

Spread the Word Student Devos
Week Four



Day 1

Have you ever experienced someone who is really nice to you? Maybe your parents had a lot of chores for you to do one weekend and you didn't get your homework done and your teacher had compassion on you. Okay, we know a lot of you are saying, *I wish! My teacher is more like a Marine drill sergeant who gets up on the wrong side of the bed every morning!* Seriously, though, have you ever had any one really show love and compassion towards you? Maybe it was a friend, a parent, or one of your youth leaders.

What happens when someone is kind to us? When you are kind, do you think it makes a difference in how people see you—or listen to you?

Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Put this verse somewhere you can see it and memorize it. What does this verse mean to you?

Day 2

Imagine you were on a biking expedition across the country, pedaling along. After a few days, you would probably be pretty sore. Your leg muscles would ache, and other parts of your body would be saying that you should have bought the more expensive bicycle seat. What would be driving you on, keeping you from giving up? For some people it would be pride: I told my friends I was going to make it across the country and I'm not going home until I do! For others it would be the pressure of the other bikers: I don't want anyone on the trip to be disappointed with me or call me a quitter! So you're driven to pedal on.

In life, people are driven by various things. Some people will do anything to be famous; others will do anything to have a boyfriend or girlfriend; others will do anything to ... well, you finish the sentence.

List some things (for example, popularity) that people you know are driven or motivated by today:

Check out Colossians 3:5–9, and underline in your Bible the things people could be driven by. Now, choose three different things that you found in Colossians or listed above. Think about a person you know or have heard about who is driven by these things. Write that person’s initials and the reason you chose that person:

What are *you* driven by? Is it a need to be popular, to succeed, to get a good job? Are you driven by money, your parents, or how you look? List the things that drive you:

At the heart of all we have been studying over the last few weeks is this thought: *If we are going to be Christ-followers, we must become like Christ.* What do you think he was driven by?

Check out Matthew 14:14 for an example of what motivated Jesus. Read it a couple of times and circle in your Bible what Jesus felt toward the people. Write it here:

Check out 1 Corinthians 16:14 and 2 Corinthians 5:14. According to these verses, what should motivate us?

Look above again at the things that drive you. Compare those to what *should* be driving you. What would you have to change in your life to be motivated by love and compassion?

Day 3

Let's say you're riding along on your bike trip and a dog runs out in front of Johnny. Johnny wrecks trying to avoid it. Now this isn't just your normal get-a-Band-Aid wreck; Johnny is bleeding big time. Blood is pouring from his nose, his forehead, his arm, and both of his legs. Johnny needs help. I don't know about you, but most of us don't like to touch bloody bodies. Yet if someone doesn't go over to physically touch and help Johnny, he may be in serious trouble. He needs more than someone to simply acknowledge that he needs help—he needs a touch. Jesus provided a great example of touching and ministering to the “untouchables.” Check it out in Mark 1:40–42.

What happened in this story?

What do you think Jesus was filled with or motivated by?

In biblical times leprosy was a feared disease. Lepers were banished from their families and friends, and forced to live outside the city. Whenever anyone came near lepers, the lepers would have to call out, “Unclean! Unclean!” No one would dare touch them. In his book *Just Like Jesus*, Max Lucado suggests that the touch from Jesus was as healing as curing the disease itself. Imagine: This man probably hadn't had a human touch in years. He was separated from his wife and children and from his friends. Whenever he came near anyone they would run from him, screaming “Unclean! Unclean!” He got no hugs, no high fives—only the label “untouchable.” Now here came Jesus. We know that Jesus could have spoken a word and the man would have been healed. But Jesus *touched* him—maybe the first touch the guy had received in years.

Why do you think Jesus physically touched this man? The Bible doesn't give us a specific answer, but we can infer that Jesus was as concerned about the man's emotional needs as his physical needs. The touch said, “I love you for who you are—leprosy and all.”

Imagine that you were a leper and Jesus came and touched you. Take a few minutes and write a thank-you note to Jesus. Explain how you were feeling *before* he touched you and how you feel *now*:

Most of us have never seen someone with leprosy. Few of us have come into contact with a life-threatening, contagious disease, yet we are around “untouchables” every day. Check out Matthew 20:29–34, the story of two untouchables who Jesus touched. Read it twice; underline what Jesus said and circle what he did.

