

STEPPING UP AND STEPPING OUT



LEARNING A NEW MINDSET ON BENEVOLENCE

SESSION 5: UNDERSTANDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

SETTING SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS

Introduction: I Thessalonians 2:7-9 (10 Minutes)

The great commission to go and teach the gospel to all nations will involve reaching the materially poor. Setting up supportive systems so that the materially poor can join our lives and our church will mean **examining our current perspectives, considering the systems needed for support, and to share a deep level of interconnectedness that binds us within the body of Christ.**

What does this verse say about how we should reach the materially poor?

VIDEO (5 Minutes)

Note to Bible Class Chairmen:

It is important to this class that the video is seen, whether in class or viewed ahead of time. Choose for your class which would be the best solution for it to be seen. If it is not going to be used during class, please send a link out to your class ahead of that Sunday and encourage them to watch it before coming to class Sunday.

What ways do we reach the materially poor so they know the gospel and can worship with the body of believers? Looking at 1 Thes 2:7-9, what did Paul say they shared with the people along with the gospel?

MAIN POINTS (25 Minutes)

⇒ WHAT IS YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

During this series, hopefully each of us have considered our perspectives in order to work with the materially poor. Starting with the role we see God playing, look at Him as active in both our lives and the lives of those with whom we are working; then understand that people will respond to God in a personal way and in their unique timing. Sometimes they do not respond the way we imagine they should; remember this is a process and there are multiple levels to consider within yourself and within their life.

Notes

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

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Recognize how victimization and unfortunate circumstances can lead to a faulty view of suffering. Your knowledge of how God views suffering is important. Some will be responding to pain illicitly and can have many broken relationships surrounding them. It can help build compassion to think that you could be in the same situation if you had experienced the same things. When together, talk out how you problem solve, talk about your view of yourself and how He is renewing your mind, and how God potentially sees them. This builds hope when the patterns of the world begin to break and His renewal begins. See Romans 12:2.

In 1 Thes 2:9. We see an example of working, as they stayed among the people in Thessalonica. This illustrates responsibility and dignity in work. Think of your value for working, helping others, and contentment in preparation to serving the materially poor. We should note that the typical American view of money will not aid in poverty alleviation. In *Becoming Whole*, Fikkert & Kopic discuss how our nation is at the highest level of material prosperity yet our “social fabric is falling apart.” In essence, we do not invite our neighbors to reach for money or materialism as the answer to their predicament. For the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10). We are inviting them into the most transforming, life giving relationship known to man and we are a partner on the journey within the body, a God designed system.

⇒ WHAT ARE YOU PROVIDING?

Setting up systems that can provide the missing or reduced resources, that are tailored to the person in need, and provide hope is a vital next step. According to Ruby Payne, we must assess their needs. In her book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, no intervention planned with the materially poor will work without the proper resources. These are emotional, mental or cognitive, spiritual, physical, financial, relationships and role models, knowledge of hidden rules and support systems. Resources can be needed to regulate emotions in negative situations to prevent from resorting to harming behaviors. Christians believe that God is acces-

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Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(Romans 12:2)

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sible and that they have purpose. It was found that people need spiritual resource in time of need. The materially poor can have limited numbers of friends or family as a support system to respond in a moment of need. The church members can provide this valuable system of support. Healthy and nurturing role models aid in acquiring understanding, processing experiences, and creating better self-talk which is found to be pivotal in perseverance and problem solving. The cognitive ability to read and write efficiently enough to get a job is another resource needed at key times. Loving our neighbor or brothers and sisters in Christ will involve the sharing of lives (1 Thes 2:8) and the building of resources and support systems. Christians together can offer their lives as examples and the church can provide teaching to build each of these resources.

⇒ WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION?

To share a deep level of interconnectedness, we start by seeing the person in need. Look at Acts 3:4 (in box). Peter and John looked straight at the lame man. Responding to his request for money, they had the man look at them. Think about what truly *looking at the person* in need entails and what asking them to see where you really are in life, in purpose, in the church. We can prayerfully give to the need at hand. The people we work with could respond with joy like the lame man and want to head to worship and praise God. Take note, though, the work with the materially poor can be a long process. Additionally, it is important to note that levels of poverty range anywhere from destitute to situationally poor. The responses, boundary awareness, level of access to relationships, and timing should be adjusted as needed.

Our interconnectedness as a society flows beyond the church. We are all affected when a child gets in trouble daily for not having his pencil in class though he has been in 4 different places the last 4 nights and they lost his backpack, or a mother plans to have one more baby without a husband to increase support from the government, or when the man on welfare decides not to marry because he does not want to lose benefits. This broken

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One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. 6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

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system can be viewed as an invisible dome that pushes people back down into poverty. It makes false claims that lead people astray and trap them. It involves broken people, destructive formative patterns, demonic forces, and false gods (Becoming Whole by Feikkert and Kapic). There is much to overcome and it is not just money or the inability to manage it that caused the situation. By now you may have noticed that the system of the body of Christ is the place for this reconciliation of mankind. Together and not singularly we can be the new creation that is the cure to the fall of which we were impacted together (2 Cor 5:17-19).

CLOSING:

As you begin being supportive systems for the materially poor, aiding in their feeling safe, allowing them to choose the rate of the relationships and to ask questions, while maintaining healthy boundaries, stay connected to others in the body. Jesus will continue His transforming work within a context of a living system, an interconnected group of people, the church. This discovery of gifts, talents, creativity, generosity, and worship will exemplify the fullness of God where every member is fitly joined together (Eph 4:16) by God's fine design.

Discussion: What new or hard thing have you heard in this lesson? How is the help to the materially poor a part of God reconciling the world back to himself in Christ?

NOTES

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

*And he has committed to us the message of **reconciliation**.*

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SESSION 5: LIFE GROUPS

Dysfunction- Understanding the Poverty Mindset

Setting Up Support Systems

Video clip to be watched and questions to follow for life groups:

<https://chalmers.org/resources/videos/becoming-whole-kingdom-community/#:~:text=Becoming%20Whole:%20Kingdom%20Community.%20As%20you%E2%80%99ve%20been%20discussing,%20poverty%20alleviation>

Is the church essential in poverty alleviation?

- ⇒ Out of the 5 areas that create poverty, false gods & erroneous stories of change, destructive formative patterns, broken systems, broken people, and evil/demonic forces, which ones are easiest for you to address and which areas do you wish you know more about?
- ⇒ In the Chalmers video, he talks about Adam & Eve being kicked out of the garden and a deep part of their personhood being gone. Why is this original human loss so important to understanding the materially poor and to advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- ⇒ Why is Jesus the real way that we effect poverty alleviation and then why is the local system God designed to pivotal in caring for the hurting?
- ⇒ Please read Ephesians 3:17-21 (in box). Talk about the glory being in the church and in Christ Jesus, and discuss what system helps us comprehend and know the love of Christ.

Ephesians 3:17-21

... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the [a]saints what is the width and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen