

# LESS IS MORE

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5 WEEKS OF DAILY DEVOTIONS

EVERY GIFT. EVERY PRAYER.  
IS POWERFUL IN GOD'S HANDS.



tearfund

# FORWARD

We live and work in a world that increasingly tells us to do more. If you only tried harder, worked longer, prepared more, then you will get what you desire and you will be happy. You will be complete.

But we know that isn't true. Although there is nothing wrong with trying your best, the scriptures teach us that we must learn to depend on Jesus. He is the source of all goodness, rest, and satisfaction.

Indeed, Jesus Himself says: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest in your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

– *Matthew 11:28-30 ESV*

Earlier on in Matthew, Jesus also reminds us from Deuteronomy that "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"

It is so easy to be tempted to believe that we can do it all, but we can't and thankfully don't have to! The more we trust in God, the more we realise that He is in control and is all we need. He is a good Father who provides for His children.



Photo: World Relief Canada

**"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD".**

And He can take the little we have and multiply it beyond our imagination.

There is so much we could say about putting faith in Christ and about Less is More – far beyond what is in this short devotional. But we hope that the passages selected will help you realize that God is our MORE and the ultimate source of Justice, Compassion, Love, Faith, and Generosity.

As you begin this 5-week journey, we couldn't help think of the passage where Jesus tells us to abide: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

– *John 15:5*

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Left Photo: Helen Manson/Medair

# More Justice

## READ LUKE 4:18-21

God has a passion for justice. We read about this in many parts of the Bible. He cares deeply about the suffering of people who are poor. God's commandments, given in the Old Testament, are intended to bring freedom for all people.

Jesus summarised many of the Old Testament laws in two commandments that sum up all of his teaching, in Matthew 22:35–40. He tells us to love God with all our hearts, souls and minds and to love others as we love ourselves. Loving other people as we love ourselves does not just mean thinking good thoughts. It means ensuring they are able to live fulfilling lives, free from oppression. We should seek justice for others so that they can live life in all its fullness as God intended.

Poverty and oppression take away people's dignity. Only when people have access to the natural, economic and political resources they need, are they able to live with dignity, and to begin to establish good relationships with each other and with their natural environment.

## DISCUSSION

Jesus read this prophetic passage from Isaiah 61:1–2 before he began his public ministry. How much did his life reflect this prophecy?

Jesus commands us to follow his example. How much do our lives and our work reflect this amazing example?

Who are the prisoners in our society? Who are the blind? Who are the oppressed? What would the Lord's favour bring?

What steps could we take to bring good news, freedom, healing and release to those whose human rights are not being met?

What is our government doing to help those whose human rights are not being met?

## NOTES

# More Justice

## READ 1 KINGS 21:1-16

Most situations today where people suffer injustice and are not allowed to live with dignity are the result of power being used for the wrong reasons. People who are given power and authority have special demands placed upon them to use their power for the benefit of others. However, power can be used poorly or abused – through lack of care, corruption or for personal gain. Injustice can occur when those with power neglect to carry out their responsibilities, or force others to act in certain ways.

People who are poor often feel completely without power. Yet each person can have some influence. By working together, that influence increases. People who are poor and who suffer injustice need to be supported in gaining confidence to challenge the misuse of power. In doing so, they will gain some power and influence.

Seeking justice is a slow, often painstaking process. Sometimes it can be almost impossible within countries where deception and corruption are common. But no suffering goes unnoticed by God.

## DISCUSSION

This is the story of Naboth's vineyard and of how power was misused with terrible consequences. Why did King Ahab want Naboth's vineyard? Why did Naboth not want to sell the vineyard?

Why did Jezebel go to such trouble with her plans to kill Naboth? Was it legal? Was it just?

What was God's response and judgement on these actions? Read verses 17–24.

How did Ahab respond to this judgement in verse 27? Why did God decide to postpone his sentence in verse 29?

Can you think of times when you have been persuaded to do something you know is wrong – like Ahab in this story? If so, take time to reflect and to ask forgiveness. Is there anything you can do to make things right?

Can you think of ways in which just laws in your own country are not put into practice? What are the consequences?

What can we say to comfort those who have bravely tried to seek justice but have failed because of corruption?

## NOTES

# More Justice

## READ ACTS 16:16-39

All societies need to protect innocent people from those who seek to do them harm. This usually means a legal system with prison as a punishment. When justice is practised fairly, this system can be an effective way of protecting ordinary people from harm. However, it can be abused in a number of ways.

Someone accused of a crime should not be imprisoned unless there is enough evidence. Witness evidence or other kinds of proof are required and the matter should be brought before an independent court. Anyone accused of a crime should be considered innocent until they are proved guilty in a court of law. However, poor people may have no access to legal representation in court.

People may be falsely accused of crimes and be unable to defend themselves. Prison can be used as a way of silencing people with opposing political, social or religious views (often called prisoners of conscience). Courts may not always uphold justice if officials are open to bribery. Sentences may be unfairly long and, once in prison, prisoners can be forgotten by officials and remain there for many years.

In an ideal situation, prison can provide a time to reflect, a time to learn new skills and ways of thinking so that prisoners can change their lives for the better. In the Bible we are told to visit those in prison. This would encourage prisoners and help to ensure they are well treated.

## DISCUSSION

This story describes in verses 16–24 how Paul and Silas suffered when they were falsely accused, beaten and imprisoned unjustly. What was Paul and Silas's response to this treatment (v 25)?

What was God's response (v 26)? Have you ever experienced God's intervention in difficult circumstances?

Imagine the situation in the prison just after the earthquake. Why do you think none of the prisoners escaped?

Paul knew his rights. He and Silas could have escaped when they had the opportunity. But he knew they had been falsely mistreated and imprisoned. Why did he not want to leave at the first opportunity (v 35–37)?

What injustices are you aware of in your community? What could you do to highlight them more? What action could you take to support people you believe have been unjustly imprisoned?

## NOTES

# More Justice

## READ MICAH 6:1-8

The writer speculates on how God is to be pleased and considers the value of burnt offerings and sacrifices. The reply is simple and clear – that God's basic requirement is none of these things. Instead of making ritual sacrifices, God requires his people to act with justice, mercy and humility. Verse 8 says: 'He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'

This verse motivates us to show compassion after a disaster has happened and to make efforts to stop disasters happening by pursuing justice. Disasters are often made worse by greed, inequality and exploitation. Christians can start advocacy projects which challenge these unjust relationships and make people less vulnerable to hazards.



