

Outline

Get Possessed!

Can we over the next few paragraphs have several pics of Compassion Children scrolling the screen during the entire time until the next page?

I came face to face with Compassion International about 10 years ago when I attended a Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant Christmas Concert at the Verizon Center (then called the MCI Center). I saw a video very similar to what you just saw today and was moved to find out more. So Melodie and I stopped by the Compassion booth and got some info about Compassion and saw all these wonderful pictures and bios of kids that you will see as you leave today. Both Melodie and I felt a huge burden for these children and felt that our hearts were telling us that we could make a difference in a child's life a half a world away. We searched for a child around the age of one of our children and found one about Luke's age – we signed up for him knowing very little about Compassion, but feeling very moved in our hearts that this was the right thing to do. It would have probably behooved us to research the organization and find out if Compassion was a quality organization or one that was just taking our money to fund their administrative salaries. But we didn't. Because we felt very burdened that God was leading our hearts to do this – we followed the voice of God in our fleeting thoughts.

The story does not end there. About a year later we were told that we could no longer sponsor our child, for he was no longer a part of the program. I later found out that Compassion has very strict accountability rules for their sponsored children and the local projects that educate and meet their needs. If either is found wanting, they are removed from the program. Anyway, we were given a new child, Eko Domingus from Thailand, and we have sponsored him for the last 8 years, writing him letters, receiving letters from him, sending him birthday presents, celebrating high points of his life like promotions at school, baptism, and other events. We have literally watched him grow up from afar. Our whole family loves young Eko, even though we have never physically met him, a relationship began because of our desire to obey God's leading in our "fleeting thoughts" to sponsor him.

As I told you, I probably should have checked out Compassion as an organization. That came later. A few years later, we were doing a *Tough Questions* message series where we tried to tackle what a Christian's responsibility is in areas like racism, homosexuality, the environment, and world poverty. For the last category, we invited a guest speaker to take the stage who was from Compassion International. Once again, my heart was immensely challenged. The question was firmly resolved about whether a Church and Christians should take a responsible role for local and global poverty – the answer was a resounding "Yes!" And to challenge me even further Compassion invited me to check them out financially, philosophically, and even globally by inviting me to visit several of their projects in Bolivia on their dime. I glossed it over and politely told them I would think about it, all the while simply planning to move on to my next project, my next service. But the magnanimous voice of God had other plans. He would not take the thought out of my mind. It was in my dreams. It was in my planning. It was in my message preparation. The thought hardly left my mind until I finally gave up and took them up on their offer and flew to Bolivia and took a whirlwind tour of the country and visiting many projects located in the midst of the poorest sections of cities and the country. God broke my heart over poverty and children who delighted over a hug and a cheap dollar store gift. I marveled over what Compassion does in its projects in the poorest countries for children of poverty, choosing to eradicate the mindset of poverty by offering Compassion in Jesus' name and instilling hope within the children of these countries. Financial books were opened to me, unfiltered access to the people of the Compassion Projects was given, and the biblical philosophy and financial fact that 84% of all donations go directly to the child were shared with me.

I heard the voice of God in my heart and immediately came back as a Ni River representative in the sponsoring of these children. From that visit came God's leading of Ni River to establish a relationship with Compassion, which God led to a relationship with ChildReach Missions ([pic of ChildReach logo and some ChildReach Pics](#)) and our adoption of Hannah's Home and Hannah's Hope, two homes in Chilca,

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Peru that take in unwanted orphans and abandoned pregnant teens to offer Compassion and Hope in Jesus' Name.

The story simply keeps expanding. A couple who are Ministry Partners at Ni River began to feel a stirring and a Holy Discontentment in their hearts that God was moving in their thoughts and desires that they were to do something different with their lives. (pics of the Petersons) They were feeling dissatisfied with their professions and with their place in life. We began to pray that God would make this clear. God began to work and as we sorted out their thoughts and feelings, they felt the Holy Spirit of God calling them to Peru. And with that the Peterson family of Fredericksburg, VA and Ni River Community Church answered God's call to go to Hannah's Home and Hannah's Hope as the American Directors of these homes. And just last month we sent the largest group of missionaries to Peru to minister and be ministered to. (Pic of the June Peru Team)

Why am I telling you all of this? Well, we are celebrating Compassion International today and even calling today **Compassion Sunday**, where we focus on this incredible organization, but that is only a part of the reason. We find ourselves at the last message in the present series, *Angels and Demons* in which we have been seeking to understand the nature of the spiritual world that surrounds us and of which we are a part. And today we conclude by seeking to understand the King of the Spiritual World – The Holy Spirit of God!

My story of my and Ni River's involvement has everything to do with our interaction with God through His Holy Spirit. From my initial stirring in my soul to get involved with Compassion International at that Michael W. Smith concert to the dragging of Ni River into it to the relationship and love that our church has with the nation of Peru to the calling of our very first missionaries, the Petersons, you have heard me say repeatedly that God moved in my heart to lead me, that I felt God speaking to me to make a move, that there seemed to be a burden impassioning my mind and heart to make the decisions that I made. That voice, that burden, that conviction, came right out of my personal relationship with God and His voice speaking to me in my [Fleeting Thoughts](#).

