



*Bringing Help, Hope, and Healing*

# Evangelism In Crisis Training Manual

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# EVANGELISM IN CRISIS MINISTRY

## DEMONSTRATING COMPASSION IS BEING PRESENT IN SUFFERING

W. E. Vines defined compassion as being moved in one's inwards. In other words, it is to have deep feelings in your gut for the plight of another. This is to be moved in our heart of hearts on behalf of someone else's hurt. When the Gospels speak of Jesus' compassion, they speak of deep, powerful emotions that go beyond superficial feelings of regret or sympathy.

The English word for *compassion* comes from two Latin words, *cum* and *pati*, which form the meaning "to suffer with." It is to hurt with someone in such a way that it moves us to action on his or her behalf. "Compassion asks us to go where it hurts and to share in the brokenness, fear, and confusion." Compassion challenges us to cry out with those who are hurting, to come alongside the lonely, and to weep with those who are broken. Compassion calls us to stand by the weak and vulnerable. Compassion does not just hurt with those suffering but reaches a helping hand. It is more honorable than pity and more courageous than sympathy.

Disaster Relief is an opportunity as Believers to demonstrate the compassion of Christ to those devastated by disaster. It requires us to come alongside them in action in order to establish the integrity of our verbal witness. Victims need to see the Gospel lived out in order to hear the Gospel. The Scripture emphasizes this as it instructs us "To bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"(Galatians 6:2): and that "therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful"(Luke 6:36). Christ also encouraged us with the cup of cool water and the Good Samaritan. And in the parable of the separation of sheep and goats at the judgment, Jesus declares that His sheep are the ones who minister with compassion "to the least of these."

One of the most important ministries that DR can perform is the "*ministry of presence*." Being there is one of the most important acts of ministry that we can do. Our presence lets people know that they are not alone and even greater reminds them that God has not forgotten them. Those left hurting by disaster are able to feel the presence of God thru our acts of compassion.

As volunteers we need to realize as well that we do not enter the hurt alone. God goes before us, is with us, and will enable us. The compassionate God chooses to be God-with-us. As we minister, we minister with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Heroes of faith have one thing in common; they were all ordinary people with no power of their own. The difference is the mighty presence of God. Times may change and circumstances may shift, but God's wondrous presence remains the same. As we go in Dr and as we seek to be a witness for Christ, it is this great God who is ever with us.

The DR volunteer in disasters shares God's presence with victims and reminds them of the promise --- "I am with you." The DR volunteer cannot deny the reality of suffering, minimize the loss, or may not be able to diminish the pain. But the DR volunteer can offer the comfort and assurance of God's love and care. Presence can provide healing, reconnect a person to the church, and open the door to positively share the Gospel.

How can a disaster victim benefit from your "ministry of presence?"

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What are some of the ways that we can practice the ministry of presence to those left hurting by a disaster?

- We can minister in prayer – it is rare that someone would decline your desire to pray for him or her. The bumper sticker reads "There are no atheists in foxholes." In crisis, even the non-religious person cries out "O' God!"
- We can listen to them – people need someone just to listen to their hurt, not offer advice but just listen.
- We can weep with them and offer the ministry of appropriate touch – a hand on a shoulder, a hug, and the touch of a hand.
- We can share with them promises and hope from God's Word.
- We can offer them a cup of cold water, food, and help in recovery.
- We can allow them opportunities to join us in ministering to others.
- We can offer them the hope and Good News of Christ.

Crisis requires more than talk. We must show the truth in action. Compassion is always hands on ministry. We must be open to all people and any door of ministry. Doing practical acts of ministry is our best opportunity to demonstrate compassion. Our best opportunity of witness will arise from an attitude of servanthood. We must follow the example of Christ and minister with a servant's heart in order to win an opportunity to share the truth of the gospel.

People in crisis need encouragement. People often feel in disasters that their life will never return to normalcy. We can bring the assurance of hope. We awaken them that this will pass and a new day will come again. We are a reminder to those hurting that God is aware of their need and cares.

Spirituality and Faith can play a vital role in a person being able to get through a crisis or disaster.

#### **FAITH:**

- Helps one to cope.
- Provides healing to our brokenness.
- Offers emotional support to the victim.
- Gives answers to the questions that disasters bring.
- Leads one to seek the help and hope of God.
- Gives one a way to manage and relieve stress through prayer, worship, and fellowship.
- Connects a person with God and a caring family of believers.