## DISCUSSION

What issues of injustice contribute to people's sufferings in times of disaster in your area?

What advocacy initiatives could be developed to help bring greater justice?

God calls us to show compassion for those who are suffering. We should be merciful towards people regardless of their ethnicity, religion, sex, age or ability, remembering that all people are equally valuable to God.



## NOTES

# More Justice

## READ NEHEMIAH 5

The situation in this chapter occurred during the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. It reminds us that even in a process of reconstruction and rehabilitation, the rich may use the situation to exploit the poor. As well as opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah and friends, the people were being badly treated by their own nobles and officials. After some thought, Nehemiah confronted them about their behaviour (vv 6–11) and was able to reform the situation.

Nehemiah's leadership is an example to churches and individuals to speak out boldly against injustice and to raise awareness of the issues that are making people poor.

Several key things to notice:

The poor complained of being oppressed by the rich (Nehemiah 5:1–5).

Nehemiah removed the oppression (Nehemiah 5:6–13).

He set an example of compassion towards poor people (Nehemiah 5:14–19).

## DISCUSSION

In Nehemiah 5, how were the rich exploiting the poor? How did Nehemiah respond? In what ways could poor people be exploited even as we try to assist them in community or disaster response projects?

The church can help to ensure that the poor are protected from exploitation and helped to find ways out of their poverty. What practical actions could your church undertake to ensure that poor people are not exploited?

What does your church need in order to become more confident and effective in speaking out on behalf of poor people?

## NOTES



WEEK 1, DAY 6

# Mamitu

## MORE JUSTICE

For women like Mamitu, Self-Help Groups (SHG) have been a source of incredible transformation both within her life, and within her heart for her village.

As a poor woman within a culture that limits women to roles within the home and prevents them from owning land, Mamitu gained the unthinkable through her SHG. Her membership not only empowered her economically, but also provided her with a newfound respect and dignity within her community.

She says that SHGs have restored humanity to the poorest people in the community. Access to finances has given her the agency and freedom to make choices to improve her livelihood, and has lifted her out of the cycle of poverty. Mamitu no longer feels the injustice of gender inequality. While justice lacked before, it now extends into the whole community.

While women used to lack a source of income, SHGs have allowed women like Mamitu to save their small earnings to borrow and invest, enabling them to find dignity and financial freedom despite their lack of assets. Her membership has allowed her to send her daughter abroad to access better education.

As an overseer and leader of her community's Self Help Groups, she actively works to support others in her community. Knowing the hardship of poverty herself, she desires to support orphaned children by sponsoring them to gain access to the Abenezer school, and to see other community members be changed by SHGs.

Mamitu is one glimpse of whole-life transformation. Her membership to her SHG allowed justice to permeate into her life, and her village. This has inspired and enabled her to change the lives of others as she brings God's heart for justice into her community.

# Justice



## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Most Christians, and people in general, believe in the idea of justice. There is something deep within us that longs to see those who do wrong receive punishment for their actions. But that is only a small part of biblical justice. The other part is restorative justice – advocating for and doing things that seek to restore people.

As you have read this week's devotionals, how are you going to seek justice and restoration for the people around you? Some ideas:

- Is there a relationship in your life that is less than ideal? Perhaps some past strife has strained a friendship? Or perhaps there is a colleague at work you don't get along with. Make this the week you seek to restore this relationship. Invite this person to coffee, call them up, or do something nice for them.
- Perhaps you know of someone else who has been treated unfairly. Think of ways you might be able to help. It could be as simple as going out for coffee and walking with them through this journey.
- Injustice is far too common throughout the world. Luckily there are many wonderful Christian organizations advocating biblical justice. Select one (or more) to get involved with.

'But you must return to  
your God; maintain love  
and justice, and wait for  
your God always.'

HOSEA 12:6



# More Compassion

## READ ISAIAH 58:10-11

Many church congregations collect food for people that are in need. This might happen throughout the year or on special occasions like Easter and Christmas. Why do we collect and give food away? Why do we help support organizations like Food banks? Why do we give away food hampers at Christmas? Why should we show concern for those in physical need?

In demonstrating kindness we shine the light of Jesus Christ in prominent and practical ways. We share with others because God has provided for all of our needs. We recognize that it takes so little to be able to help someone in great need.

Isaiah tells us that if we spend ourselves helping satisfy the necessities of those in need, we will rise in the darkness and shine as brightly as the noonday sun. It's not glamorous work, but it is work that must be done. If we hope to be a church that is known for its love, we must certainly take part in helping satisfy the needs of others. We must spend ourselves on behalf of the hungry and oppressed. In the end, we too will be satisfied.



## DISCUSSION

What are you doing to "spend yourself" in kindness to others?

What would it take for you to get involved in a local Food Bank to be a blessing to others in need?

How has showing kindness to others satisfied you?

Do you ever think of the food needs of people in other parts of the world? How can you show compassion to them?



## NOTES

# More Compassion

## READ PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

During a semester in college our class spent time serving those who were in desperate need. One particular woman lived in a place that was terribly dirty. We would go each week to try and clean up as best we could. One week we went with the intent to clean up, but she insisted we sit and talk. The temptation was to move ahead with the weekly cleaning agenda.

In Philippians we are reminded to “do nothing out of selfish ambition”, which certainly might have been the case if we had insisted on cleaning after being asked to sit and visit. We all face moments of truth like these when our own plans and interests conflict with the desires of the person we are trying to love. Our pride can well up within us demanding that we have the right to serve this person in the way we intended. Yet we also have the option of seeing their wants and hopes as more important than our own.

When reading the gospels it’s interesting to note how often Jesus set His own plans aside, being moved by compassion at the needs of others. He would stop to converse with people and then heal them. Another time He gave up His desire for rest and solitude and chose instead to teach the crowds who were following Him; then He went the extra mile upon seeing their physical need of hunger and performed a miracle to feed them.

Often compassion takes different forms and God’s Spirit invites us to learn from a place of humility that quickly serves others.

## DISCUSSION

Do I love anyone out of my own selfish pursuits?

In what way could I deny myself today and choose instead to love someone else by putting his or her interests and needs before my own?

Am I open to the leading of God’s Spirit to reveal the best ways to serve other people?

## NOTES

# More Compassion

## READ ISAIAH 65:17-25

For many people in our world today, life is very difficult. They may have problems in their family lives, with lack of money, food, work or housing. Poor health may be a concern. They may have lost loved ones. They may be living in fear of abuse or violence. They may have lost their homes as a result of conflict, disaster or famine.

