

STEPPING UP AND STEPPING OUT



LEARNING A NEW MINDSET ON BENEVOLENCE

INTRODUCTION:

Breaking the chains of Generational Poverty can be complex, multi-layered and extensive; and won't be solved in a short Bible class. We can, however, shine some light into some difficult spaces and continue the mission of Christ by proclaiming the good news to the poor.

OPENING QUESTION

How can we as the church (personally and corporally) continue to fulfill this ministry of Christ found in Luke 4:18-19?

OPENING VIDEO

Define Generational Poverty.

List some Hidden rules of poverty culture mindset.

ALLEVIATION OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY (?)

The good news of the kingdom is the true and only real power to break Generational Poverty (GP), when poverty is understood from a biblical framework of a broken relationship originated from The Fall (Genesis 3) and effects ones relationship with God, self, others, and environment. Poverty, therefore, is a result of relationships that do not work as intended by our Creator. True GP alleviation, therefore, can only be accomplished through the message of reconciliation—the gospel of Christ! Since most GP goes beyond the aspect of material insufficiency, the solutions must go beyond the material as well. From this perspective, the goal is not to move from a poverty culture to a middle class culture; but, to transform from poverty/middle class/wealth culture to KINGDOM CULTURE. Kingdom culture Assimilates, Educates, Restores the broken into *His workmanship created in Christ Jesus*.

SESSION 4:

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

(Luke 4:18-19)

...there shall be no poor among you...

Deuteronomy 15:4

For the poor will never cease to be in the land;

Deuteronomy 15:11 {See also Acts 2:44; John 12:8}

After reading Alleviation of Generational Poverty, how can Deuteronomy 15:4 reconcile with 15:11?

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SESSION 4:

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY

⇒ Breaking the chains of generational poverty through ASSIMILATION.

Merriam-Webster refers to assimilation as the process through which one of differing heritages acquire the basic habits, attitudes, and mode of life of an embracing culture. Although the word may have modern day negative connotations depending on how the process is conducted— from a biblical sense, however, of one living in ‘kingdom culture’ having this attitude be in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5); assimilation is a necessary process for one trapped in GP to escape. And, the best place for that assimilation to take place is in Christ—through the church. Even secular research has shown that religious social capital (People that bring emotional, spiritual, and psychological support in times of need) does more to bring one out of being homeless {& other poverty circumstances} than any other form of assistance. This research also reflects that the ability to leave GP is more dependent on social capital than simply material resources. Assimilation in the church (if the church is being the church) also lends itself to ones “future story”. Future story (having hope for a better life situation) is one of the top indicators of moving out of GP along with 1) relationships of bridging social capital (accomplished through assimilation), 2) Education, and 3) Employment.

⇒ Breaking the chains of generational poverty through EDUCATION.

In order to break GP, learning (education) must take place. Jesus, as a focal point in his ministry taught the people (see Matthew 9:35). Christianity itself is a taught religion, and when it comes to how we walk with the poor among us—this too should be taught. The disciples of Jesus are simply learners {mathetis} of Jesus—both the teacher and the student or the helper and the one helped. Additionally, education does not have to be in a classroom setting. Isaiah 58:10 references helping the poor by *giving yourself to the hungry or pouring yourself out*. Giving resources can be much easier than spending yourself through comfort, time, encouragement, and education. Since many in poverty situations have a corrupted cognitive domain file (how one thinks or may not have the right category in

How does Acts 2:44 and Acts 11:19-26 demonstrate aspects of kingdom assimilation? How does assimilation in the kingdom impact ones “future story”? What are some additional scriptures that reflect this?

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Hosea 4:6

What areas of learning can be most beneficial to those in poverty and why? Also, how can the teacher learn ways themselves of not teaching with a “superior complex” which does further damage in poverty alleviation?

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how to think) teaching kingdom ethics of work, responsibility, accountability, etc., is vital. Again, research is clear on this topic; Education is a key to getting out of and staying out of GP!

⇒ **Breaking the chains of generational poverty through RESTORATION.**

Restoration in light of GP is the all encompassing work of God partnering with man in order to restore man's original intent of shalom with God, others, self, and environment. As soon as the immediate and impending crisis is met, Restoration, not relief, should be the goal of the kingdom helper. Most, however, continue to apply relief efforts which actually creates more problems of GP. Restoration, on the other hand, does not enable dependency but strengthens the individual to break through GP chains. After relief, the church is the one institution designed to operate in bringing forth restoration as God has intended. God's people are not commanded to give with mindless prodigality but with great discernment we freely give in order for the restoration of those caught in GP to be what they were created to be; and ultimately, it depends on the reconciling work of the Colossians 1 Jesus; our Creator—Sustainer—Reconciler.

