

# 7 Transformational Characteristics of Mercy

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”(James 3:17, MEV).

Mercy is like a diamond; it is multi-faceted. Here are seven facets of mercy. I guarantee if you'll learn how to be an agent of mercy, it will transform your relationships.

**1. Mercy means being patient with people's quirks.** How do you get more patience for your kids, spouse, or friends? The Bible says in James 3:17, *“The wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy”* (NLT, second edition). The wiser you become, the more patient and merciful you become.

**2. Mercy means helping anyone around you who is hurting.** You cannot love your neighbor as yourself without being merciful. Proverbs 3:27 says, *“Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it”* (TEV). But God is not simply watching what you do. He's watching your attitude: *“[When you] show mercy, do it cheerfully”* (Romans 12:8, NIV).

**3. Mercy means giving people a second chance.** When somebody hurts us, we normally want to get even or write that person off. But the Bible says, *“Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:31-32, CEV).

**4. Mercy means doing good to those who hurt you.** Mercy is giving people what they need, not what they deserve. Why

should we do it? Because that's what God does with you: *"Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because [God] is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful"* (Luke 6:35-36, NIV).

**5. Mercy means being kind to those who offend you.** You've got to be more interested in winning people to Christ than in winning the argument. Jude 1:22-23 says, *"Show mercy to those who have doubts. Save others by snatching them from the fire of hell. Show mercy to others, even though you are afraid that you might be stained by their sinful lives"* (GW).

**6. Mercy means building bridges of love to the unpopular.** This is what I call premeditated mercy, because you intentionally build friendships with people who don't have friends or who are not accepted at work or in society. When the Pharisees questioned why Jesus ate with tax collectors and other unpopular people, Jesus said, *"'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners"* (Matthew 9:13b, NLT, second edition).

**7. Mercy means valuing relationships over rules.** Romans 13:10 says, *"Love fulfills the requirements of God's law."* If you want to show mercy, put people before policies. Put their needs before procedures. Put relationships before regulations. Choose love over law.

### **Talk It Over**

1. In today's cultural climate, why is it often easier to be more interested in winning the argument than in winning people to Christ?
2. If mercy means valuing relationships over rules, what do you need to change about the way you interact with your coworkers? What about with your children?

3. How can you be intentional this week about showing mercy to people around you who are hurting? {eoa}

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