

DAY 18

Love Engenders Empathy

When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36

Leadership Affirmation

I will invest in an individual today who does not know I am a leader. I will help them discover they are of great worth to our amazing God through the grace of Jesus Christ His Son.

The attribute of love produces the attitude of empathy. The natural inclination of leaders who love people is to see things from their perspective, to understand and share their feelings. They are not harsh.

When James and John made an outlandishly arrogant request of Jesus, His response dripped with empathy. Jesus listened to their request. He understood their hearts, their desires, their ambitions, though wrong-headed as they are. And Jesus gently redirected them.

Jesus is a master of empathy. He has compassion for our *spiritual condition* (Matthew 9:36). He has compassion for our *physical condition* (Matthew 14:14). Jesus has compassion for our *emotional condition*. When Jesus arrived at Lazarus's tomb, we find the shortest verse in the Bible: *Jesus wept* (John 11:35).

Jesus' weeping carried a deeper intensity and had a different focus from the others.^{xv} Mary and the others were lamenting loudly over their sense of loss; Jesus silently burst into tears at the heartache of His friends.^{xvi}

Have you experienced grief so great that you couldn't breathe? It's been well said that in that moment, Jesus looked back and forth across the corridors of time and saw all the grief and brokenness that humanity would ever feel because of the effects of sin. It grieved Him to the core, and He wept bitterly.^{xvii}

Empathetic leaders create an environment of support and encouragement, of trust and safety. They celebrate our successes and provide encouragement during our failures. They're always there for us to pick us up when we're down. That's Jesus. And that is us when we lead like Jesus leads.

Prayer for Protection

Lord, following in the footsteps of Jesus, I refuse to let the vastness of human need deter me from helping the ones I can.