It is helpful to remind ourselves that however difficult life may be now, God has a perfect plan for our world. We read in Isaiah 65 and Revelation 21 that God has planned a new earth and a new heaven where Jesus will live with his people as our King. He will bring comfort to the sad, healing of pain and an end to death and mourning. There will be no place in this new earth for those motivated by evil. It will be a place of wonderful beauty. There will be no need for people to build churches to worship God in, as His presence will be everywhere.

What a wonderful vision to encourage us today, whatever our situation!

## DISCUSSION

This is how God would like things to be now, if everyone was responsive to His will. What will happen to this present world with all its difficulties (v 17)?

What are the first concerns of God mentioned in verses 19 and 20? Consider our own lives now. Would these be your first concerns too?

Verses 21 and 22 describe a situation where each person will have their own home and their own land. No-one will be exploited in working for others. What difference would this make in our own situation? How would this change life?

What kind of stability is described in verses 23–25?

## NOTES

# More Compassion

## READ LUKE 5:12-14

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Leprosy is a terrible skin disease. In Leviticus 13-14 we read that lepers were isolated, forced to shout out "unclean!" wherever they walked. Lepers were like prisoners locked in their own isolated world- nobody could touch them. This man was "covered" with leprosy. He was relegated to life away from family and friends.

To touch a leper was not only to incur physical danger, but to defile oneself in the eyes of those who observed the Law of Moses. But when Jesus was faced with deep human need, compassion was more important than disease or defilement.

Compassion is often misunderstood as an emotion that we feel rather than an action that we take. True compassion moves individuals and communities at the core and seeks to provide solutions in whatever form they might take.

## DISCUSSION

Do you find it hard to act on your compassion?

Can you think of a time when you were motivated by true compassion? What triggered that in you?

The scripture often talks about Jesus looking at people with compassion (read: Matt:14:14, Matt:15:32)

What thoughts come to mind when you read this? There are things which the lips cannot say, but the hands can.

## NOTES

# More Compassion

## READ LUKE 10:25-37

Jesus had compassion for people with all kinds of needs, including disability, sickness, ignorance and injustice. Churches, too, should be willing to help meet all kinds of needs. Though a church may have few financial resources, it has people willing to pray and show love in caring for the needs of others.

Like the good Samaritan, Christians need to be ready to meet the needs of our 'neighbours', whoever they are. There are many needs around us but we should not feel so overwhelmed that we do nothing. Each of us can make a real difference to the lives of others.

Sometimes needs may be very practical. Widows, the elderly or those with disabilities may need help in their homes. The church may be able to encourage local government or organisations to help improve services, healthcare or education. Improving literacy skills may increase people's confidence. Young people under pressure to use drugs or to take part in sex for financial reasons may find discussion and support groups helpful in understanding their options.

Where people face injustice, such as over access to practical needs or exploitation at work, the church could find experienced advisers to help defend the rights of those with little or no power.

## DISCUSSION

Who are your neighbours?  
What needs do they have?  
How does Jesus tell us to love our neighbours?

What are the challenges we may find in loving our neighbours? How can we help each other overcome these challenges?

Our upbringing can make it hard for us to relate to certain groups of people – those of different age, level of education, caste, tribal group, or those who are very poor. Who do you find it hard to relate to? How can you overcome those feelings? If you have children, how can you help them grow up able to relate to people of all kinds?

Through prayer, God can give us real insight and wisdom into different situations. How can we know whether such guidance is of God, or simply our own thinking?

What additional skills or resources do we need to enable us to help people?

What difference can you make in helping people in your community without lots of training or hiring expensive 'experts'?

## NOTES



# Fatima



## MORE COMPASSION

Fleeing from Syria, Fatima and her husband uprooted their lives and the lives of their three children to find refuge in a tent of Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. The years passed and despite all the hardships they faced, their family grew.

Giving birth to four children in Lebanon, Fatima was blessed by the clinic where she delivered happy and healthy babies. Even more so, she was blessed by Hanadi, one of our local partner's midwives who is an expectant mother herself.

Fatima is so thankful for Tearfund's support to her and her babies - both medically and spiritually! Hanadi has provided Fatima with breastfeeding advice and a hygiene kit, and has become a friend and mentor. She tells Fatima, "Be faithful that things will get better. God always has plans for us. Be strong!"

Helping women like Fatima who have fled hardships in Syria, Hanadi says, "I've seen women struggling and suffering, yet I've helped them overcome their pain. I've heard the heartbeats of hundreds of children inside their mummy's bellies, and then saw them born as healthy babies. And this feeling is irreplaceable."

She feels blessed by the opportunity to love and care for mothers and their new babies through Tearfund's local Christian partner, and is amazed at God's provision over the mothers she's cared for, and over her in her pregnancy. "Now, after God grew this soul inside me for the first time, I love my job even more. I am sharing their pain, and I'm grateful that I am doing one of the noblest jobs in the world."



# More Compassion


## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

The literal meaning of compassion is “to suffer together.” Unlike empathy or altruism, which are more general, compassion not only includes the ability to feel another’s pain, but also a desire to help. What a wonderful thought it is to know that Jesus looked on the crowd and had compassion! As we become closer to God, His thoughts and desires will start to become our own and we will display His compassion. Here are some ways to get started:

- Get to know people. Sometimes we are so caught up with our own lives and worries we neglect to see the needs of people around us. This week, take some time to slow down and genuinely ask a person a day how they are doing. Have coffee or eat lunch with them. Take time to listen.
- Is there someone in your church or social group that you know is going through a tough time? Perhaps an illness, loss of job, or unexpected death. Beyond letting them know you’re praying, go out of your way to offer support. Maybe cook a meal or offer to do some errands for them.
- Think of all the ways Christ has shown His compassion to you. Were there times in your life you have felt His peace? Make a list and reflect.

- Commit to volunteer. There are many charities who work in Canada and throughout the world that display compassion. What are the needs that resonate with you?





'Now to him who is able  
to do far more abundantly  
than all that we ask or think,  
according to the power at  
work within us.'

EPHESIANS 3:20

# More Love

## READ 1 JOHN 3:18

Have you ever found that at times it is easy to speak about love and a lot harder to actually demonstrate the action of love? So often this is the case in many of our relationships.

Some years ago, Dr. Karl Menninger, noted doctor and psychologist, was seeking the cause of many of his patients' ills. One day he called in his clinical staff and proceeded to unfold a plan for developing, in his clinic, an atmosphere of creative love. All patients were to be given large quantities of love. No unloving attitudes were to be displayed in the presence of the patients, and all the nurses and doctors were to go about their work in and out of the various rooms with a loving attitude. At the end of six months, the time spent by patients in the institution was cut in half.

For love to be real it must be put into action. You can never underestimate the powerful influence that will take place as that is practiced. Love gives, love shares, love impacts people. That is the kind of love that God calls us to. We are the hands and feet of God's love today. How are we doing? Do people know the full measure of God's love by the way we act towards them?

## DISCUSSION

Does your love for Christ affect your giving?

Are you willing to give of your time and money to show Christ's love for the world?

Does Christ's love move you to action?

## NOTES

# More Love

## READ JOHN 15:12-13

It's hard, isn't it? Loving others as Christ loved us. The task would be a lot easier if people were more lovable. While some people are easy to love, more are not. Loving becomes an act of the will, and somehow it loses its sweetness. How do we keep our love real?

The Lord knows how hard it is for us to love each other. He knows we cannot, with our own strength, love as He loved. Once again, He is the solution. He asks us first to love Him. The beauty of our Lord is that He loves all, always, even the unlovely. His love is genuine, everlasting and forgiving. So, our duty is to love Him. Loving Christ is easy; it should come naturally to believers. Being in love with our Savior will produce in us a love for what He loves. He becomes the fountain from which we can draw to love the unlovely. That fountain of love flowing from His heart never runs dry.

Christ never gives us a command that He will not enable us to fulfill. We can love each other as He loves! That is His promise-that is how good He is!

## DISCUSSION

Are you relying on your own strength to love others? Can you think of a time when you did that and it did not turn out well?

When did you love someone with God's strength? How did that feel?

Have you taken the time to crawl up in the lap of your Savior just to love Him more? Is He your hero?

## NOTES

# More Love

## READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9,10

It is exciting to watch a tiny seed grow. I can remember as a child planting a seed in a cup and then watching every day to see if anything was peeking through the soil. My youngest son planted a sunflower seed in a white styrofoam cup. Every day we would water it and place it in the light so it would grow. Soon it had outgrown that cup and was transplanted to a sunny place outside. Over the course of the summer it continued to grow to the point that it was over six feet tall. It was huge and healthy!

Amazing how something so beautiful could come from something so tiny and dry; just like my life was before Christ. He planted me in His forgiveness and watered me with His love. And I grew. As long as I keep myself in His light and feed myself from His word, I will continue to grow.

We are urged in this passage to grow in love more and more. You do not have to grow overnight, but you must grow steadily. Always changing, learning, loving others more and better than you did before. Stay close to the light. Never allow complacency to seep into the root of your heart. May our prayers be for God to grow us more into His image so that tomorrow we will stand closer to His heart than we were today!

## DISCUSSION

Are you staying close to the light of Christ in your daily walk? Is there a practical step you can take to make that easier?

Is your love both for Christ and others growing more and more?

## NOTES

# More Love

## READ PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

In Philippians 4, Paul calls for a mediator to help two women who apparently were quarrelling in the church at Philippi. Unfortunately, most of the bickering and quarrelling that occurs between Christians is petty. In all likelihood, the disagreement between the two women at Philippi was trivial in the grand scheme of things, yet apparently significant enough to cause division in the church. It certainly wasn't a matter that was kept between the two of them. Paul reminded the objective third party that these women had worked at Paul's side to advance the gospel, and he felt there was no effort too small or too great to maintain unity in the body of Christ.

The person Paul called for to help in this situation must have been someone whose patience and gentleness could help facilitate the resolution of these women's differences. A patient person can diffuse many hot tempers and break through many defensive demeanors. A patient person would work hard to show kindness in spite of the difficult situation. Even though the topic of Eudonia and Syntyche's dispute is not recorded, the patient person would be sure to encourage their individuality while pulling them back to commonality.

We live in a world that is in desperate need of living examples of Christ's love. Love that moves beyond the everyday challenges of

life like those being worked out by these two women. Through the Holy Spirit and by God's grace, let's pray that our lives will reflect love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.



## DISCUSSION

Write one sentence that would characterize where your life is today. Are you content with that?

Serving God means serving others. Is there a person or people that God is asking you to serve? What can you practically do?

# More Love

## READ EPHESIANS 5:1- 3

To imitate God is to grasp fully this idea of love. Sometimes that can be hard to do, especially if we have been hurt in the name of love.

When I pursue God's love, I realize that the only way to find it is in imitating perfect love that is produced in me by God. For this love is agape love. Agape love means that Christ followers live out sacrificial acts of love that puts the needs and interests of others above our own. It's measured by our actions not our feelings.

### When this kind of love flows through us...

We choose the best course of action.

We please God

We will enjoy the benefits of righteousness

This is the kind of love that Jesus showed. His life was difficult. His journey took him to the pain of the cross. But, Jesus was able to see beyond the cross and find the slice of perspective that enabled Him to remain faithful even to the point of death.



## DISCUSSION

Write out in your own words what Agape love means to you.

Can you see ways that you might have confused what this type of love really looks like?

Identify three practical ways to show this love to other people.

The fruit of this love is caring deeply for other people. (1 Peter 1:22). Ask God to produce this in you today.



## NOTES



WEEK 3, DAY 6

# Seeing Love



## MORE LOVE

We love the community and vision our Ethiopian Self-Help Groups (SHGs) encompass. In fact, one of our SHGs is named Ife, meaning Vision, by one man who named and established the group.

After leading the SHG for five years, the man who established the group lost his sight. Disheartened, he decided to leave the group, feeling that he had nothing to offer anymore after losing his vision. But to his surprise, the other members refused his decision. They stuck by his side as friends and support, reminding him of all he had done for the Vision Self-Help Group.

Moreover, the group members constructed him the house he planned to build before he became blind - fulfilling this man's long-time vision. They even committed themselves to financially support him as he continues to seek medical attention to treat his eyes.

Not only are both the physical and material vision of this man being met through the SHG, but the vision of the group itself has grown to encompass more than just economic empowerment. The group is continuing to extend the love of Christ to its members in need, as God is opening the eyes of their hearts to love and serve their community.

# More Love

## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

There are so many passages in the Bible that talk about love, and for good reason. God IS love. But Biblical love is radical. It is the kind of love that calls us to "love our neighbours as ourselves," to seek good for our enemies, to lay our lives down for our friends. That is hard!

