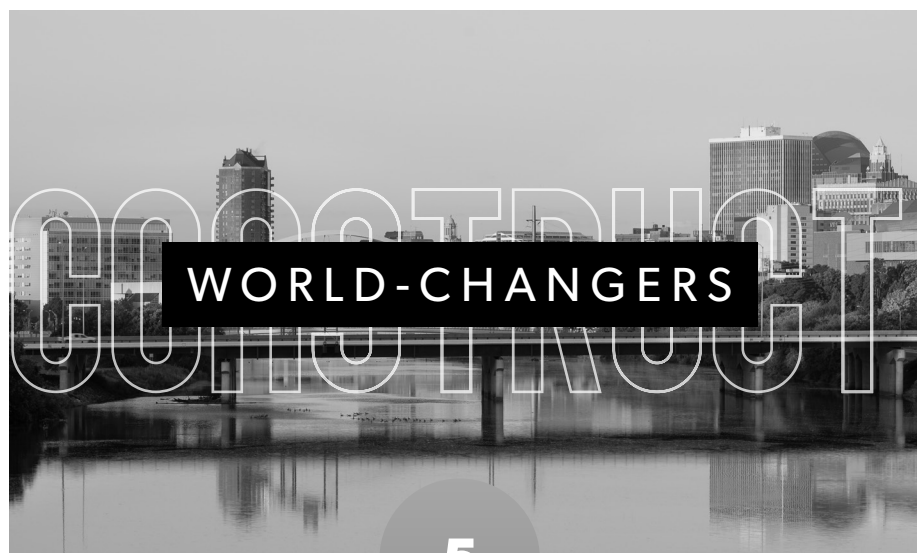




WHEN HELPING HURTS

Study Guide

Hope's 10 for 10, which launched Nov. 2, 2019, details 10 goals for Hope in the next 10 years. With a fresh, updated vision for the next decade of ministry, we are ready to see the amazing ways God is going to move! This study is focused on goal #5, World-Changers.



CONSTRUCT

new church
buildings, clean
water wells
and provide
malaria nets
in developing
countries that ...

... can use as holy ground to draw into his kingdom more than 1 million neighbors who currently live in communities without a church. Respond effectively, actively and generously in response to global issues as the Spirit leads. Send hundreds of volunteers on short-term mission trips all over the world, all for the sake of the gospel and letting our light shine.

Luke 10:2 | Acts 20:24 | Romans 10:14-17



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

3 SESSION 1:

Introduction & Opening Exercise

PART 1:

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

9 SESSION 2:

Chapter 1: *Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?*

15 SESSION 3:

Chapter 2: *What's the Problem?*

21 SESSION 4:

Chapter 3: *Are We There Yet?*

PART 2:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

27 SESSION 5:

Chapter 4: *Not All Poverty Is Created Equal*

33 SESSION 6:

Chapter 5: *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, and Their Assets*

39 SESSION 7:

Chapter 6: *McDevelopment: Over 2.5 Billion People NOT Served*

PART 3:

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

45 SESSION 8:

Chapter 7: *Doing Short-Term Missions Without Doing Long-Term Harm*

51 SESSION 9:

Chapter 8: *Yes, in Your Backyard*

57 SESSION 10:

Chapter 9: *And to the Ends of the Earth*

PART 4:

GETTING STARTED ON HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

63 SESSION 11:

Chapter 10: *Excuse Me, Can You Spare Some Change?*

69 SESSION 12:

Chapter 11: *On Your Mark, Get Set, GO!*

A FINAL WORD: *The Most Important Step*

PART 1:

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 1:

Introduction & Opening Exercise

PRE-READING: Foreword – 2009
Foreword – 2012
Preface
Opening Exercise
Introduction

INTRODUCTIONS:

Have each participant state their name and perhaps what drew them to this study.

OPENING PRAYER

Take a few minutes to open your group meeting in prayer. Thank God for joining you, ask him to guide your conversation and request that he reveal his truth to you.

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Deuteronomy 15:4-8

There should be no poor among you, for the Lord your God will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession. You will receive this blessing if you are careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. The Lord your God will bless you as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations but will never need to borrow. You will rule many nations, but they will not rule over you. But if there are any poor Israelites in your towns when you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted toward them. Instead, be generous and lend them whatever they need.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

Using the **Opening Exercise** on page 19, discuss your thoughts and ideas about each of the six questions.

Remember this is just a pre-study look at our own situations. There are no wrong answers. Please be honest with your group about your thoughts regarding these questions. We are all on a journey to deeper understanding.

CLOSING PRAYER

When your conversation is finished, take some time to close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Then, have someone in your group or you close the group in prayer. If you want, have someone open the prayer and another person close.

NOTES:

[illegible]

Handwriting practice lines for the title "WHEN HELPING HURTS". The page features 20 horizontal lines. The first 10 lines are for the first word "WHEN", and the next 10 lines are for the second word "HELPING". The final 10 lines are for the third word "HURTS".



PRAYER JOURNALING

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Today I read _____ **chapter(s)**

Takeaways as I read...

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Dear God,

Teach me...

You are...

I confess...

I'm thankful for...

Specific Prayer Requests:

Amen.

SERMON NOTES

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PART 1:

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 2:

Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?

PRE-READING: Chapter 1

OPENING PRAYER

Take a few minutes to open your group meeting in prayer. Thank God for joining you, ask him to guide your conversation and request that he reveal his truth to each person individually and as a group collectively.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

These words in Deuteronomy were from God to Moses. They are considered part of Jewish law, given to Moses to guide the people of Israel, God's chosen people.

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Deuteronomy 15:4-11 (emphasis added)

*There should be no poor among you, for the Lord your God will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession. You will receive this blessing if you are careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. The Lord your God will bless you as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations but will never need to borrow. You will rule many nations, but they will not rule over you. But if there are any poor Israelites in your towns when you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted toward them. Instead, **be generous** and lend them whatever they need. Do not be mean-spirited and refuse someone a loan because the year of canceling debts is close at hand. If you refuse to make the loan and the needy person cries out to the Lord, you will be considered guilty of sin. **Give generously to the poor**, not grudgingly, for the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do. There will always be some in the land who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to **share freely with the poor** and with other Israelites in need.*

1. How do these words fit into our lives today? We have no legislation that says we *personally* need to care for the poor. There are federal and state programs to assist the poor, as well as charities. We know that Jesus changed the law by atoning for our sins through his death and resurrection. But do we still have personal responsibility for the poor?

2. What is the primary task of the church? Do you know how Lutheran Church of Hope answers this question?

Hint: Check out the **10 for 10** published by Hope in November 2019.

The **10 goals for Hope in the next 10 years** are that we become:

1. Evangelists
2. Unity Agents
3. Spirit-Filled
4. City-Changers
5. World-Changers
6. Inter-Generational
7. Faith Builders
8. Kingdom Expanders
9. Legacy Makers
10. Care Providers

Which of these 10 goals could have an impact on poverty in our communities and in the world?

3. When poor people look at Lutheran Church of Hope, in what ways do they see the embodiment of Jesus Christ and the comprehensive healing of his Kingdom? Think of ministries that you are aware of at Hope, as well as special Advent or Lent projects. How do these benefit the poor?

Hint: Visit hopewdm.org/serve/locally to see the more than 35 local ministries that Hope supports.

Read aloud: Luke 11:4

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation.

4. The essence of parts of the passage read earlier in Deuteronomy 15 relates directly to the way Jesus taught his disciples – and us – to pray. Deuteronomy specifically commands, “Be generous.” How is Jesus an example of generosity for us to follow?

CLOSING PRAYER

When your conversation is finished, take some time to close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Ask that your group pray intentionally about their personal involvement in why Jesus came to earth and how they can expand their thinking regarding the ministry of the church.

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Amen.

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PART 1:

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 3:

What's the Problem?

PRE-READING: Chapter 2

OPENING PRAYER

Take a few minutes to open your group meeting in prayer. Ask that God will make hearts receptive to the information and biblical concepts that are expressed in this chapter and may be a totally new way of looking at poverty for us in Western culture.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Turn to page 50 in the book. These are comments from “the true poverty experts, the poor themselves” (page 49). Regardless of where we are financially in our world, we are still considered rich by world standards of poverty. You may have or had experience with financial poverty. However, our poverty levels are nothing compared to third-world countries.

Think about the words expressed by the poor and discuss how these descriptions influence your thinking about poverty.

2. What is poverty actually? What descriptive words did the speakers use that make you think differently about poverty as we know it?

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: 1 Timothy 5:8

But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

Read aloud: Mark 3:33-35

Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers [sisters]? Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

3. How do these verses express our personal responsibility for the poor, not just in our communities, but also throughout the world?
4. Open your book to page 54 and look again at Figure 2:1. Discuss your relationships with God, self, others and the rest of creation. Share specific things you would like to personally work to improve in those four relationships.

Read aloud: Romans 5:6-11

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

Read aloud: Colossians 1:13-14

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

6. Because of our traditional Western thinking, we likely have learned a material definition of poverty. Explain how your thinking is changing regarding who are the poor and what does it mean to be poor?
7. Do you personally know any poor people? How can we know who the poor are and then learn to minister in a meaningful way to them?

CLOSING PRAYER

When your conversation is finished, close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways our Western culture ideas can be replaced with more meaningful definitions and solutions for poverty.

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Specific Prayer Requests:

Amen.

SERMON NOTES

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[illegible]

PART 2:

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 4:

Are We There Yet?

PRE-READING: Chapter 3

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer. Ask God for understanding. Most of us have never experienced true poverty, and we need understanding in how we can personally be aware and helpful.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to alleviate poverty? Is your view of poverty and alleviating it different since beginning this study? Explain how your view has changed.
2. What would a successful ministry to materially poor look like?

The premise developed by Corbett and Fikkert is that reconciliation with Jesus and others is the key issue in poverty and how alleviating it should be approached.

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (emphasis added)

*And all this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And **God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.** For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. We are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"*

3. What does this passage mean for us in relation to how we approach poverty? We already talked about how it's not just about saving souls, but it's not all about feeding the poor, either.
4. Read aloud the highlighted text in the middle of page 74. The explanation is in two parts on page 74: "First, material poverty alleviation involves more than ensuring that people have sufficient material things." Rather, it's about empowerment so that people have adequate things because of their own labor. How can we help that to happen in our own communities?

5. The second part states that “Work is an act of worship.” Have you ever looked at your own work as an act of worship? Does that change your perspective of your own work?

Read aloud: Romans 10:14-17

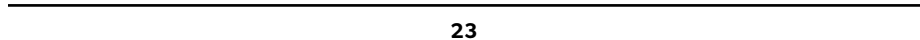
But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!” But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.”

6. Think about poverty-alleviating ministries, both in our church and in parachurch ministries you are aware of. Do their ministries involve the fundamental truths that “God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the technology, resources, and methods” that they provide? Or do they communicate that the power is actually *in* the technology, resources and methods? Is this approach new to you? Many Americans believe that empowerment comes from resources, education and technology.

CLOSING PRAYER

When your conversation is finished, close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways our Western culture ideas can be replaced with more meaningful definitions and solutions for poverty.

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Amen.

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PART 2:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 5:

Not All Poverty Is Created Equal

PRE-READING: Chapter 4

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer. Ask for discernment in determining our approach to poverty, both here and abroad.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Look again at the “Initial Thoughts” on page 98. Discuss your thoughts about those first two questions. Be specific about your feelings. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Do you think the poor of North America need relief, rehabilitation or development? Are we approaching their alleviation in the correct way? If not, how can that be remedied?

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: 2 Kings 5:9-10,14

So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha’s house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: “Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy.”

So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

Read aloud: Luke 5:27 (Jesus speaking)

“And many in Israel had leprosy in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.”

3. Naaman, an army commander, had leprosy, a contagious and disfiguring disease, which made him unclean in every way. He was not traditionally poverty-stricken, but perhaps had the worst kind of poverty – ill health with no cure in sight. What kind of poverty alleviation – Relief, Rehabilitation or Development – was provided to him?

