

# Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Course of Compassion

**Course Objective:** The objective of this course is to equip practitioners with a biblical foundation and a technical framework from which to lead, communicate and engage in a spectrum of ministries of compassion across Local Churches, Districts, Fields and Regions.

## Module 2 - Foundations of Compassionate Ministry (II)

**Module Objective:** The objective of this module is for a student to continue to develop a basis from which to articulate how compassionate ministries express our relationship with God and how these ministries serve the mission of the Church of the Nazarene

### Learning Outcomes

- The student will be able to articulate how Wesley connected engagement in works of mercy with spiritual growth
  - The student will begin to be able to articulate how to make God's compassion the basis and presence of our life
  - The student will be enabled to present to a cohort how compassionate ministries serves the underlying mission of the Church of the Nazarene
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### Readings

1. Read chapters 4, 5 & 6 of our textbook: *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*
2. Read the attached article: "Compassion" - by Nguyen Thi Hang (see Appendix A)
3. Read the attached article: "Works of Mercy & Spiritual Growth" - by John Watton (see Appendix B)

### Video Clips

<https://vimeo.com/371324172/d36e330bbd>

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### Assignments

#### Exercise #1 – 250 words

Describe how John Wesley connected works of mercy with spiritual growth.

#### Exercise #2 – 250 words

Identify and describe the many different 'transformations' that possibly occurred as a result of the action taken as shown in the CAA3 video clip.

#### Exercise #3 – 250 words

What are some of the characteristics of a disciple of Jesus? Support your answers from Scripture.

#### Exercise #4 – 500 words total for questions A, B, C & D

Course book application questions - *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* [Chapters 4, 5 & 6]

- A. On page #49 of our *Compassion* course book the authors write: “The presence of Jesus Christ manifests itself to us in the life of the Christian community. It is in the Christian community that we can be open and receptive to the suffering of the world and offer it a compassionate response. For where people come together in Christ’s name, he is present as the compassionate Lord.

Describe an experience where you witnessed a response in which a community of people came together in Christ’s name to minister compassionately together.

- B. Chapter 5 of our *Compassion* course book, focuses attention on the idea of ‘displacement’. On page #71, the authors present: “God is always active in our lives, always calling, always asking us to take up our crosses and follow. But do we see, feel, and recognize God’s call, or do we keep waiting for that illusory moment when it will really happen? Displacement is not primarily something to do or to accomplish, but something to recognize.”

In what ways do you recognize ‘displacement’ in your own life and the life of your worshipping community?

- C. Chapter 6 of our *Compassion* course book speaks about ‘togetherness’. On page #79 we read: “We often think that service means to give something to others, to tell them how to speak, act, or behave; but now it appears that above all else, real, humble service is helping our neighbors discover that they possess great but often hidden talents that can enable them to do even more for us that we can do for them.”

How can this idea of ‘togetherness’ shape our approach to and expressions of compassion?

- D. On page #80 of our *Compassion* course book the authors write: “When someone listens to us with real concentration and expresses sincere care for our struggles and our pains, we feel that something very deep is happening to us. Slowly, fears melt away, tensions dissolve, anxieties retreat, and we discover that we carry within us something we can trust and offer as a gift to others. The simple experience of being valuable and important to someone else has a tremendous re-creative power.

Describe someone that you know who listens to you and listens to others with real concentration and expresses sincere care for the struggles and the pains. In what ways can ‘listening’ be part of everything we do and are in our compassionate ministries?

E. **Assignment:** Prepare a brief sermon for a local church. The sermon should focus on the connection of works of mercy with spiritual growth. Submit your sermon manuscript or outline for this assignment.

**or choose**

F. **Assignment:** Engage in a simple ‘work of mercy’ in your local area and write then submit a brief reflection on how this engagement may help you to grow spiritually.

#### End of Module Summary - 500 words total

What is the most significant thing you learned in Module 2?

What previous experiences relate to what you read and learned?

