

THEN, have a student read 2 Samuel 24:14 and another one read Psalm 121:1-2. Explain to the students that in each verse we have a call to look to the Lord in times of trouble. Metaphorical language of falling into His hands and looking to him for help is used. So, the question is:

- **What exactly does that mean? How do you fall into the hands of the Lord? How do you look to Him for help?**
 - Answer: In the 2 Samuel passage, David contrasts falling into the Lord's hands with falling into human hands. Falling into the Lord's hands means that we find our rest and peace in Him and not the things of this world. Looking to Him for help essentially means the same thing. We look to His guidance and wisdom and our rest in our security with Him.
- **Is this your natural response during times of trouble? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Can you describe the difference between times you've looked to the Lord during these times versus times you haven't?**
 - Answers will vary.

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FINALLY, finish the lesson by giving each student a note card and something to write with. Have them look back to the 2 Samuel 24:14 and Psalm 121:1-2 passages. Have them write these verses in their own words. Allow them time to do this, and then a chance for anyone who chooses to share their words. Wrap it up by have them by thinking of ways they can put this into practice. On the same sheet of paper have them write at least three practical ways they can look to the Lord during times of trouble.

Close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.