

Seeking God's Ways (2 of 6)  
Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, March 13th, 2022



**Series Focus:** Lent is a time to repent—to turn from our ways and recommit ourselves to the ways of God as revealed in Jesus. What do those ways look like? Join us for our Lenten series as we explore the higher ways of God and embrace his will for our lives.

**Sermon Title:** From Fear to Compassion

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 9:16-21; Psalm 27; Matthew 9:35-38; 1 John 4:17-18

**Sermon Focus:** The Scriptures tell us that we were created by a forgiving God who is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. We see this most clearly in the person of Christ, who invites us to know his love and to freely share his compassion with others. But if we're going to embrace his higher way, we cannot live in fear. In this second message of our Lenten series, Pastor David invites us to move from operating out of fear to living with compassion for all those whom Jesus loves.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person, by phone, or video call. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Pastor David began his message by sharing a story about Clarence Jordan and his racially integrated community in Georgia back in the 1950s. His brother, Robert, refused to help them with legal challenges for fear that it would harm his law practice and political aspirations. He said, "I'm not getting myself crucified." Clarence then told him that he was an admirer of Jesus, but not a disciple. How does this story challenge the church today? How does it challenge you?
2. The *amygdala* is the "fight or flight" (primitive) center of the brain that is responsible for processing strong emotions like fear, anger, threats, etc. When it has been activated, the prefrontal cortex—which is for thinking, reasoning, and impulse control—shuts down. How do you see media, politicians, and American corporations using fear to increase ratings, get votes, and sell their products? Also, where do you personally see this impacting you in your life?
3. Read Matthew 9:35-38 together. When Jesus had "compassion" on the people, it means that he was moved in his gut and entered into solidarity with their pain and plight. Compassion is like a mother's deep love for her child. Compassion literally means, "to suffer together" with someone. How have you experienced this love of God? How have you experienced God's compassion through others?
4. Pastor David read an excerpt from Brennan Manning about the compassion of God seen in Jesus. Here are a few lines: "With all the wrong turns you made in your past... the mistakes, the moments of selfishness, dishonesty and degraded love? Do you really believe that Jesus Christ loves you? Not the Person next to you, not the church, not the world. But that He loves *you*—beyond worthiness and unworthiness, beyond fidelity and infidelity. That he loves you in the morning sun and in the evening rain. Without caution, regret, boundary, limit. No matter what's gone down, He can't stop loving you. This is the Jesus of the Gospels."

Share your thoughts and feelings in response to Brennan's words.

5. Read 1 John 4:16-18. It is God's perfect love that casts out our fears. Therefore, we must love and worship the God who looks like Jesus, the Son of compassion. How is God challenging you to embrace his true character, see him more clearly, and trust him with your fears? Share and then pray about those things together.