4. You likely have heard the saying, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." How does this popular, but not biblical, saying relate to poverty alleviation? How can it be effectively applied in today's world?
5. Corbett and Fikkert state, "All of us need to remember that the materially poor really are created in the image of God and have the ability to think and to understand the world around them." Knowing this, how can we avoid paternalism in all its forms (Resource, Spiritual, Knowledge, Labor, Managerial) as we minister to the poor?

Read aloud: Galatians 2:10

Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do.

Read aloud: James 2:5

Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith?

6. Throughout Scripture, going way back to Levitical Law, there are instructions to look after the poor. Do you think the church of the 21st century does a good job of that? Why or why not?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray specifically for understanding and discernment as we seek to serve the poor.

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Specific Prayer Requests:

Amen.

SERMON NOTES

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PART 2:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 6:

Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, and Their Assets

PRE-READING: Chapter 5

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer. Pray for understanding and that we can replace our North American approach of “fixing” the poor with relationship building and helpful tools.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Colossians 1:15-17

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see – such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

1. Before reading this chapter, when you thought of creation of all things did it occur to you that it included more than the natural world and the creatures of the world? Would you have included culture as a part of creation? Why or why not?
2. “Our basic predisposition should be to see poor communities – including their natural resources, people, families, neighborhood associations, schools, businesses, governments, culture, etc. – as being created by Jesus Christ and reflective of his goodness. Hence, as we enter a poor community, there is a sense in which we are walking on holy ground, because Christ has been actively at work in that community since the creation of the world!” (page 122)

How do you feel about this approach to poor communities? Do you have a sense of God's work there?

Read aloud: Proverbs 22:29

Do you see any truly competent [skilled] workers? They will serve kings rather than working for ordinary people.

Read aloud: Ecclesiastes 10:10

Using a dull ax requires great strength, so sharpen the blade. That's the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

3. Every human being has God-given talents and possibly skills. (Talents may need development to become skills.) The author said he was very uncomfortable going into a low-income housing project to talk to people about their own skills and abilities.

Look at question #2 on page 118 in the text. Share with your group some of your own skills and abilities. Think beyond your professional or vocational skills. What can you do that could benefit someone else, whether in the church or in a poor community?

Read aloud: Philippians 4:8

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Read aloud: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

4. In what way do these two passages shed lights on the perspective and tools of **A**sset **B**ased **C**ommunity **D**evelopment?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Perhaps ask God to reveal to each person how the ABCD approach could be implemented in local communities.

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PART 2:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 7:

McDevelopment: Over 2.5 Billion People NOT Served

PRE-READING: Chapter 6

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer. Pray for understanding as we learn to minister to the poor in ways that are possibly unfamiliar to us. Also ask for wisdom to know what is the best approach in helping others, individually or as a community.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Ephesians 4:15

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Read aloud: Romans 3:22-24

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did that through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

"A participatory approach is consistent with a biblical perspective concerning poverty and its alleviation. The scriptural truths that all of us are broken and that all of us retain the image of God are affirmed by a process that solicits and values the positive contributions of everyone, both insiders and outsiders." (page 138)

1. What do these verses and the passage from our text tell us about participation either by or for or together with the materially poor and those wishing to help them?
2. According to the text, what can distort the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) process? (page 141) Discuss why this happens and share any examples from your own experience or knowledge.

3. What are you learning about yourself and your attitude regarding the majority world and the poor within our own communities? Talk about your thinking and feelings, and about any changes you have experienced in your own thinking or attitude since beginning this study

Read aloud: Isaiah 58:7,10

Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

4. When we read, “Feed the hungry,” in Scripture, and “Help those in trouble,” we may have never thought about the assessment and approach the text suggests. Feel free to discuss your own opinions regarding these approaches, as they are likely not the methods we have seen used, and we may never have thought of this kind of approach.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray for discernment and understanding as we encounter situations where help is clearly needed but we are not sure the approach that is appropriate.

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Amen.

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PART 3:

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 8:

Doing Short-Term Missions Without Doing Long-Term Harm

PRE-READING: Chapter 7

If possible, this would be a great session to request that a representative of Hope's Missions team visit and speak to your group. Call 515-222-1520 for more information.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Ask members of your group who have done short-term missions to share a bit or their experiences. After reading this chapter, and in retrospect, what are the feelings about the work they participated in?