How has what you learned changed your thinking about this week's topic(s)?

How will you use the knowledge gained this week in your life or ministry?

## APPENDIX A

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### COMPASSION

By Nguyen Thi Hang (CAA3)

The Lord God so loved the world that he gave his only Son the Lord Jesus for us. The Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus came to earth to bring the love of HEAVEN to mankind. The Lord sought, saved and brought all of us to the Father so we could receive the magnificent love of the Sovereign One.

In the years of carry out his ministry, the Lord Jesus went all over Palestine, going to places to foreign lands to evangelize, to seek out those who were lost.

#### **The Lord loved the souls of people!**

Not only that, the Lord went everywhere to express the love of the Lord God of Heaven for the outcasts. The Lord brought healing to their bodies. The Lord brought joy, and value to the lives of the blind, crippled, and lepers; the Lord brought freedom for those who were imprisoned by the power of demons. The Lord saved all who would come to Him. He loved the outcast and miserable.

#### **Love is the characteristic of the Lord!**

Scripture tells of times the Lord fed the multitudes with bread.

Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. <sup>30</sup> Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. <sup>3</sup> The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

Matthew 15:29-32

The crowd surely followed the Lord because they wanted to hear teaching with authority, unlike the teaching of the religious teachers and also because of the miracles. He did them in their midst. They witnessed things they had never seen before. The Lord Jesus knew their spiritual need. The Lord knew they desired food but were spiritually empty. And the Lord responded to them. Three days, following the Lord, they heard, they saw proof of love. Three days went by, maybe it was a small amount of food they brought and it was gone. They were hungry. Now, they would go home. With 5000 people, not including women and children, would they be able to

feed them? With money in hand, still no one would be able to go and buy the quantity of food needed. The crowd would have to go home with empty stomachs!

### **The Lord Jesus had compassion!**

The Lord knew very clearly the needs of the physical needs of the crowd that were with him over those three days. The Lord would not let them go away hungry. He feared they would faint along the road. So the Lord created bread to give them food to eat, once more giving them the experience of his great and strange power. In a flash, was the food they needed and they ate to full.

The Lord Jesus did not only feed them by the WORD of God but the Lord cared, he gave them what was necessary for their physical life.

### **How does the good character of the Lord affect us?**

As children of God, what have we done to express compassion with the brothers and sisters in our neighborhood? The Lord wants us to not only bring His Word to the sheep but also to care about their everyday life and others too. To care about their needs and weaknesses everyday, their material needs and studies...

1. The church where I do the Lord's work has thought of and been touched with thought of some brothers and sisters in the church and some families who live near where the church meets. They still are in poverty, and the church is thinking of how to share with them.

First of all, we express this thinking to the Church Board. We choose the families that need help. The list is of one family in the Church, 4 poor children from the love class\* and 2 families in the community.

After discussion, in agreement with each other on methods, we announce to the Church about this ministry and call them to participate with all of the brothers and sister believers.

We nominate a responsible person to collect the monthly donations and to buy the food and bring it to the families with the purpose of visitation. That is an opportunity to create new relationship in the community.

There are some brothers and sisters who have promised an offering every month: only small amounts according to the ability of each person. There are also times when it seems like the program was stopping but thank the Lord it continues until now.

2. Other than that, we still care about the studies of poor students in our church.

We call for the contributions for a poor student of a different Nazarene Church, an amount of money every month to support this one in their studies. When one finishes we help a different one and we are continuing in this manner.

We also help to feed a child who has been deleted in studies for 2 years to help them graduate from high school. Most of the believers in the Church also have a life that is just okay so they could only give a little once in a while and not regularly. Because of this, we split the group up, this group takes care of poor students and another group takes care of the feeding program. We have carried this out from 2014 until now.

We visited the home of an elderly person, impoverished - three years a shut-in with little communication. We talked with her child. She was also over 60 years old. She was very moved to get to us and that the Church cared to help her.

