

WHAT IS MERCY MINISTRY?

by Philip G. Ryken & Noah J. Toly

TO THE READER: A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. If someone asked you to explain, “What is mercy ministry,” how would you answer?
2. If your church found itself stepping over people sleeping in the doorway to your church each week, what might you suggest the church do about it? [5-6]
3. With all the advancements we have seen leading us into the 21st century, why is there still a need for mercy ministries? [7-9]
4. What do “God coming in the flesh” and “God’s image reflected in us” have in common? [10]
5. What do you think the Westminster Confession means by, “[All of us] are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil?” [10]
6. What should be our motivation for doing acts of mercy? [10-17]
7. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 5, tells us about those attributes (characteristics) we have in common with God, as part of the image of God in us. They are: being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Which of these display God’s mercy, and therefore, ours also? [10-17]
8. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. How many acts of mercy can you find in these verses? [12]

9. What would you say is more important – worship or showing mercy? After thinking through this question, re-read Ephesians 2:8-10. [14 & 17]
10. What examples can you think of where Jesus showed acts of mercy during His ministry on earth? [14-15]
11. What do **we** get when we serve others? [30]
12. Which is more important to God, serving locally or overseas? [30-32]

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class. Write down other questions you might have here...

APPLICATION

1. Personal: Answer the following questions from the last paragraph on page 34:
 - a. Who is the recipient of *my* mercy?
 - b. Is my compassion helping to transform anyone's life?
 - c. Am I driven to show mercy to others, or am I dominated by my own pleasures and ambitions?

If you find yourself falling short in any of these areas, don't despair. Instead, pray about what you should change in your life and lifestyle (including your family's) to better reflect the image of God in our world of need.

2. As a church: Answer the following questions from the last paragraph on page 34:
 - a. Who is the recipient of our planned acts of mercy? Who should be?
 - b. Is anyone's life being transformed by our compassion?
 - c. Are we driven to show mercy to others, or are we dominated by our own projects and plans?

Make a list of every ministry in which your church is currently involved. In what ways might these ministries be more involved with mercy outreach? In what new ways can we better reflect the image of God to a lost and dying world?

For Further Study

Ministries of Mercy, The Call of the Jericho Road, Tim Keller, P&R, 1997.

Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace, Harvie Conn, P&R.

Tangible: Making God Known Through Deeds of Mercy and Deeds of Truth, Chris Sicks, Crossway, 2013.

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