Often in disasters questions arise from our heart that are spiritual in nature. These questions give us opportunity to share a witness for Christ. These questions are often a beginning step in the mourning process that should not be ignored. Let me share some common questions:

- Why did this happen to me?
- Why did \_\_\_\_ have to die?
- Why didn't God take me instead?
- Did this happen for God to punish me?
- Does this mean I owe God my life since I survived?
- Why do good people suffer?
- Why does God let bad things happen?
- Why does God let children suffer?
- I want to die...why can't I just die, too?
- Whose fault is this?
- Are the people who caused this going to be punished?
- Why doesn't God answer my prayers?
- How can I hear God if He speaks to me?
- Why does God allow evil in the world?
- Who keeps God in line?
- Is there life after death?
- Is there really a Heaven?
- Will those who did this go to Hell?
- What did I do to deserve this?
- Did God choose me to suffer for a reason?
- Will good come out of this suffering?
- What is there to live for?
- Why can't someone do something about this?

What questions would you ask if you were the survivor or victim of a disaster?

Each of these questions is an opportunity for us to listen, to share the pain, and to share the Good News. Remember, we need to listen and demonstrate genuine compassion in order to establish integrity for our witness. People do not care what we know until they know that we care. It is always appropriate under the leadership of God's Holy Spirit to lovingly share the Good news of Christ with those hurting. Sensitivity and respect in asking permission to share and not seeking to manipulate victims was a skill and approach that Jesus demonstrated frequently. We can be used to witness for Christ in crisis situations if we will see people as Christ saw them and love them as He loves them.

In our next hour we will look to see how we can do this effectively and compassionately in the midst of disasters.

# SHOW PEOPLE LOVE

1 John 3:18 declares, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth".

One of the keys to remember in disaster situations is that our acts of compassion will be the keys in winning us opportunities to share our faith. Hurting people most often have to see Jesus before they will allow us to share about Jesus. Ken Hemphill says, "As we illustrate the Gospel, God will open doors for us to articulate the Gospel."

But before we move to how to share Christ with hurting people, Let's lay some important foundations. These principles are critical for us to understand if we are going to be an effective witness.

1. **GOD IS AT WORK EVERYWHERE AND IS ALWAYS WORKING TO FURTHER HIS KINGDOM.** It is not up to us to win anyone to Christ. The convicting, convincing, and winning are all works of the spirit. We are just given the privilege of being part of what he is doing in human lives.
2. **PRAYER IS VITAL IN THIS WORK OF GOD AND DEMONSTRATING THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO OTHERS.** We cannot do this in our own strength and abilities. We need the supernatural work of God, and that power is unleashed through prayer. We need to ask God to show us where He is working, to empower us with the boldness to join Him, and to show us how to demonstrate His love to those hurting. Prayer helps us to see more clearly with the eyes of Jesus because it deepens our relationship with God. Prayer is our most important weapon as we battle the enemy for lives precious to God.
3. **THE HARVEST IS ABUNDANT.** One of our barriers is that people will be resistant to the Gospel. This is not true. The Gospel is Good News. People are eager to receive good news. The problem is sometimes we have not demonstrated that what we have in Christ is Good News. Most people have rejected religion not Christ. We are called to share a relationship not a religion. In Luke 10:2 Jesus said, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few...." There is no shortfall of those who need Christ, just a shortage of those sharing the Good News.
4. **BEING A WITNESS IS NOT AN OPTION.** We are all witnesses if we know Christ as our Savior and Lord. Once you have encountered the Living Lord, you are a witness of His saving grace. You do not have to memorize a list of verses or conquer all your fears about sharing Christ. You do not have to pluck up your courage or be a Bible scholar, you simply need to share what Christ has done for you.

In Matthew 5 Jesus declares, "You are the salt of the earth...". Salt was used to preserve food. Our lives are to have a preserving effect on others. Literally, we are to stop the rot. We are called to interject the love of Christ when we have opportunity. We do not do it with holier-than-thou attitudes but with positive, loving interjections. We are to be an influence that awakens them to God... a preserving force with those who cross your path. Second, salt brings out the flavor of food. Food without appropriate seasoning has little flavor. Believers should add flavor to life. Our lives should be different, and others should see the joy and hope that we possess in Christ. We need to live in a way that demonstrates the life that we have in Christ. Finally, salt makes you thirsty. Our lives in Christ are designed to make people thirsty for Jesus. Our lives need to be different in a way that makes people curious about what we have in Christ.

We have to show people Jesus in order to share about Jesus. We need to ask God to show us where He is working. We have to see people before we can share love with people. Always remember in DR our reason for serving is not to do chainsaw work, or mudout, or to cook meals, it is to minister to people. Our concern is not the work but people who are hurting. Trust that God can use you and remember He does the work, we are just tools in His hands. And never underestimate the power of an appropriate touch to one who is hurting.

Can you think of a time when someone showed the Gospel to you?

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Jesus had the ability to see people for who they are but also who they could become. We see it as He called Matthew the tax collector, when He called Zacchaeus out of the tree, with the Samaritan woman at the well who had been married 5 times and currently had a live-in, and with the woman caught in adultery. Matthew 9:36 summarizes the heart of Jesus, "But when He saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Until we see the disastrous consequences of sin, we will see crowds and not people.

## SUGGESTIONS TO OPEN PEOPLE TO THE GOSPEL

1. **ALWAYS HAVE BAIT READY.** I am not much of a fisherman, but I know this; you will never catch a fish without the right bait. If we are going to catch people, we need to have bait ready if an opportunity arises. I would encourage you to get in the habit of carrying a tract or other kinds of spiritual lures with you that you can use and leave with the person with whom you are talking.
2. **BE APPROACHABLE.** Be friendly. Smiles are always more inviting than frowns. Being helpful and courteous opens people to you. Be genuinely interested in the people who cross your path. No one wants to be just another notch on your Bible.
3. **PUT PEOPLE'S NEEDS OVER THE TASK AT HAND.** Again remember, the reason we are there in DR is to minister to people. Yes, we want to complete our tasks, but people always need to come first. The person may need your touch even more than they need a tree out of their front yard or a serving of hot food.
4. **LOOK FOR THOSE WHO SEEM INVISIBLE.** The hurting and lonely often are open to the touch of Jesus more than those who have it all together. Be sensitive to the hurting and the forgotten.
5. **DO THE UNEXPECTED.** Jesus was the master of showing unexpected kindness. Remember the Samaritan woman at the well. It was no accident that she came to draw water in the heat of the day rather than with the other women in the cool of the morning. Jesus shocked her that He a Jewish man would talk with her, and she was forever changed by the touch of the Master. Doing that little extra touch of unusual kindness will open people to the message of Christ.
6. **REALLY SEE PEOPLE AND SHARE THE LOVE OF GOD WITH THEM.** Our God is a loving God who sent Jesus not to condemn the world but to save the world. Love is not optional for a Christian. It is a command. It is the evidence that we have a personal relationship with Christ. God wants to love people through you. Love is not a feeling. Love is an action and that is what DR is all about. DR is the love of Christ in action.

How can we show the love of Christ as we go in DR?

- Offer to pray for the hurting person. Ask if they have specific needs.
- Take time to listen to their story.
- Demonstrate a team attitude and joy as you do the DR work assigned.
- Just be courteous and kind.
- Smile...Smile...Smile. Smiles are always in season!

Tell the story of the 75-year-old man who came to Christ in Toadhop, Indiana. He lost his wife in the late fall and then everything else he possessed in the Spring floods that ruined everything he owned in his house. As he walked thru the ruined mess, he cried out in anger, "Where is God?"

DR volunteers working on a neighbor's home saw him weeping on his front porch several days later. One of our volunteers went over to him, listened a bit, and then offered help. For the next several days they helped the man go thru his damaged belongings and did mudout work on his home. On Friday as they finished the work and had prayer with the man he exclaimed, "I wondered where God was in all this and this week I saw God. I saw God in you who helped me!"

This opened the door for one of the volunteers to sit on the man's porch later that afternoon and lead this man to Christ. This man had to see Christ to be open to Christ. He saw Christ in the kindness, smiles, joy, the listening and acts of compassion that these DR volunteers shared with him. They showed this man love and it gave opportunity to share the Good News of Christ.

## AND SHARE HIM

The little word *and* can seem unimportant but it is a vital word. It is a connecting word. And it is vital at this point that I share a word with you as a Believer. It is critical to show our compassion to those who are hurting. Smiles, kindness, listening, appropriate touches, and our physical acts of ministry are vital and establish integrity for the Good News. But here is where that little word “*and*” is vital.

To impact people with the Gospel, there needs to be a conjunction of lifestyle and witness. We cannot simply assume people will understand why we are showing them love. Jesus did not just show them God’s love. He also told them of God’s love. We need to show them love and tell them of Christ’s love.

The demonstration of love in DR prepares the way for us to share the love of Christ in words. Loving acts of ministry are like rain. They soften the soil for the seed. We must show and share for people to come to a transforming relationship in Christ. It must not be either or, but both and. People will not desire to listen if our life does not match our words, but they equally may not understand why we are different if we do not share the reason why. We cannot assume that people will make the natural connection between our acts of kindness in DR and the grace of God that prompts them. We must join salt and light, words and action, behavior and explanation, kindness and truth. We must be a bridge between loving action and a loving Savior. We are the “***and***.” If Jesus, who embodied the grace of God, shared with people the reason for his acts of kindness, then we can do no less.

Why is it vital to both show and share the love of Jesus with those we minister to?

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Sharing Christ requires love and empathy. We know as Believers what sin does to lives. That knowledge should compel us to share lovingly with others the Good News of Christ. We have been commissioned as ambassadors of reconciliation... bringing people and God together in a personal relationship.

Sharing Christ requires sacrifice. Sometimes it means going the extra mile or spending extra time. But let us not forget that Christ went beyond the extra mile for us on the Cross.

