

Empathy vs. Compassion (February 19, 2026)

“Then Jesus, moved with compassion,
stretched out His hand and touched him,
and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’”
(Mark 1:41)

In the Bible, the Greek word that is translated “compassion” means “to be moved in the bowels.” In modern vernacular, we would say, “it touched my heart.” Webster’s definition of compassion is “a sympathetic consciousness of other’s distress with a desire to alleviate it.” It is interesting to note that every time the Bible says that Jesus had compassion on someone, He did something to help that person.

Compassion is empathy moved to action.

However, whether that action is helpful assistance or harmful enabling will depend on the use of the other EQ skills of awareness, regulation, and motivation. Compassion is more than an impulsive reaction to suffering. It is a thoughtful response to improve another person's life.

Jesus is the perfect picture of compassion, not because He needed it, but because we did.