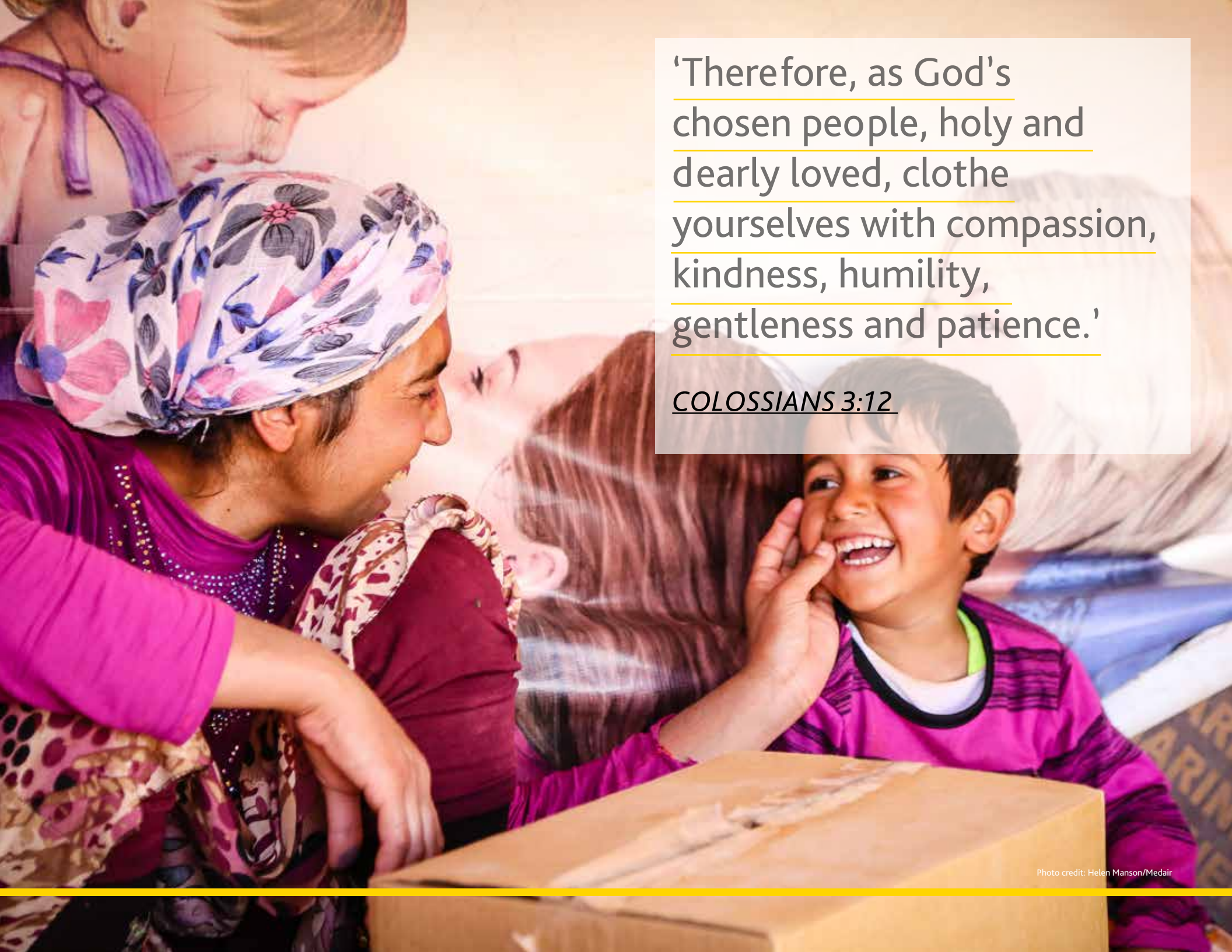
How can we start acting out this love? Well it starts with Jesus. As we draw nearer to Him, we will become more like Him. Below are some small things you may be able to do as we strive to implement this radical love.

- Loving our neighbours as ourselves can begin with the smallest of things. Next time you want that last slice of pizza, or prefer a chip flavour that differs from someone else, let them have their way.
- Likewise, seek out ways to show love instead of being asked. Volunteer to do a chore that you typically don't do. Go out of your way to buy a gift or write a word of encouragement to someone who needs it.
- Is there someone in your life that you need to apologize to? Or maybe someone who you have withheld forgiveness from? Make this week the week you show love by restoring the relationship.



## NOTES

- God calls us to love those who are difficult to love. Is there a person at work, church, or school you don't get along with? Or perhaps someone that no one likes? Show love to that person. Invite them over, give them a ride, or another gesture of hospitality.

A photograph showing a group of people, including a woman in a floral headscarf and a young boy, looking at a cardboard box with interest and joy. The woman is wearing a purple top and a headscarf with a floral pattern. The boy is wearing a purple shirt and is smiling broadly. A woman with long brown hair is also visible, looking towards the box. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a wall.

'Therefore, as God's  
chosen people, holy and  
dearly loved, clothe  
yourselves with compassion,  
kindness, humility,  
gentleness and patience.'

COLOSSIANS 3:12

# More Faith

## READ EPHESIANS 6:21- 24

John Paton was a Bible translator working with a South Seas Island tribe. As he went about his work, he quickly realized that they had no word for faith or trust. He struggled with what to do until one day an indigenous person ran into his house, sat in a chair and declared, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." John had his word for faith!

What an amazing feeling to be able to rest our whole weight on God! After all, life can be discouraging and draining. Faith is a simple trust in knowing that all of life can rest fully in God's powerful and sufficient hands.

Sometimes we use that word in such a careless manner that we do not realize all of the implications of what faith gives us. Yes, it gives us hope for the next world, yes it gives us joy, yes it gives that peace. It also gives a confidence that God knows the situations of my life today. That allows my faith to grow.

This might not be easy. Tragedy has rocked your faith. Financial stresses have rocked your faith. A lying co-worker has rocked your faith. An anonymous letter has rocked your faith. A relationship crisis has rocked your faith. A disease has rocked your faith. Something that has happened to a child has rocked your faith.

This unmovable faith can only be found in God. He is the source real faith and we can put our whole weight on Him today!

## DISCUSSION

Are you ever tempted to see other things as the source of your faith? What is it?

Picture a child jumping into a parent's arms. Why do they do that so easily? Do you ever feel that God is asking you to jump into his arms? Do you do that easily?

My faith says that I trust in my heavenly daddy and He will never let me down. That is the precious gift that God gives me. This faith gives me great encouragement.

## NOTES

# More Faith

## READ JOHN 11:25

We are often reminded of the realities of life in this world. A young person dies suddenly or a friend passes in the prime of life. The grief from those occasions can almost overwhelm family and friends as they try to understand what has happened.

