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Sympathy



Sympathy

- *sympatheo* – “*sun*, ‘with,’ *pascho*, ‘to feel’”; “to have a fellow-feeling for or with” (VINE)
 - “as showing a disposition to help because of fellow feeling” (ALGNT)
- Most often considered in light of negative circumstances
 - compassion – from Latin *compati*, *com* – “together,” *pati* – “to suffer.”
 - *sympatheō* – translated “*compassion*” in **Hebrews 10:34** (NKJV, ESV)



The Basis and Standard

Relationship is the Basis of Sympathy

- Humanity – **Acts 17:26-28**
- *“The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all.”* (**Proverbs 22:2**)
- Job’s defense – **Job 31:13-23**
- Good Samaritan – **Luke 10:25-37**
- Sympathy should intensify as the relationship increases – **1 Timothy 5:8; 1 John 4:20-5:1**



The Basis and Standard

Jesus Christ is the Supreme Standard of Sympathy

- He can sympathize – **Hebrews 4:15**
 - Sharing flesh and blood – **Hebrews 2:10-11, 14, 17-18**
- “a heart at leisure from itself is needed to sympathise; and not less needed is a sedulous cultivation of the power of sympathy.” (Alexander MacLaren) – **cf. Philippians 2:3-8**



The Scope (Romans 12:15)

Rejoice with Those Who Rejoice

- We often limit sympathy to the negative, but Christ calls us to a complete sympathy involving a “fellow-feeling for or with” those who experience good.
- Seen in what Christ calls us to refrain from in putting on the new man – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:15, 19-21, 22-23, 26



The Scope (Romans 12:15)

Rejoice with Those Who Rejoice

- “It is, indeed, more difficult to congratulate others on their success, especially if their success involves disappointment to us, than it is to sympathize with their sorrow and their loss. It is only when self is dead that we can take as much joy in the success of others as in our own.” (William Barclay)
- **1 Corinthians 12:26** – “*rejoice with it*” – *sygchairo* – “*sun,* “*with or together,*” and *chairo*, “*to rejoice*”; “*sympathize in gladness, congratulate*” (STRONG)



The Scope (Romans 12:15)

Rejoice with Those Who Rejoice

- This activity is Christ-like – **Luke 15** – lost sheep, coin, son.
- For all positive situations – **Luke 1:7, 13-14, 57-58**
- When our brothers and sisters in Christ struggle under the weight of sorrow or loss, we seek to help them in bearing that load by showing compassion. **Why should we not seek to augment their joy when they are in a season of blessing?**



The Scope (Romans 12:15)

Weep with Those Who Weep

- Shown and encouraged – **Hebrews 10:32-34; 13:1, 3**
- Jesus consistently was moved with compassion – **Matthew 9:35-36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:32-34; Mark 1:40-41; Luke 7:12-15; John 11:32-36**
- We need to have compassion on those who do not know their miserable state, and seek to open their eyes to it – **Mark 6:34; Matthew 23:37-39**

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