The mother of three of the students of the love class, a single woman who earns money doing manual labor to feed her children, accepted the invitation of the children teacher to attend a Good Friday service and she accepted the Lord. There was once she witnessed before the Church that, the Church has loved her children and had shared food with them that was needed for her family. There was also one time when we visited a family who was out of work. The mother was so worried because they were out of rice. The rice from the Church came at just the right time...

These are the small helps that we continue to rely on the Lord and to carry out the ministry through.

The compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus has brought joy, warmth and comfort for the impoverished. Today, we are those who belong to the Lord, let's open our hearts to care for those with needs of encouragement, let's visit with them and share, helping those all around us.

We ask the Lord to move the hearts of many brothers and sisters in the Church to be able to do more ministry of sharing love and compassion for those in miserable situations in this life. This is also a way to express the love of God for all people.

In the letter sent to the Church, the Apostle John affirmed that:

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? *1 John 3:17*

So then, let us have hearts of compassion before the unhappy lives around us and show love in practical ways.

\*\* Translator's note: The Love Class is a literacy program of the local church for squatter children.

## APPENDIX B

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### JOHN WESLEY: CONNECTING WORKS OF MERCY WITH SPIRITUAL GROWTH

By John Watton

#### Introduction

John Wesley's life examples and his teachings have greatly championed spiritual growth. The purpose of this research paper is to determine if Wesley directly connected works of mercy with spiritual growth. These findings may impact a local church that is seeking methods to grow spiritually. Restating the purpose of this paper as a question, it is presented as: "From Wesley's position, should local churches intentionally pursue works of mercy as a means of nurturing the spiritual growth of the members of the local church?"

#### Wesley's personal engagement in works of mercy

How did John Wesley live his life? Examining his personal practices will contribute to our understanding of the value John Wesley placed on ministering to the least and the outcast. John Wesley's works of mercy will be divided into those that relate: to prisoners, to the infirm, to the poor and to children.

It is clear that prisoners occupied a significant part of Wesley's social concern. Throughout his life he made it a habit to visit prisoners. In particular, he spent time with those who were on death row (Waller 108). Wesley did not appear to restrict his prison activities to visitation. In addition, he preached and raised funds to purchase needed medicines and books. The families of prisoners were also assisted. On occasion he was able to gain discharge for some serving time in the debtor's prison (Pollock 53). Wesley did not seem to become involved in the broader scope of prison reform but he indirectly encouraged and he certainly witnessed a tremendous prison reform at the Newgate Prison.

Desiring to help those who could not afford medical treatment, Wesley engaged the services of a pharmacist and an experienced surgeon. These professionals offered their medical services to the poor for free (Waller 113). John Wesley had a very strong interest in medicine and health; he was not a casual student of this. Although not a medical doctor himself, he intently studied the topic in his leisure hours. He also wrote a book on easy and natural methods of curing most diseases (Pollock 166). This book pointed to simple medicines that had been disregarded in time or had been overlooked by 'politer nations' (Wesley iii). Wesley created housing for the sick and also for widows (Waller 107). In the accounts of his life, he is often seen calling together members of the Methodist Society to collect funds from every member in order to help the sick (106).

John Wesley clearly loved the poor and spent his life helping the poor. This comes out repeatedly in the documents that are written about him. It was to the poor that he gravitated: "He was never happier than when he

visited the cellars and garrets of the choicest part of London society” (Pollock 228). When Wesley referred to the choicest part of London he was actually referring to where the poor lived. He also undertook ways to improve the lot of the poor. Income generation was part of his encouragement and response. An example of this would be his foray into the knitting trade to create employment for those who had no work (Waller 106, Pollock 166).

John Wesley had a special concern for children. He gave generously of his money, his emotion, his energy and his love in all that he did for them (Waller 113). He started a small school for poor children and hired a woman to teach them. He organized his friends to take turns to hear the children read or say their prayers. Sometimes, John Wesley would buy clothes for a child in need (Pollock 53).