Jesus was not afraid to confront the ever-present thought of death. We even know that one time he raised a dead man back to life. That must have really shocked both local people and loyal followers into thinking more about who Jesus really was. But, he used that time to introduce people to the idea of life after death. Imagine how you would have responded if you were there that day!

Often death seems like the end of things, a conclusion. But, followers of Jesus see it as something much more! This reality gives us a determination to live well in this world. To try seemingly impossible things and believe God in challenging circumstances.

Faith allows us to see the temporary nature of life in this world and causes us to think deeply about our own journey. Someone explained it this way, "When we die we move from the Land of the Dying to the Land of the Living."

## DISCUSSION

As we walk with Jesus on this journey, do we take time to think about life after death and our own faith?

In what areas do you doubt God?

Can you remember times when God helped you through a tough situation? How did God use that situation in your life?

## NOTES

# More Faith

## MATTHEW 14:22-24

The disciples have gone out in the boat. While out there on the lake, a huge storm brews up. Matthew says that the boat was thrown around by the waves. The conditions are battering this little boat. Can you imagine how frightening it must be to be out on a lake and stuck in a sudden, violent storm? What is Jesus doing while this is happening? He is by himself praying.

Often we face storms in our lives and sometimes they shake our faith. Maybe not physical storms like the disciples. But storms that still make us feel that life is throwing us upside down.

In Hebrews 4:14-16 we have the wonderful story of how Jesus intercedes for us in heaven. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Like the high priest, Jesus comes between God and us. He is our representative, always ready to plead our case before God. Jesus came to this world to talk to us about God, and now he is in heaven talking to God about us. The Hebrew writer says that Jesus intercedes for us in our time of need, or at just the right moment.



## DISCUSSION

Do you have any storms in your life today that are shaking your faith?

Picture Jesus as the one speaking on your behalf. How does that make you feel?

Be encouraged today that your storm is known by God!



## NOTES

# More Faith

## READ COLOSSIANS 2:15-16

A substitute takes the place of the real thing. So we have substitute teachers who fill in when the real teacher can't make it. And substitute sugar when we don't want the real thing. Substitute car parts when we don't want to pay a lot of money for the real brand name parts.

In Colossians, these people were being warned about using cheap substitutes in place of Jesus Christ. There were some who were teaching that to have a deeper spiritual life you had to live by a certain standard. The standards here surrounded food, drink and the observance of certain days. These things were becoming the rules to live by. Another word for this is legalism. Legalism has been called the religion of human achievement. It makes conformity to a human standard more important than relationship with Jesus Christ.

In Philip Yancy's book entitled *"What's So Amazing About Grace?"* he comments about this very phenomenon. Writing about perfection and legalism, he observes: "Legalism fails miserably at the one thing it is supposed to do: encourage obedience. In a strange twist, a system of strict laws actually puts new ideas of lawbreaking in a person's mind."

Do you remember when you were a child and your teacher said, "don't" you were immediately tempted to "do." And, if the sign said STOP, you would GO. If rules are in place, we want to break them. And if a lot is riding on our being good, we just naturally, under that pressure, do bad.

Rules are empty, cheap substitutes called shadows. They are not the real thing.

Know the reality of Jesus Christ and allow that reality to influence you today as your faith grows!



## DISCUSSION

Is it possible that we substitute a belief system for real faith? Why do we do that?

Do you have anything in your life that you have substituted for the real thing? Is that the healthy thing to do?

Can you think of people in our world that invite you to follow a cheap substitute?



## NOTES

# Move Faith

## READ HEBREWS 12:1,2

It seems so easy to say that Jesus is the author of faith, yet we soon forget the full impact of that on our daily lives. It is easy to become tired in our faith and discouraged by daily challenges.

Perhaps the greatest example of perseverance that we can know is Jesus. He already knew what was going to happen to him and yet He still endured the cross with all its pain. He still walked the lonely road of rejection, scorn, and anguish to fulfill God's eternal plan.

That is the example we are to look to when we struggle with going on. We are to look to the example of the one who has perfected our faith. This keeps me from persisting in perseverance. Only when I am first fixed on Jesus am I able to persevere in spite of my challenges.

Former tennis player, Bjorn Borg said: "My greatest point is my persistence, I never give up in a match. However down I am, I fight until the last ball. My list of matches show that I have turned a great many so called irretrievable defeats into victories."

Isn't that what resurrection is about? God turns irreversible defeats into victories. Faith allows my defeats to become victories. When my eyes are fixed on Jesus I can continue a persevering life! Can you think of an example of persistence in your life?



## DISCUSSION

Do you ever face the challenge of getting your eyes off of Jesus? Maybe you set them on your work, your family, your struggles, and your pain?

Do you have any examples in your life when a defeat turned into a victory?

Think of the example of someone who persevered under difficult circumstances. What stands out to you from their story?



## NOTES



# Fatu



## MORE FAITH

With memories of the devastating Ebola outbreak which killed eight in her small village, one of which was her husband, Fatu continues to dance in spite of her sorrow.

She is thrilled by the visit of one of our local church partners who came to help them grow more food and help them with their poverty.

“We are so far off the main road, that no one has ever come to help us. Not the Government. No other organizations” Fatu says. “We are all Muslims, so we were very surprised when we found out that Association of Evangelicals of Liberia (AEL) came to help us.”

Before AEL arrived at this village, their primary source of income was growing and processing palm oil. “If too many people were selling it, the prices went down, and we all suffered,” Fatu recalls. The local church helped the community grow all kinds of new market crops. “Today, every family is engaged in market gardening. We eat some of them, and we sell the remainder. I no longer have to beg my neighbours to ensure the school fees are paid for my children.”



Not only have people improved their economic situation, the church also helped restore relationships within the community. Fatu explains, “Before our training, we gossiped a lot. Now, everybody helps each other.”

Through their service and support, AEL shared the love of Christ in a powerful way. In fact, we are excited to share that the community leader, Sheik Ghiblarr Kanu, asked if a church could be started in the community!


Fatu may have lost her husband, but she rejoices when she thinks of the hope that has arrived.