CLOSING

What new concepts did you learn about breaking the chains of generational poverty? In your opinion, can generational poverty be alleviated?

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What actions steps of walking in grace and truth can your family proceed in helping those in generational poverty?

SESSION 4:

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY

What about Restoration challenges your initial thinking on giving to the poor?

Read and reflect on Colossians 1:13-29 with emphasis on helping alleviate GP.

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Colossians 1:19-23

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SESSION 4: SOURCE MATERIAL

Here are sources used and supplemental material on Breaking the chains of Generational Poverty:

- ⇒ A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Ruby K. Payne
- ⇒ When Helping Hurts, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
- ⇒ Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development, Bryant L. Myers
- ⇒ The Church of Christ A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today, Everett Ferguson
- ⇒ Neither Poverty Nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions, Craig Blomberg

Personal Notes

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SESSION 4: LIFE GROUPS

“Generational poverty sometimes results in the most damaging outcome—a perpetual sense of hopelessness... One generation follows another in a cycle of hopelessness. In the absence of hope and the belief that life can be better, motivation and energy are insufficient to break the cycle.”

(John Rampton)

In the grand tapestry of human society, poverty stands as a stark reminder of the inequalities that persist in our world. Defined not just by a lack of material wealth but by a deprivation of opportunities, dignity, and hope, poverty casts a long shadow over the lives of millions, trapping them in a cycle of hardship and despair. As we confront the daunting challenge of poverty, it becomes increasingly imperative to shine a light on its causes, consequences, and the urgent need for collective action to break its chains.

Understanding the Faces of Poverty:

Poverty wears many faces, manifesting in myriad forms across the globe. It lurks in the slums of urban centers, where families struggle to make ends meet in the shadows of skyscrapers. It lingers in the rural villages of developing nations, where access to basic necessities such as clean water, healthcare, and education remains elusive. It haunts the lives of marginalized communities, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, who bear the brunt of its impact.

Unraveling the Complex Web of Causes:

The root causes of poverty are complex and multifaceted, intertwined with economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Economic inequality, lack of access to education and healthcare, unemployment, discrimination, conflict, and environmental degradation are just a few of the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and exacerbate its effects. Poverty is not merely the absence of wealth but the result of structural injustices and systemic barriers that deny individuals and communities the opportunity to thrive.

Confronting the Human Cost:

Behind the statistics and figures lies the human cost of poverty, measured not only in material deprivation but in lost potential, shattered dreams, and diminished dignity. Poverty robs individuals of their agency, forcing them to make impossible choices between food, shelter, and healthcare. It denies children the chance to receive an education, trapping them in a cycle of intergenerational poverty. It erodes communities, fostering social unrest, crime, and instability. And it undermines the very fabric of society, perpetuating inequality and hindering progress for all.

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SESSION 4:

LIFE GROUPS

A Call to Action:

In the face of such daunting challenges, the fight against poverty demands a concerted and sustained effort from individuals, communities, governments, and organizations around the world. We must work together to address the root causes of poverty, including economic inequality, lack of access to education and healthcare, discrimination, and environmental degradation. This requires implementing policies and programs that promote inclusive growth, equitable distribution of resources, and social justice.

Investing in education, healthcare, and social protection programs is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering individuals and communities to build better futures. By ensuring access to quality education, healthcare, and social services for all, we can unlock the potential of every individual and pave the way for a more equitable and prosperous society.

Empowering marginalized communities, including women, children, and people with disabilities, is essential for addressing the intersecting factors that perpetuate poverty and exclusion. This requires promoting gender equality, protecting the rights of children, and ensuring access to inclusive services and opportunities for all members of society.

At the same time, fostering sustainable development and environmental stewardship is critical for safeguarding the planet and ensuring a livable future for generations to come. By addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and climate change, we can mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities and build resilience to future shocks.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, poverty is not an inevitability but a social injustice that demands our attention, compassion, and action. By confronting the root causes of poverty, investing in inclusive development, and empowering marginalized communities, we can break the chains of poverty and build a more just, equitable, and sustainable world for all. As we strive to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and confront the challenges of the 21st century, let us renew our commitment to ending poverty in all its forms and leaving no one behind.

<https://medium.com/@omisakinmonioluwa/breaking-the-chains-of-poverty-a-call-to-action-2561cdbffd67>

LIFE GROUP INSTRUCTIONS:

Send this out to everyone in your group ahead of time for reading. Then ask everyone- What can we do as a Life Group/Church to alleviate generational poverty within our own circles? Can we really make a difference?