Name some of the people in our society who people don’t like to touch or interact with:

What types of people do you have a hard time physically touching or interacting with?

Let’s get personal for a minute. Write the initials of people you have a hard time giving a compassionate touch to at school, home, work, or church:

Spend a few minutes praying for the types and names of the people you listed above. Ask God to give you a compassionate heart towards them.

Day 4

Johnny is still lying in the ditch and bleeding. He needs someone to stop the bleeding. Let’s say everyone gathers around Johnny and says, “Johnny, we believe you need the bleeding stopped; we all agree that your bleeding is a problem.” Yet if everyone just

stands around and doesn't do anything about it, what good would that do? The Book of James comments on this; check it out in James 2:14–20.

Summarize this passage in a short paragraph.

Faith without action is _____! Our actions should grow out of our faith. The way we interact with others and the way that we give should show that something is different in our lives.

Read Matthew 25:31–40. What is the main message in this passage?

Now read the passage again; underline the behaviors that, according to Jesus, qualify us to enter the Kingdom. Read verse 40 again. To whom can we do something and have it be the same as doing something for Christ himself? When we are touching others compassionately we are, in essence, ministering to Jesus.

Let's go back to our earlier example. Johnny is lying in the ditch bleeding. If we do nothing about it and Johnny lives through it, he will probably not be willing to listen to us when we talk about living like Christ. We didn't have any compassion; we talked the talk but didn't walk the walk.

Think about this: If we are trying to share the good news with friends at school, yet they see us talking about the down-and-outers, gossiping about others, and not wanting to be around those who aren't in the "in" crowd, can we really expect them to listen to us?

Turn back to the passage in James and read 2:19. Who does it say believes in God?

Believing isn't enough; there must be faith *and* action.

Day 5

Suppose, on your bike journey, there is a person riding with you who has the most expensive bike money can buy. On top of that, this girl also has all the top-of-the-line biking apparel as well as every accessory you can imagine. On the outside she has got it all. As you look at the ragtag bike that you got free a few years ago, you start to feel a little self-conscious. Your outfit is normal athletic gear, not the \$100 biking shorts and \$150 biking shirt that makes this girl look like she is ready for the Tour de France. Her bike costs more than your car.

As you start to ride, you notice something—this girl can't ride. She continually has trouble keeping up and extreme trouble maneuvering even the slightest curves. She looks awesome on the outside, but that's about it. Looks and being able to ride are two different things. Jesus dealt with a similar group of people. They looked good on the outside, but their hearts were far from God. Check it out in Matthew 23:1–36.

List five things Jesus condemned the Pharisees for doing to act religious:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now reread the passage and pick out three things that Jesus admonished the Pharisees to do:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now read Luke 11:37–42. What is God more concerned with—the inside or the outside? In verse 42, underline what the Pharisees did and circle what they left out. What do you think is the main message in verse 42?

Now check out Luke 18:9–14. Which man was the Lord more pleased with? Why?

As you study the life of Jesus, you will notice a few things about how he treated others. He always had great compassion on those who were the “down-and-outers” of society. He spent a great deal of time with them. On the other hand, his sharpest words and criticism were reserved for those who were considered the elite of society, the religious people. He saw through the outside of these people and into their hearts. What about you? Do you focus on what is on the outside or what is in the heart?

People were attracted to Jesus for many reasons, perhaps mostly because of his compassion for them. They sensed that he loved them for who they were, and they listened to his message. Even after two thousand years, nothing really has changed. People listen to our message about Christ because we love them and care about them. A message without compassion is just words. For people to hear the good news they must sense something different about how we view them. They must see us focused on the inside, rather than the outside.

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 by circling the number that best indicates your attitude. A *1* would indicate that you usually judge people on their outward appearance. A *10* would indicate that you focus more on what is on the inside of people. Be honest!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Challenge

Over the next 24 hours, make a conscious effort to see people for who they are on the inside rather than the outside. Ask Jesus to give you his eyes. After that time, journal your observations.

How is your pledge to STW going?