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Colossians 3:23-24

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

2. Whether you think any short-term missions you are familiar with in the past fits the criteria offered in the text, it's important to remember that God honors the intent of the heart of those serving him. However, with this new information in mind, has your view of short-term missions changed at all?

Read aloud: Hebrews 3:12-13

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

3. Discuss your interest in participation in short-term missions. What is your motivation? Have you asked others to pray with you about discernment and direction?

If you are looking for a short-term missions opportunity, it's a good idea to check out some local opportunities first. On Hope's website there are more than 30 local organizations listed that are in need of volunteers. Visit hopewdm.org/serve/locally or email missions@hopewdm.org for more information about local opportunities.

Read aloud: Jeremiah 6:16a

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths. Ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest of your souls."

Read aloud: James 4:17

Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray that members of the group will listen to the Holy Spirit's teachings in their lives regarding participation in short-term missions.

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Specific Prayer Requests:

Amen.

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PART 3:

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 9:

Yes, in Your Backyard

PRE-READING: Chapter 8

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer. Pray for conviction and guidance as we consider ways to help the materially poor in our communities.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Hope is not an “old” or historic church. The Hope West Des Moines church building is located in an upper-middle-class suburb. (Some would say wealthy suburb.) Though built long after the “white flight” of the early 20th century, is the location a result of that scenario?

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Psalm 119:33-37

Teach me your decrees, O Lord; I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart. Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found. Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than for money! Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through your word.

2. “For the first time in US history, more poor people live in suburbs than in cities” (page 169) and, unfortunately, suburban poverty is less visible and much easier to overlook than traditional inner-city poverty.

Are you aware of poor people in West Des Moines, Waukee, Clive and Urbandale, all upper-middle-class suburbs? How is Hope responding to the needs of poor who are “next door?” Is it a biblical understanding of justice for the poor? Share how you personally feel about ministering to poor in your own community, not in the inner city, but perhaps next door. Be honest about any hesitation or anxiety you feel.

3. Are you aware of any nonprofit organizations (Christian or secular) nearby offering job preparedness training, financial education or wealth accumulation information?

Read aloud: Proverbs 31:16-20

She goes to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard. She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy.

Hope often offers money management classes for anyone looking to grow in their understanding of budgeting, saving and personal finance. Check out all of Hope's class offerings at lutheranchurchofhope.org/classes.

4. The book says, "... the playing field is not level at the start of the twenty-first century." (page 171) America has become much more service sector-oriented than manufacturing- or labor-oriented. How can young people be coached to consider trades and manufacturing jobs? Many young people say they don't know much about job opportunities that do not require a college education. However, community colleges offer courses in the trades, such as plumbing, electricity, building, and technical installation and maintenance. What can be done to let people, both adult learners and youth, know about opportunities available in their communities?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray for guidance regarding participation in ways to help the poor find and keep employment.

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Amen.

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PART 3:

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 10:

And to the Ends of the Earth

PRE-READING: Chapter 9

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Until reading this chapter, did you know that “loan sharks” are at work, even in third world countries? Did discovering that, or being reminded of that, stir any feelings or motivate you to any action to help?

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

2. This passage, often called “The Great Commission,” is addressed to Jesus’ disciples. How does it apply to you? Do you consider yourself a disciple (a follower or student of a teacher, leader or philosopher)?
3. The text says, “Accessing capital – through either borrowing or saving – is a matter of life and death ... focusing only on the fallen systems surrounding poor people will fail to bring about the reconciliation of relationships that is at the heart of poverty alleviation ... The gospel and its implications for humans’ relationships to God, self, others, and the rest of creation must be clearly presented and modeled in all poverty-alleviation strategies.”

Does knowing this change your view of ministry or the responsibility of Christians to the Majority World?

Read aloud: Acts 18:1-4

Then Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left Italy when Claudius Caesar deported all Jews from Rome. Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was. Each Sabbath found Paul at the synagogue, trying to convince the Jews and Greeks alike.

