



We can know something is true in our minds and still struggle to experience it as true in our hearts. Simply telling ourselves to “think differently” does not always reach the places where fear, hurt, or old patterns have settled deeply within us. This prayerful practice gently brings together what we know, what we feel, and what we experience in our bodies, inviting the Holy Spirit into all three. As we slow down, notice what is happening within us, remember what is true about God, and open ourselves to receive His compassion, truth begins to move from something we understand into something we can experience and live from. Over time, what we know about God can become something more deeply rooted within us—His mercy becoming not only a truth we believe, but an anchor for the heart.



Introduction

The life of faith begins with a turning from our own ways to the way of the Lord. This is repentance: a change of heart, a change of mind, a change of direction – where one is turning back from sin and destruction. Far from being a one-time occurrence, in the believer's life of faith we are called, again and again, to live with open hearts, to engage in reflection and repentance, and to return to the One who knows us fully and loves us still. In that quiet turning, we are called to remember His true nature, the Name and attributes He proclaimed to Moses in Exodus 34:6–7. These are known in Jewish thought as the 13 Attributes of Mercy, repeated frequently throughout Scripture as the writers reminded Israel of God's lovingkindness towards them. For us, today, they serve as an invitation to draw near and experience His presence.

When we meditate on these holy attributes, the grip of self-defensive habits that wound us and others and place distance between our souls and God begins to loosen. **When we lift our eyes from our failures and behold His mercy instead,** we observe what compassion truly is. And as His compassion settles deep within us, it begins to re-form us from the inside out, because we are transformed into what we behold:

But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Come quietly before the Lord.

Settle your heart.

Let the noise within you grow still.

*For the Lord is near,
and His mercy is not far from you.*

*His compassion reaches into the
places you have hidden,*

*and His lovingkindness holds what feels
tender, burdened, or undone.*

Set aside 10 minutes in a quiet space.

This is a time to slow down, notice what is happening within you, and open yourself to God's presence, mercy, and lovingkindness.

The Prayerful Path

1. Name one area of your life where you need God's compassion.

What feels troubling, heavy, painful, or tender right now?

2. Remember God is with you

Whether you feel Him or not, God is present with you in this moment.

3. Notice what you feel.

What emotion(s) rise within you?

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What do you feel in your body as this emotion comes forward?

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4. Be gentle with your own heart.

- a. You do not need to rush, resist, or reject what you feel.
- b. If the emotion or feeling makes you uncomfortable, use wonder/curiosity to explore it instead of pushing it away. (1)

- c. Receive this moment with honesty and kindness. You are safe to come as you are. You can allow the feeling to stay – or set it aside until you are able to handle it.

5. Reflect on God's compassion and mercy

Which attribute do you sense God desire to give you as you face the feelings being stirred?

Mercy	Compassion	Grace
Truth	Lovingkindness	Forgiveness
Patience	Faithfulness	Steadfastness

or something else?

The list below is adapted from “The Attributes of Mercy”, God’s self-declaration in Exodus 34:6-7(2). These facets of God’s character cover all the relational needs we have – but feel free to include any character trait not included here:

1. The LORD – His compassion towards us before we sin;
2. The LORD – His compassion towards us after we have sinned;
3. God – God’s compassionate might that gives all creatures according to their need
4. Merciful
5. Gracious
6. Slow to anger (patient)
7. Abounding in steadfast love
8. Abounding in faithfulness
9. Keeping steadfast love for thousands (faithful for generations)
10. Forgiving iniquity – this is intentional sin
11. Forgiving transgression – this is outright rebellion
12. Forgiving sin – this is accidental wrongdoing
13. Clearing the guilty – cleansing and purifying

6. Open Your Heart to Receive His Gift

Place your hand over your heart and declare/pray:

- “Lord, I receive Your [insert the attribute God is highlighting to you].”

For example:

- “Lord, I receive Your truth.”
- “Lord, I receive Your compassion.”
- “Lord, I receive Your grace.”
- Etc.

It may seem 'corny', but saying these things out loud creates a calming effect in your nervous system!

7. Consider what may shift, ask what may be made new.

How might this situation look different if you received God's compassion and love here?

8. Give thanks.

Bless the Lord for His nearness,
for His mercy that does not fail,
for His compassion that meets you here,
for His steadfastlove that endures forever.

Find inspiration in the Scriptures, especially the Psalms. (3)

9. End with Amen.

“Let it be so.”

For additional study:

(1) Here is a 3-step process that can help bring peace to painful emotions:

Notice	Wonder	Welcome
Come to your senses. Notice your body, breath, posture, images, colors, movement, and emotions. Express them in whatever way feels available.	Become curious. As safety increases, begin putting language to your experience. What is this emotion communicating? What need, wound, value, or longing might it reveal?	Invite God into the experience. Receive His compassion, wisdom, and truth. Rather than trying to eliminate emotions, allow Him to transform them into pathways of healing, connection, and growth.

A more extensive explanation can be found in this article:

A Three-Step Path Toward Emotional Healing

(2) A deeper look at the 13 Attributes of God's mercy is available in this free PDF handout:

Praying the 13 Attributes of Mercy
(with background story + Lectio Divina prompts)

(3) Psalm verses for this step if you need a little inspiration!

Psalm 16:11	Psalm 23:6	Psalm 25:6	Psalm 31:7
Psalm 33:5	Psalm 51:1	Psalm 52:9	Psalm 63:3
Psalm 86:15	Psalm 103:8	Psalm 103:11–12	Psalm 106:1
Psalm 118:1	Psalm 136:1	Psalm 136:26	Psalm 145:8–9

Download the list with the full verses written out:

Psalms for God's Compassion & Mercy

Other verses to consider:

Where to Find the 13 Attributes in the Bible