God talks to you and to me everyday. We also have an Enemy that assails us spiritually everyday in every thought with self-defeating negative thoughts and others' crushing negative temptations. But we also have a Guide who seeks to lead us into a life of joy and peace. Jesus introduced Him to His disciples and to us in the book of John.

Get Possessed to KNOW God!

["If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."](#) John 14:15-17 NIV

Notice what Jesus is seeking that we do – get possessed by God! Look at the last line: As we obey what He tells us in our spirits, we will be possessed by the Spirit of God Himself. He lives with us and is even IN us. I offer to you that the loudest voice in your heart and spirit and life is God's voice. However, we only hear that voice as we obey His commands. Jesus explains it further later on in the text:

Get Possessed to KNOW God's Love!

Jesus replied, ["If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."](#) John 14:23,24 NIV

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Jesus promises to make His home with whoever invites Him to be a part of their lives. God constantly seeks to be a part of our lives and to receive an invitation to be a part of our lives. God will not take over our lives but seeks to receive our permission for His blessing in our lives. The Enemy demands that we obey and if we do not will fill us with negative emotion to obey like fear and condemnation. Look what God seeks and constantly is talking to us. Words like “love,” and “home.” God will let us choose to bless our lives, but His blessings are so much bigger and better and they come with things like peace and love and joy. Listen as Jesus talks about it further:

Get Possessed to KNOW God’s Truth!

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:25-27 NIV

As we seek to be possessed by the Spirit of God, He promises to bless us in several functions:

- ◇ **Teach us in all things** – God promises to teach you things you have not learned or cannot know.
- ◇ **Remind us of Jesus’ Teachings** – God promises to help us understand the Bible and God’s philosophy of living a fulfilled life.
- ◇ **Lead us in a life of Peace** – God will speak to us about how to live a life of peace and joy rather than stress and dysfunction.

Jesus isn’t done. He desperately wants us to realize that He is not abandoning us, but that while physically on this earth, He could only be one place at a time, through the Spirit, He can indwell each and every person who desires His Counsel and Help to live this battle called life. He knows we are woefully ignorant when it comes to living a full life and wants to offer His disciples, you and me, the full extent of His presence and love. He offers us all we need to live abundantly if we just listen to His voice and obey:

Get Possessed to KNOW God’s Rightness!

“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.” John 16:8-11 NIV

In other words, Jesus knows we are incapable of knowing the truth on our own. He offers His Spirit to possess us to give us a supernatural knowledge of the truth.

- ◇ **The Truth of our Sin** – God does not condemn us for sinning. He simply wants to show us a better life without sin. Therefore, that nagging little voice in your head that lets you know you blew it and how to make it right – That’s God! Obey it and live!
- ◇ **The Truth of our Righteousness** – God is constantly showing us the path to peace and joy and a fulfilled life. He wants us to have our best life now as Joel Osteen says, and I agree with him! You know that gut feeling that seems to be directing you toward the right decision the right choice the right... – That’s God! Obey it and be blessed in life!

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- ◇ **The Truth of Satan's End** – God does condemn one being – Satan. He is the defeated foe and God gives us the right to remind Him of his defeat by Jesus at the Cross. The Enemy lies to us every day. The Holy Spirit within us gives us the right to condemn him and remind him of his condemnation in Jesus' Name!

So how do we do this? Well, I believe that God has given us some tools to defeat Satan and they must be in our arsenal every day! Take a look at them and commit to use them every day as you enjoy your God possession within you!

Get Possessed to KNOW God's Victory

God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Ephesians 6:10-13 TM

Sounds scary – right? It is but it isn't - because the Spirit who lives in us comes with the tools to fight off the Enemy and to live a peaceful and fulfilled life. But we have to listen and we have to obey. It's sort of like if I was a really rich guy and I liked you a lot and, just for the fun of it, I gave you a Maserati (**Can we enter a pic of this car?**) and with it, I came along as an instructor to teach you how to drive it safely and get the most out of it (I know, I am really stretching it with this story). But you chose to just sit in the car and ignore my instructions and immediately drove the car into a brick wall and totaled it. That would be foolish. That's how we are with the voice of God. He has given us a Maserati called life and He comes with the life and all we have to do to get the most out of it and live a fulfilled life is listen to Him and use the tools He gives us. Here are the tools and every time He tells you to use them and you do, you will grow and mature and be blessed!

Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

Ephesians 6:14-18 TM

1. **Truth** – God will lead you to always tell the truth – live in it and be blessed.
2. **Righteousness** – God will lead you to live right – Obey His voice rather than the world's and live blessed.
3. **Peace** – God will lead you to live peacefully with all men – Choose peace and be blessed.
4. **Faith** – God will lead you to trust Him with your decisions. Follow Him and live blessed.
5. **Salvation** – God will lead you to Forgiveness. Accept Him and be blessed.
6. **God's Word** – God will speak to you in the Bible. Read and be blessed.
7. **Prayer** – God will listen. Talk to Him and be blessed.
8. **Encouragement** – God will speak to you through others. Love and be blessed.

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