

TEXT John 8:1-11; Titus 3:3-7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Genesis 18:23-33; 19:16

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate that mercy implies compassion which forbears punishment even when justice demands it. Mercy is extended by God to those who seek it.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. — Psalm 106:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. — Lamentations 3:22

RESOURCE MATERIAL Tract No. 64 — Pardoned!

ANSWER
TITLE: **Should I Show Mercy?**
SEARCH
TITLE: **Mercy**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Mercy signifies essential perfection in God, whereby He pities and relieves the miseries of His creatures; gives eternal life and happiness; shows more kindness than justice requires or what can be claimed or expected.

Showing mercy is one of the cardinal virtues of a true Christian and is one of the great blessings God shows to

us. Christian mercy is a part of the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22,23), made up in part of love, longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness. God’s mercy toward sinful man was shown most clearly and fully in His giving of His beloved Son to die in our stead; and our Lord’s mercy enabled Him to willingly make the ultimate sacrifice (Romans 5:8).

YOUR OPENER

Mercy

TEXT: John 8:1-11; Titus 3:3-7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Genesis 18:23-33; 19:16

KEY VERSE: It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. — Lamentations 3:22

RESPONSES

1. Divine mercy was clearly shown when Jesus Christ forgave the woman's sin and made the way for her to avoid punishment for breaking God's Law. Divine mercy is in operation today in much the same manner. God does not cut off a sinner without giving him knowledge of his sins and an opportunity to repent. Your students should see that mercy is the provision made by God in which His Son paid the full price for man's violations of His holy laws. Of course, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1). Ask your students when divine mercy is extended to them. Bring out that mercy is extended to a sinner day by day, but it is given in its fullest when men affirm God's righteous standards and repent of their failure to live by them.

2. It seems that the scribes and Pharisees were not so interested in justice. They brought the woman to Christ to tempt Him, that they might accuse Him. However, their action gave Jesus an opportunity to extend mercy to this woman. Ask your students why Jesus extended mercy to her, even though we have no record of her asking for it. Help them see that Jesus, no doubt, read the desire of her heart, just as He could read the motives in the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees who brought her to Him. They should understand that in approaching Jesus they must be honest.

3. Let the group supply their answers, which should revolve around the fact that these men realized they were sinners. In response to the second question, your students should conclude that conviction of sin gives access to God's mercy. The Spirit of God brings conviction to reprove the sinner of his sin and show him Christ's righteousness. See John 16:8. These men could have received mercy by repentance and faith in Christ, but they did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the One who could forgive sins, so they left without mercy.

God's love sent Jesus, who fulfilled all the demands of holiness and justice. Jesus in turn poured out a flood of mercy, grace, and forbearance and made it available to everyone. By faith we can receive this mercy and have "peace with God . . ." and ". . . access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:1,2).

1. The dictionary tells us that the word *mercy* implies "compassion which forbears punishment even when justice demands it." Though the word is not used in the account of the woman taken in adultery, in what ways was divine mercy demonstrated? How is divine mercy extended to each of us today?

2. The woman taken in adultery was clearly guilty of breaking God's Law. If the scribes and Pharisees wanted justice, why did they not take the woman to the judge to be tried? Why did they bring her to Christ?

3. What do you think the Scripture means when it says that these were "convicted by their own conscience"? If they were convicted, how could any of these have received mercy?

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. The Law demanded justice for the woman's sins (Leviticus 20:10). How could Jesus circumvent this demand?

5. What was the significance of Christ's statement, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"? How was it possible for the woman to do this?

6. In Genesis 18:23-33 and 19:16 we find Abraham praying for God to extend mercy. How did God do this?

7. In Titus 3:3-7, contrast the individual described in verse three to the one in verse seven. Then describe the elements which are mentioned in verses four through six that made the difference.

8. One of the greatest benefits of Christ's mercy extended to us is the salvation of our souls. But once we have been saved, His mercy is extended to us in other ways. List some of these.

4. The Law could not be exercised in the absence of at least two witnesses who would substantiate an accusation. Thus, when the scribes and Pharisees stole away, the woman was no longer subject to punishment by the demands of the Law. In a broader scope, Jesus was God in the flesh, and the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. See John 1:29. He fulfilled all God's demands for justice, and was the only One who could extend divine mercy.

5. The words, "Neither do I condemn thee:" extended mercy. But His continuation—"go, and sin no more"—was His directive as to how she was to live in the future. Christ's extended mercy also provided the needed power for the woman to do as He commanded her. How can we know that Christ's mercy carries with it the same implicit command today? This question could be the springboard to a brief discussion of the necessity of living above sin. Other supporting Scriptures might include Isaiah 1:16, Isaiah 55:7, John 5:14, Romans 6:12, and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

6. Even though Abraham had asked God to spare the city for ten righteous people, that number could not be found. But God, being a merciful God, had the angels take Lot, his wife, and his two daughters by the hands, and lead them out of the city. As your students discuss this, help them see that God is still a merciful God, and is mindful of individuals.

7. Verse three describes the sinner. Verse seven describes the saved person who has received mercy. What made the difference? The kindness and love of God, mercy, washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. These elements are realized by each person coming to God for mercy. God's love shed abroad in the heart, His mercy giving them peace with God, washing away their sins, witnessing this by the Spirit of God, makes them heirs of God with a hope of eternal life.

8. Use this question as a wrap-up for this lesson, but also as a preview of lessons in the weeks to come. Encourage a personal response from each of your students. Typical answers may include divine protection, healings, physical needs supplied, guidance. Some may be able to cite specific examples from their own experiences.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why is God's mercy so important to us? What does it mean to show mercy to someone? Give an example.

How did Jesus demonstrate mercy in His dealing with the woman that committed adultery?

What is the punishment for the sin that we commit? What does God, in His mercy, provide to enable us to escape that punishment?

Can we earn God's mercy by doing good? Why or why not?

Does our receiving God's mercy depend on what kind of sins we have committed? Explain.

Can you think of other cases where mercy was shown in the Bible?

Do you think Bruce Archer, the man in our ANSWER story, deserved mercy? If you had been the judge would you have responded in the same way? Why or why not?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a first-aid kit (or a white box with a red cross painted on top). Attach a label that has the word MERCY written across it, to each of the things in the kit (a band-aid, a roll of gauze, etc.). Make a parallel between the first-aid kit and the provisions of God. When we have an accident, the kit provides us with what we need at that particular moment—for cuts, burns, or whatever. In the same way, God provides for our every need. Whatever sins we have committed, God provides His mercy to overcome our problem with sin—giving us the power to live sinless lives.

Have the class draw pictures depicting what mercy means to them.

Bring to class, one of your monthly bills and a check written to pay the debt. Compare these to the debt we owe for our sin. The check (promise) was written in the Garden of Eden. For over two thousand years, God held the

check, and when Jesus died—God cashed it! The debt has been paid according to God's mercy. Help the students to understand that salvation is freely given to all those who give their hearts to Jesus.

Divide the class into two groups. Ask them to name instances in the Bible where mercy was extended. Allow them to use their Bibles and keep score on a blackboard or note pad. It might be interesting as a follow-up to suggest that students recount situations they know of first-hand (or in the news), where mercy is being shown in current times.

Answers for ANSWER

