

Circle of Faith – Week 3: Lift Up

Intentionally Compassionate

Last week, we went into Week 2 of this series with Reach Out, learning how to go to the lost and that we don't get to pre-judge who is worthy of hearing the Gospel or wait for people to clean themselves up before we bring them to Jesus.

Once we reach out to people right where they are in the mud and mess of life, we enter Week 3: Lift Up – Intentionally Compassionate. We don't reach out just to leave people in their brokenness. We reach down to where they are so that we can lift them up and bring them directly to the feet of Jesus Christ, where real healing and transformation take place.

Core Scripture

Main: Luke 4:18–19

The 3 Dimensions of Lifting Up

Just like Reaching Out, biblical compassion is not one-dimensional. It lifts up in three distinct directions:

- **Upwardly Lifting Up:** Exalting Jesus and lifting our prayers to His throne.
John 12:32 *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself."*
1 Timothy 2:1 *"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people."*
- **Inwardly Lifting Up:** We give each other the freedom to reach out when we need help, lifting one another up without judgment, fear, or condemnation.
Galatians 6:2 *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*
- **Outwardly Lifting Up:** Reaching down into the pit to bring the broken to the feet of Jesus.
Matthew 15:30 *"Then great crowds came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, & many others; & they laid them down at Jesus' feet, & He healed them."*

1. Put On Your Uniform: Compassion Is an Intentional Choice

Colossians 3:12 uses the practical imagery of getting dressed every morning: *"Clothe yourselves with compassion."*

- **Compassion Is Not an Accident:** You don't accidentally get dressed in the morning; you make a deliberate choice about what you put on. In the same way, compassion isn't just an emotion that happens to us. It is a daily, intentional spiritual uniform we choose to put on before we walk out our front doors.
- **Seeing Past the Offense:** The world naturally responds to broken people with judgment, frustration, or annoyance. But when we put on the garment of compassion, we stop seeing people as problems to be managed or arguments to be won, and we start seeing them as image-bearers who are hurting.
- **The Anointing for the Broken:** In **Luke 4:18-19**, Jesus declared that the Holy Spirit's anointing was specifically aimed at the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. If the Spirit of God lives in us, His anointing will always draw us toward the broken; never away from them.

2. We Reach Down to Where They Are

Before you can lift anyone up, you have to be willing to reach down to the level of their need. Lifting Up means to pull them out of the pit and place them into the kingdom. Reaching Out goes to them with Jesus. Lifting Up invites them into a relationship with Jesus. Connecting walks alongside them as they walk with Jesus.

- **Meeting People in the Mud:** Jesus never demanded that the hurting climb up a ladder of moral perfection to reach Him. He met the woman at the well in the heat of her shame; He met the leper in his isolation; He met Zacchaeus up in a tree. Etc.
- **Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-10):** Compassion gets hands-on. It stoops down to lift people out of their paralysis into total transformation. It doesn't treat symptoms; it gets to roots. **Reaching Out** finds roots causing the problems. **Lifting Up** destroys roots by healing what it broken. **Connecting** tends the garden to ensure the roots don't grow back and no snakes come in to replant the seeds.
- **Stooping Down:** Reaching down requires humility. It means stepping off our spiritual pedestals and entering into someone else's pain, confusion, or addiction without looking down on them.
- **Pity vs. Compassion:** Pity stands on the edge of the pit, looks down, and says, *"That's so sad."* Compassion climbs down into the pit, puts an arm around the broken person, and says, *"We are getting out of here together."*

3. Let Wisdom Lead Compassion: Discernment Keeps Us Effective

While our hearts must remain open and compassionate, our heads must remain clear and wise. True godly compassion is never blind, naive, or easily duped. Jesus warned His disciples to be *"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."* (Matthew 10:16), and He cautioned against casting pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).

- **A Hand Up vs. A Hand Out:** There is a vast difference between offering someone a hand up and giving them a hand out. A hand out subsidizes dysfunction and enables dependency; a hand up lifts someone out of the pit and empowers them to walk toward Christ.
- **Discerning Willingness from Manipulation:** Not everyone who asks for help genuinely wants to change. Some people only want their immediate crisis cushioned so they can return to the very habits destroying them. If we aren't careful, people will manipulate our time, drain our energy, and consume resources that God intended for those who are truly crying out for deliverance.
- **Guard Your Calling Against the Enemy:** The devil loves nothing more than to use manipulation to wear down compassionate believers. If he can tie up your time and resources with someone who refuses to change, he successfully blocks you from ministering to the souls who are desperate for a life-changing encounter with Jesus. Don't let unguided zeal cloud your spiritual judgment.

4. We Lift Them Up to the Feet of Jesus

Reaching down is a vital step, but it is only one part of a larger equation. Reaching down without lifting up leaves people stuck in human sympathy, and lifting up without connecting them (which we will look at next week) leaves them isolated. Our goal in this second phase is to lift them up to the One who can actually save, deliver, and set free.

- **The Four Friends (Mark 2:1–12):** Consider the four men who carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus. When they couldn't get through the front door, they dug through the roof and lowered him down right at Jesus' feet. They reached down to carry his mat, but their goal was to lift him up into the presence of the Healer.
- **Bringing Them to the Feet of Christ:** We don't lift people up to depend on us, our church, or our human wisdom. We lift them up to the feet of Jesus because only Jesus can forgive sins, heal broken hearts, and break the chains of oppression (Luke 4:18).

- **Elevating Their Vision:** When a soul has been beaten down by life, they can only see the ground. Intentionally lifting someone up means helping them see their God-given value, their identity, and their hope in Christ.
- **Break the Curses By Shifting the Mindset:** Too often people believe more in the power of their affliction than they do in the healing and delivering power of Jesus. They believe Jesus can't heal them or that He even wants to. Lies get so deeply entrenched into their thinking that it becomes a way of life. They need that broken off their minds to see the truth of God's freeing word. Prayer breaks that stronghold and truth replaces the lies that allow them to see clearly, hear the word and receive the Son who sets them free.

Living It Out: The Daily Garment of Compassion & Wisdom

To be intentionally compassionate and spiritually wise is to wake up every morning & pray:

"Lord, as I get dressed today, I put on Your garment of compassion, but I also ask for Your spirit of wisdom and discernment. Help me see those who are truly ready to be lifted up. Give me the humility to reach down into their pain, the strength to bring them to Your feet, and the wisdom to guard my heart against manipulation. Give me the boldness to act on your nudge. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Conclusion & Corporate Prayer Time

Jesus doesn't free us to abandon us. We don't need to fear like orphans. He invites us to walk with Him so closely, that we bear His image. When people look at us, they should see Jesus which helps us to lift them up. What Jesus has done in us gives hope to others. We no longer need to stay at the doors of the church, but can be lifted to our feet, walk again and rejoice in new life He has given us. We can take that life into the world and find others who are wounded and give them what we have received. We don't need to stay in the place of our past pain. We can walk in the freedom and newness of restoration, healing and power.

"Jesus, I lift up this congregation to You today. I pray for them in every area they have been crippled from living the abundant life You came to give them. I ask You to heal, restore and revive them. I ask You to break any and all fear off of their lives. You have not abandoned them. You have not left them to fend for themselves. You are preparing them for greater things and the harvest You have for this church. I ask You to lift their hearts from the depth of despair. I pray You would release them to serve with gladness and joy. Restore to them the joy of their salvation and renew a right spirit within them. Strengthen them and sharpen their discernment. Bless them abundantly as they serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen."