

During times of crisis, we often see the most dramatic examples of caring. After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in August 2005, tens of thousands of people from all over the world reached out to help. Many of those people lived far away from the disaster. In some cases, volunteers drove for thousands of miles to be in Louisiana or Mississippi to help victims. Those people showed extraordinary kindness and compassion.

When wildfires destroyed nearly 2,000 homes and hundreds of thousands of acres throughout Southern California in October 2007, residents and non-residents alike came together in a spirit of caring. The

fires raged for more than a week. Nearly half a million people had their lives turned upside down. Almost immediately, shelters and evacuation centers were up and running, and donations of food and clothing poured in. This was all a result of people showing great compassion and kindness for others during a time of crisis.

**New Orleans residents walk the flooded streets after Hurricane Katrina.**



Caring is not only about being kind or generous during times of crisis. It's also about being that way every day. For caring to truly be part of your character, it needs to be one of the priorities in your life. We'll talk more about this in Chapter 3.



**In 2007, thousands of homes were destroyed by wildfires in Southern California.**

## Two Parts to Caring

Caring as it relates to character is shown in two basic ways:

1. as concern for others
2. as a passion for an ideal, belief, or cause.

Most often, these two ways go together. A person who shows a constant concern for others most likely believes passionately in the idea of helping others. A truly caring person is involved in the well-being of others, as if their own happiness depended on it.

## Concern for Others: Compassion and Empathy

*Compassion* and *empathy* are words that are often used to describe a true concern for others. Compassion means being affected by the suffering of others and feeling the urge to help. Empathy is the ability