# More Faith

## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

It is so easy to take things into our own hands. We are quick to say that we have faith, but then catch ourselves living as if we don't. Our faith comes from God. Faith is sometimes paradoxical in nature – the more faith we put in God, the more faith we receive. How can we start to have more faith? Some suggestions are given below:

- Start small. "Faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains" (Matthew 17:20 paraphrased). Many times, we look for the big signs and the big tasks. But often God calls us in small ways first. Is there something small that you know God has been asking you to do? Maybe it is speaking to a friend about Him, or donating a bit more? Don't delay, do what God is calling you to do today.
- We are so easy to forget all the ways God has been faithful to us in the past. Take some time this week to think about how God has answered prayers in your life or has shown up in unexpected ways. Write these things down in a list and reflect on God's faithfulness.
- Having faith in God means that you trust in His ways – knowing that He knows what is best more than we could ever know. Is there something that didn't go as planned which tested your faith in God's goodness? Take some time to pray and ask God to forgive you and open your eyes.

A man with a goatee and a brown cap stands in a lush green field. He is wearing a red polo shirt with diagonal stripes in white, green, and yellow. The field is filled with tall corn plants and large, broad-leafed plants, possibly castor beans. The background is a clear blue sky.

Being confident of this,  
that He who began a good  
work in you will carry it on  
to completion until the day  
of Christ Jesus.

*PHILIPPIANS 1:6*

# More Generosity

## READ MATTHEW 25:31- 46

There is an increasing need for church leaders to understand the importance of supporting people in need within their communities. People who have survived violence, families struggling to pay rent, children who have lost a parent. These people have different practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and responses from within our churches.

Encourage people to see that everyone has the capacity to help each other. Even if we are poor or weak or sick, we still have something to offer. For example, even if we lack money, we could still give our time to sit and listen to survivors' experiences. We could also accompany an individual when they go to the health clinic, to provide emotional support.

Are there people in your community who are excluded, or whose needs are ignored – for example, because of their age, gender or life experience?

What does our society lose because of the way we treat these people?

An incredible, but often overlooked form of giving, is to advocate for others and ensure that all people can participate fully in the life of your community.

We may feel we have little to offer to help others, but in this passage, Jesus calls everyone to account for how they have cared for others.



## DISCUSSION

What does this passage tell us about how we as Christians should care for those in need?

In our culture, who do we expect to care for the sick, and why? In this passage, whose responsibility is it to look after them?

What are the needs of those who have survived trauma? Consider their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. How can we as Christians, both as individuals and as a church community, meet these needs and provide practical care and support for each other?

How can we provide care and support for vulnerable children in our community, for example those who are orphaned or those who are caring for parents who are sick?

Explore the ways in which we could use what little we do have to help others.



## NOTES

# More Generosity

## READ PROVERBS 3:9,10

Many of the people that we serve at Tearfund live in extreme conditions. Their normal is to live with little food, changing weather patterns, potential conflict and uncertainty regarding the future. They do not choose the harshness of their lives and a reliance on outside intervention to take them to another year.

Followers of Jesus Christ want to engage with others in bringing not only spiritual hope, but also physical hope. For this to happen there must be a financial investment of resources that bring hope and lifelong transformation.

It pleases God when we honour Him with our wealth. This act acknowledges the source of all that we have and it helps to address issues of greed that can creep in.

Christ followers understand the place of generous giving and delight in serving people around the world!

## DISCUSSION

Billy Graham once said, "If a person gets his attitude about money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life." How is your attitude towards money today?

Have you experienced the joy of investing in another person and seeing them released from poverty?

## NOTES

# More Generosity

## READ LUKE 12:13-21

People would often bring their daily problems to the religious leaders to sort out. On this occasion a question comes to Jesus around an issue of inheritance. This exact question is one that some people are even asking today!

In response Jesus warns to avoid all kinds of greed. 'Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.'

As he often did, Jesus uses a parable to help bring clarity to the question. It is a parable about a rich young ruler and those hearing it would have in all likelihood known someone like this!

From outward appearances, this person was very successful. But, what happens to the rich fool in the parable? The man had prepared many things for himself but was not 'rich towards God'. Similarly, Proverbs 21:13 tells us: 'Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need'

We are encouraged to be generous with what God has given us and we know that God loves a cheerful giver! We should be open-hearted and willing to lend to the poor (Exodus 23:11, Deuteronomy 15:7-8). We are also told to be eager to share and give to one another (Acts 4:34-35, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Galatians 2:10).



## DISCUSSION

Jesus said: 'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured to you' (Luke 6:38).

Can you think of a time when someone was generous towards you? How did you feel?

In what ways might you better express generosity?

Have you ever even remotely felt like that rich young ruler? Building treasure on earth to the neglect of those in real need.

Are you listening to the cry of the poor? At your church how could you do more for needy people, both within your community and outside your community?



## NOTES

# More Generosity

## READ MATTHEW 6:19-24

We often find Jesus specifically addressing the subject of money. In fact he addressed that issue more than any other issue. Jesus talked so much in the gospels about our money and possessions. Twenty-seven out of forty-three of the parables in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John deal with money and possessions. In other words, sixty-three percent of the parables deal with how we spend our money or how we give our money.

Many times we pursue the accumulation of stuff. Can we afford the stuff—no. So we go into debt. Debit living is centered on self. Generous giving is centered on God and it is a common theme of scripture.

Tim Keller in his book *Giving Power* wrote, “You will always give effortlessly to that which is your salvation, to those things that give your life meaning. If Jesus is the one who saved you, your money flows easily into his work, his people, and his causes. If, however, your real religion is your appearance, your social status, or personal comfort, or pleasure, your money flows most easily into those items and symbols.”

Our giving is a spiritual issue. Treasure gets down to the bottom line in your life. What is it that you really hold on to and value? What is it that you pursue with all of your energy? You cannot have two bottom lines.

## DISCUSSION

Why is it that Jesus spent so much time addressing this subject of money?

Why is our spending and our giving such a big deal?

Can you think of other passages of scripture that encourage us to be generous givers?

What small step can you take today to grow in generosity?

## NOTES

# More Generosity

## READ JOHN 6:1-15

Each person, however poor, has a right to live with dignity and to have their basic social and economic needs met. People should have access to water, sanitation, housing and food, however basic. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that these basic human rights are available to all their people.

We have a responsibility to make sure that certain people or groups of people are not ignored. People with disabilities, those with serious illnesses or very old people are often easy to overlook, but their need for support is considerable.

Jesus encouraged his followers to share material possessions to ensure that each person had enough to live. In the book of Acts, we see this happening in wonderful ways in the early church, as people shared what they had. Often one person's generosity will encourage others to share.



## DISCUSSION

This is a very well-known Bible story of an amazing miracle that Jesus did to provide enough food for over 5,000 people. We read about the boy who had brought his own food in verse 9. What might have encouraged him to let Jesus take his food?

