

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

Luke 8:26–39 — *Compassion Moves Toward the Bound*

Series: Compassion

Theme: Compassion moves toward people whose lives are controlled by forces they cannot overcome on their own.

1. Opening Prayer and Check-In (10–15 minutes)

Begin with a short prayer asking God to form the heart of Christ in the group—hearts that are both compassionate and wise.

Then invite each participant to briefly share about last week’s practice.

Reflection Questions

Last week we committed to practicing what we learned from the previous passage.

Take a moment to share:

- What did you attempt to practice this week?
- Where did you see God at work?
- What felt difficult or uncomfortable?
- What did you learn about yourself or about God?

Remind the group: the goal is **growth, not perfection**. Deep practice means learning through attempts.

2. Sermon Overview

Text

Luke 8:26–39

Setting

Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee and enters Gentile territory.

Immediately he encounters a man whose life has been completely overtaken by destructive forces.

Luke describes him vividly:

- He lives among the tombs
- He wears no clothes
- Chains cannot restrain him
- He is controlled by a “legion” of demons

This is the place no one would expect holiness to go.

But Jesus goes there anyway.

Key Teaching Movements

1. Reality Is Bigger Than What We Can See

Scripture reminds us that the world includes spiritual realities beyond human understanding.

But Luke keeps the focus clear:

The authority of Christ is greater than any darkness.

2. Human Lives Can Be Overtaken by Forces Larger Than Themselves

The man in the story is demonized.

Today we often see other forms of captivity:

Addiction

Abuse

Trauma

Injustice

Destructive environments

Shame and despair

People can become trapped in cycles they cannot escape alone.

3. Compassion Moves Toward the Worst-Case Scenario

Everything about this scene screams “stay away.”

Gentile territory.

A cemetery.

A herd of pigs.

A violent man possessed by many demons.

But Jesus moves toward the place everyone else avoids.

4. Two Responses to Brokenness

Luke quietly contrasts two responses.

The Community

They chain the man.

They isolate him.

They manage the problem.

When healing happens, they become afraid.

Jesus

He moves toward the man.

He speaks with authority.

He restores dignity.

When the story ends, the man is:

“sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.”

Jesus does not simply remove demons.

He restores a human life.

3. Discussion Questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

Move slowly through these questions, encouraging thoughtful reflection.

Remember

What details does Luke give about the man before Jesus heals him?

What changes do we see in the man after his encounter with Jesus?

Understand

Why does Luke describe the setting so vividly (tombs, pigs, Gentile territory)?

What does this tell us about where Jesus is willing to go?

Apply

Where do you see people today whose lives seem controlled by forces beyond their control?

What might compassion look like in those situations?

Analyze

Compare the response of the community with the response of Jesus.

How does each group deal with the man?

What does this reveal about their priorities and fears?

Evaluate

Why do you think the community reacts with fear after the man is healed?

What does that reaction teach us about how people sometimes respond to transformation?

Create

Imagine our church responding to people in crisis the way Jesus does in this passage.

What might that look like in real life?

4. Bible Storying Exercise

Deep practice discipleship includes **learning Scripture through story**.

Tonight we will explore another moment where Jesus moves toward someone others avoided.

Story Passage

Mark 2:1–12 — The Healing of the Paralyzed Man

Step 1 — Listen

Have someone read the passage slowly.

Encourage the group to simply listen.

Step 2 — Retell

Close Bibles.

Ask the group to reconstruct the story together.

Allow people to fill in the details until the story is retold.

Step 3 — Reflect

Discuss:

What obstacles stood between the man and Jesus?

Who helped bring him to Jesus?

What did Jesus restore besides physical healing?

Step 4 — Connect the Stories

How is the paralyzed man similar to the man in Luke 8?

What do these stories teach us about the kind of people Jesus moves toward?

5. Pastoral Wisdom: Compassion and Boundaries

Christian compassion does **not** mean ignoring wisdom or putting yourself in danger.

Compassion keeps our hearts open.

Wisdom keeps our boundaries healthy.

Compassion refuses to give up on a person.

Boundaries refuse to participate in destructive behavior.

Healthy communities learn to hold **both together**.

6. Deep Practice Challenge for the Week

This week we will practice **compassion that moves toward people**.

Invite participants to write down a specific commitment.

Practice 1 — See the Person

Pay attention to someone this week who is usually defined by their problem.

Ask God to help you see the person beneath the struggle.

Practice 2 — Take One Step Toward Compassion

Move slightly toward someone who is hurting rather than avoiding them.

This could be:

Starting a conversation

Offering encouragement

Listening without judgment

Practice 3 — Bring Your Own Bondage to Jesus

Spend time this week asking God:

“What is something in my life that still holds power over me?”

Bring that honestly before Christ in prayer.

The same authority that restored the man in Luke 8 still restores lives today.

7. Commitment Moment

Invite everyone to write down their personal commitment.

This week I will practice:

The situation where I will live this out:

8. Closing Prayer

Close by thanking God for the compassion of Christ.

Ask God to:

- Give us eyes to see people beyond their struggles
 - Help us move toward brokenness with wisdom and courage
 - Continue restoring lives through His power
-

One fascinating thread in this passage that could become powerful in your discipleship groups over time: **the man wants to follow Jesus across the lake, but Jesus sends him back to his community.** Restoration doesn't end with personal healing—it turns into **mission.** The man becomes the first witness of Jesus in that region. Chaos becomes testimony.

That strange little detail hints at a profound principle of discipleship: the places where grace restores us often become the places where we are sent to speak about it.