### **Wesley’s teaching regarding works of mercy**

Grider offers a perspective derived from Wesleyan-Holiness teaching: a by-product of service to Christ is that we will grow in grace (526). By examining the sorts of things Wesley taught regarding time, talent and treasure, it will reveal whether he directly linked works of mercy with spiritual growth.

Wesley impressed upon his followers that it was their Christian obligation to care for those in need. For example, he taught his preachers to pay special attention to children, particularly their care and education (Waller 111). Wesley’s father learned of John’s early forays of spending time in works of mercy, and his father sent him strong encouragement to continue (Pollock 53). John Wesley did continue and in turn taught others to give their time to the love and service of others. He taught that causes of not growing spiritually can be due to not denying oneself, or not being zealous in doing works of mercy, or not being merciful to the extent of one’s full ability which God gives (Russie September 25).

Wesley intentionally taught his followers that to apply oneself in works of mercy is a means of grace. Providing clothing, shelter, healthcare, education and even friendship were all within this purview and he valued them as means of sanctifying grace (Maddox 215). He even encouraged ‘exercising and improving’ in works of mercy in order to shape and strengthen one’s relationship with God’s empowering presence – reshaping one’s moral nature in the image of Christ could be assisted by imitating Christ’s model of servant hood (215) - not by motivation to earn God’s favour but rather to reshape character (212). People were taught to organize relief for the poor. In some cases this took place as a result of severe weather, in other cases because of the long illnesses of afflicted people (Pollock 141). Wesley urged Christ followers on towards works of mercy even though they might be exposed to disagreeable circumstances in the prisons or in visiting the sick (Russie September 25). He called on people to shine in their actions, in doing all possible good to all men (Burwash 250), that whatever grace received should be grace communicated to others (243), in the knowledge that each will give an account to God of his/her stewardship (Russie December 25).

Within John Wesley's writings he offered teachings about money. He urged men and women to avoid extravagance and vain expenses (Russie December 25), so that as much could be given away as possible. In his

view money should not be hoarded (Pollock 242). One of his favourite sermons to preach was entitled “The Use of Money”. This sermon illustrated two main points: that time and money were gifts from God. With these gifts came responsibility to other members of the community (Waller 104). John Wesley’s teachings included cautions: he “issued a series of warnings that the increasing wealth of the Methodists correlated directly with a decline in their spiritual growth...” (Maddox 245).

### **Analysis of Wesley’s engagement in works of mercy**

John Wesley was clearly generous with his whole being. It is inspiring to read about his life example. He was engaged on many fronts with very needy people. He was very protective of the ‘least of these’, seeking to screen them from whatever may hurt their soul or body (Russie, January 28). By examining his personal practices it is very clear that John Wesley placed great value on ministering to the least and the outcast. His life shone as an example to others. His teachings have become very important because he lived what he believed; his rich experience undergirds the validity of his taught words.

### **Analysis of Wesley’s teaching regarding works of mercy**

By his teachings on godly use of time, talent and treasure, Wesley clearly held that works of mercy are a discipline. Doing all the good that one can do, is a means of grace (Maddox 211). Inward transformation, if it were real and sustained, necessarily led to works of mercy (Life in the World 1). From Wesley’s teaching, therefore, participating in works of mercy will impact inward transformation. ‘Being’ fuels ‘doing’. ‘Doing’, in turn, forms ‘being’. He also taught that not growing spiritually is connected with neglecting works of mercy and that hoarding wealth could actually be correlated with a decline in spiritual growth.

### **Conclusion**

Is there a connection between works of mercy and spiritual growth? Wesley connects the two. He does so firstly by living what he believed. Secondly, he does so by his teachings - directly and indirectly connecting the participation in works of mercy to spiritual growth. Local churches, intent on making disciples who look more and more like Jesus, should intentionally pursue works of mercy as a means of nurturing the spiritual growth of the members. This is Wesley’s position. It is what he taught and what he lived out.



## Works Cited

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