

Bridgeway Community Church
Series: Overwhelmed
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Overwhelmed: Embracing the Emotional Part of Me

Regret Anger Nervousness Grief **Empathy**

Can you imagine if God did not have compassion for us?

Where would you be if his mercies were NOT new every morning?

God the Father is a Compassionate God

Lamentations 3:22-23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Psalms 103:8-16

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
14 for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
15 As for man, his days are like grass,
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
16 the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.

Two amazing qualities of empathy:

1. When you know - "I know what you're going through, I know who you are"
2. When you remember - "I remember what you went through, I remember who you are"

Jesus our Savior is Sympathetic

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

He walked in the shoes of our humanity - he knows, he remembers
He worked as a high priest to build a bridge from our humanity to our eternity

Hebrews 2:18

Because he himself [Jesus] suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Sermon in a sentence: God's compassionate heart leads to mercy ministry and ours should too.

Book: StrengthsFinder 2.0 by Tom Rath

Empathy: People exceptionally talented in the empathy theme can sense other peoples' feelings by imagining themselves in others' lives or situations.

Simple definition of Empathy: feeling with others

Sympathy: feeling bad FOR others
Empathy: feeling bad WITH others

As Christians, God expects us to develop mercy ministry whether it comes natural or not.

The more you grow in Christ, the more empathetic you should be.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:21

For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

If you continue to be clueless about the pain of other people, you will never have true friends nor will you know what it's like to be one.

4 Ways to Grow Your Empathy

1. Learn from empathetic people

- Observe how they respond to you and others
- Listen to the words they use
- Notice their disposition

2. Listen for expressive words

- feelings, not facts
- “I feel...” this is a clue that empathy is required.
- Be careful not to over-spiritualizing your response

BETTER RESPONSES

- “I am so sorry”
- “That must be so difficult”
- “Do you want to talk about it?”
- “I don’t know if there is anything I can say or do but I’m here”
- Don’t say anything at all. Just be there.

3. Let go of your expertise

- the expert inside of you wants to fix the problem, fix the person, give answers, give solutions, address the issue
- In empathy you focus on the person, not the problem
- In conflict it is the exact opposite: focus on the problem, not the person
- Let go of the need to fix the person or the problem if you want to grow in your empathy

4. Limit your execution strengths

- In Strengthsfinder 2.0 there are four big categories that the strengths fall under, one is Execution

Execution strengths: action oriented to make things happen, get things done

But when Empathy is required, the values of these strengths need to take a back seat, go behind the scenes

Luke 10:38-42, The story of Martha & Mary

“What is required of me right now? My inner Mary or my inner Martha?”

Mary: being present

Martha: being productive

A word of balance: you can be so empathic that you become empa-flooded

- you begin to wear other people's problems
- you lose boundary lines where you no longer know what is and is not in your lane emotionally
- you can live in the feelings of others to the point where you become immobilized, overwhelmed

Feel the feelings, but don't own them

Share the burden, but don't bear it

You can feel something, but don't feel responsible for it

Sermon in a sentence: God's compassionate heart leads to mercy ministry and ours should too.

John 3:16

[Jesus speaking] For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.