4. In a church the size of Hope, there are likely many businesspeople who could help set up a Business as Mission (BAM). They would need to be trained to understand the principles, as outlined in the text. Businesspeople, rather than missionaries, would have the skills and gifts necessary to operate a business and help people uneducated in business understand and use best practices. Are you a skilled, gifted businessperson? Would you be willing to invest yourself in a short-term mission to teach and administer BAM so that when you left the area, nationals could successfully administer it?
5. Do you have any gifts as a trainer? Would you be willing to train others to train people regarding principles of borrowing, lending, repaying, saving and good investing? Remember, you would have to consider very small loans, cents maybe, rather than dollars. And you would need to help trainers understand the consequences and enforcement of not repaying debt.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray for understanding and for people to volunteer to train trainers and for business-savvy people to come alongside trained missionaries to demonstrate BAM to Majority World countries.

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PART 4:

GETTING STARTED ON HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 11:

Excuse Me, Can You Spare Some Change?

PRE-READING: Chapter 10

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving – the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

1. Think about how you obtained your job. Did your social network play a part? How does your social network support you in other ways?
2. In the spirit of generosity, could your contacts and connections help a materially poor person to gain employment, learn essential life skills and/or otherwise support a materially poor person? How could you help facilitate a connection for a poor person?

Read aloud: Romans 12:13

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

3. While Scripture is very clear that we are to help those in need, we want to do it wisely. Have you checked into programs that Hope participates in, either as a mission partner or on an individual basis, to determine if there is a place where your gifts and talents could benefit materially poor in our communities?

4. "One of the most significant obstacles to change is a lack of supportive people. We all do better when we have people cheering us on, supporting us through prayer, offering a listening ear, and lending a helping hand when we need it." (page 209)

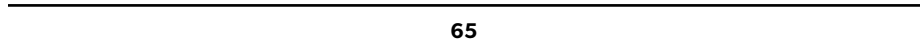
Is there anyone in your life you have tried to help but found that the person is resistant to change? Have you "cheered them on" in ways that could lead to significant change? Also, because we know "we are better together," have you asked anyone else to come alongside you in your efforts to help this change-resistant person?

5. Are you receptive to the positive changes God wants to make in your life? Can you pinpoint a change God has laid on your heart? If you are willing, share that with your group, so others can pray for you to make the change.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Give everyone a few minutes to share a prayer request. Pray that each person will be receptive to change in his or her own lives and to become the change factor for others.

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PART 4:

GETTING STARTED ON HELPING WITHOUT HURTING

Session 12:

On Your Mark, Get Set, GO!

A Final Word: The Most Important Step

PRE-READING: Chapter 11

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group meeting in prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

BIBLE READING:

Read aloud: Romans 15:1-4

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me." Such things were written in the scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

1. The last chapter of the book is mostly concerned with what Parkview Church can and perhaps should do going forward. Did any of these principles seem applicable to you in your personal ministry? Did you see a correlation between Parkview's approach and what Hope has in place currently?

Read aloud: Colossians 1:11-22

We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see – such as

thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

2. "If you are a North American Christian whom God has blessed with material resources, there is good news for you. For as you take the first steps in helping the materially poor – namely, repenting of the modern worldview – you may discover a solution for your own deepest hunger: "Colossians 1 Jesus," the King who is connected to your world, the King who heals all your diseases, the King who reconciles you to God, self, others, and the rest of creation: the King who can make both you and the materially poor truly human again." (page 149)

Discuss how your worldview may have shifted because of the principles and ideas presented in this book. Be honest with each other and yourself. Do you feel a "calling" to do more for the materially poor?

3. For many years, the Catholic Church has coordinated Catholic Worker Houses. There is one in Des Moines and recently one opened in Ames. There are others around Iowa as well. In all, there are 187 in the United States and around the world. The Catholic Worker Movement promotes the biblical promise of justice and mercy, offering free housing, transportation and job assistance to people who are homeless or transitioning from incarceration. It started during the Great Depression. Every resident shares in responsibilities to others, including projects around the house.

Being involved in such an organization is one way to act on our belief in Scripture, in justice, mercy and serving the poor. Would you feel any anxiety about being involved in such an organization?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group meeting in prayer. Pray that the teachings of this book and class will be implemented to bring reconciliation with God, us, others and with the rest of creation to help alleviate poverty, both in our communities and in the world.

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