Sharing Christ requires putting the needs of others above your own. This little acrostic for “**JOY**” will help. Joy stands for *Jesus* first, *Others* second, and *You* last.

Sharing Christ requires a willingness to be vulnerable. The truth is that we are vulnerable when we share Christ. It is always a two-way street. We never know how they will respond. Sometimes those we minister to may take advantage of us. They may say “no” to the message we share. But please hear our witness is never a waste. You never fail when you sprinkle people with the Living Water of Christ. The seed you sow is good seed and God plants it in lives as we share. Trust God to bring the results in His time and remember it often requires many seeds to be planted to produce a crop.

If we are to be effective in sharing Christ, we must remember:

- It is not just about being good and doing good.
- It is not about the presentation of a set of propositions. We are sharing about the Person of Christ not a formula of Biblical verses.
- It is not about religion but about a personal relationship with Jesus.

In DR we can follow the example of Jesus. Jesus consistently used the meeting of physical needs as the bridge for revealing and meeting the deeper spiritual needs of people. We must learn from the Master and point people to Him. As John reminds us in John 14:6, “He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him.”

Your witness has the power of the mustard seed. Jesus said when a tiny mustard seed is planted that is not visible to the naked eye; it grows into a tree that birds can nest in. When we plant seeds of faith in other peoples’ lives, God can take those seeds and do miraculous, wondrous things of Kingdom impact.

Trust the promise of God's Word. The power of the Scripture is not in the eloquence of the presentation or the creativity of our illustrations. You do not have to be able to have the answers for every question. The Word is God's Spirit-inspired, holy Word. It is powerful in itself completely apart from us. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Just sow the seed and trust God to give the results.

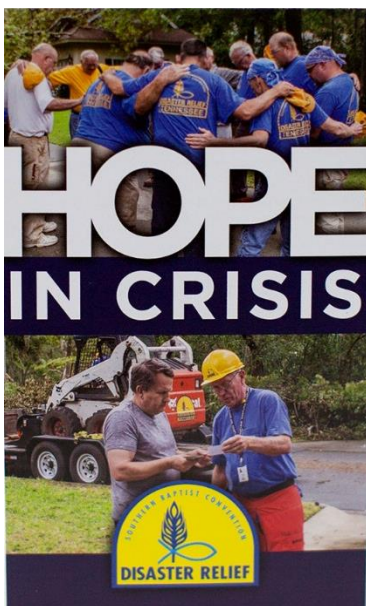
Trust the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit to open hearts and to bring conviction. You do need to try to convince people of their need for Christ that is the Spirit's job. Your calling is to share. The Spirit takes it from there. Here is a great promise to remember: "And He, who comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe Me" (John 16:8-9).

Rely on the Spirit to use others to cultivate and to sow other seeds. I have great news for you. You are not alone in the work of sharing Christ. At times you will plant seeds. At other times you may be watering or cultivating the seed someone has sown before you. And if you keep planting seeds long enough, God will give you opportunities to help Him in the harvest. But remember for most folks, it takes several times of sowing and cultivating to bring them to a place to receive Christ. Trust if you sow seeds and a person does not receive Christ that God through His Spirit will bring others to continue His work on that person's life. Here is a great formula for sharing Christ: Your story plus God's truth empowered by the Holy Spirit equals a magnificent harvest.

So as a Believer trained in DR, it is your turn. Let me give you an action plan to prepare you for your opportunity.

1. **WRITE OUT YOUR TESTIMONY SO THAT YOU CAN SHARE IT IN A MINUTE OR LESS.** Make sure it focuses on a personal relationship not church or religion. Avoid religious language that might not be understood. Focus on what Jesus has meant to you more than on the sin of your past.
2. **TAKE THE DR TRACT "HOPE IN CRISIS" OR ANOTHER TRACT THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLE WITH AND BECOME FAMILIAR WITH IT.** You do not have to memorize a tract, but you do not want to come across it as just reading it. Make this tract a comfortable extension of yourself.
3. **MARK YOUR BIBLE WITH THE PLAN OF SALVATION.** Show them my marked Bible. I use a version of the Roman Road.
4. **OFFER TO PRAY FOR FOLKS WHEN THEY TELL YOU ABOUT A NEED.** Do it right then when appropriate. Prayer is a powerful witness.
5. **PRAY THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE AND OPEN YOUR EYES TO OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THEY ARISE.**

"Hope in Crisis" DR tract and "The Roman Road" plan to use in marking your Bible.



## THE ROMAN ROAD

**ROMANS 3:23** - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

**ROMANS 6:23** - "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**ROMANS 5:8** - "But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

**ROMANS 10:9** - "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

**ROMANS 10:13** - "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

**ROMANS 8:1** - "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."