

WORD

³²Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them . . . **ACTS 4:32-34**

As the church grew in numbers, the book of Acts shows that the church also grew in compassion, generosity, and service in the community. The disciples were united and shared what they had with one another. They were able to do so because of God's hand and grace upon them. As a result, there were no more poor and needy among them. In the same way, we can be compassionate to and serve the poor among us because of who Jesus is in our lives. In this lesson, we will look at what we can give to show compassion that translates into action.

1 Service

¹Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. . . . ³"Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." **ACTS 6:1,3**

As the church grew, the apostles knew they couldn't neglect serving the poor and needy. They made sure this was done properly and consistently, while the gospel continued to be preached. How have you learned to serve the poor and needy? Recall a specific instance explaining this.

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2 Resources

³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. **ACTS 4:34,35**

The community of believers voluntarily and sacrificially gave of what they had so that each person's needs would be met. This is not something the apostles asked or required of the church. Rather, it was something each believer chose to do out of love. Share about a time when you were a recipient of God's blessing through your church community.

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3 The Gospel

But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" **ACTS 3:6**

When Peter and John were asked for money, they had nothing to give the lame beggar. Instead, they declared his healing in the name of Jesus. Though we can serve the poor and share our resources, the best thing we can give others is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who preached the gospel to you? How did you become a follower of Jesus?

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