The willingness of the young boy to let Jesus take his food meant that 5,000 other people were fed. We are often overwhelmed by the size of the needs around us. This story is a wonderful reminder of how God can use a little faith to bring huge results. When we share the little we have with others, God may bless this beyond our expectations. Are there ways in which you could put this into practice in your own life?

How effective is your government in meeting the needs of the poorest groups in your country? Are there minorities who lack support? What can you do to help meet their needs?



## NOTES



# Kaswera



## MORE GENEROSITY

56-year-old Kaswera Nusayi never would have imagined this kind of abundance. Not only does she have enough food and money for her and her family, she is even now able to support her relatives and neighbours!

But it wasn't always this way.

After losing her husband to sickness, Kaswera was under pressure to support her family. Living in North Kivu, DR Congo, she faced the intense challenge of growing nutritious crops on poor soil. Struggling for survival, she went to the local church, where she was introduced to new agricultural techniques and a village savings and loan (VSL) group. It changed her life. She learned how to efficiently grow vegetables on limited land - which resulted in abundance like never before.

Kaswera was able to feed her family and started selling the surplus. With the new-found income, she began saving funds to pay for school fees, to support her relatives, and extend money to her neighbours in need. With the VSL group, she was even able to take out a loan to repair her house, using the money from her surplus harvest to repay her debts.

Now an active member, Kaswera is thankful to her church and to God. She loves being a part of a church that cares for her and treats her like family.

Our God wants to bless us abundantly. It might not always be physical or be in ways we expect, but He loves His children. Kaswera has experienced real transformation! She is thankful for the church programs that have empowered her to use her resources to lift herself out of hardships.



# More Generosity

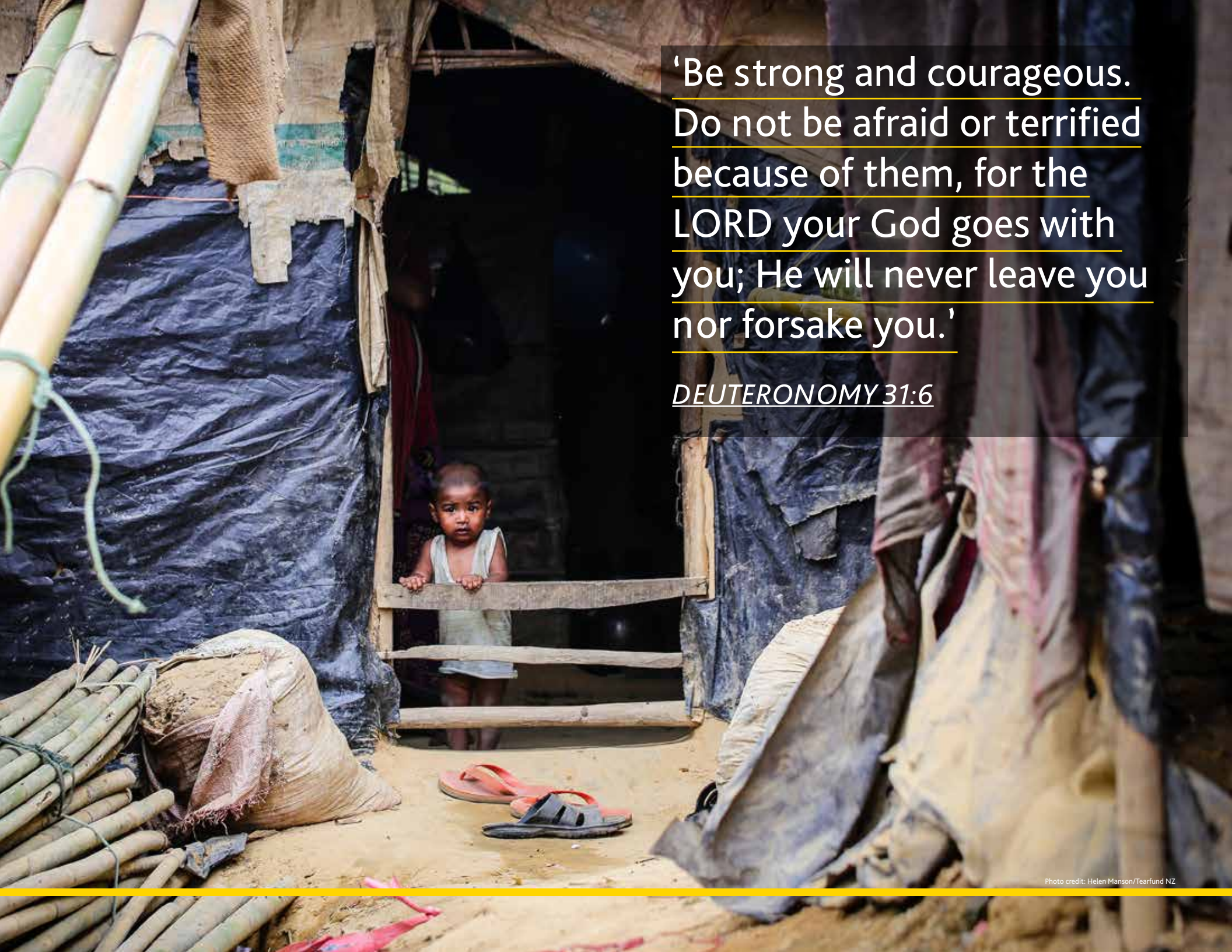
## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

God has been so generous to us, how can we not be generous to others? There are so many passages in the Bible that warn against keeping our resources to ourselves and are so many others that tell us that God has given us good gifts so that we can bless others. In our materialistic, individualistic society, it is so easy to fall into the trap of "mine." When in reality everything given to us is from God and is His. He has the right to use what we have for His purposes and His glory. But it's not easy. Below are some ways we can learn to be more generous:

- How much in your house do you actually use on a regular basis? If we are honest with ourselves, we have far more than we need. Take the Less is More challenge. Every week for one year think of one item you don't need and donate it to someone in need or to a charity.
- When we talk about generosity, often material items such as money or food come to mind. But God has given us all unique skills and abilities that we can use to bless others. List out skills you have that you think you are good at. Consider this week how you might offer these skills to others, your church, or charities who may need them.

- Generosity goes beyond giving when it is convenient. God calls His people to become "living sacrifices" and sometimes there is pain in the offering. But we do not live on bread alone. Pray and ponder in your heart what God is calling you to sacrifice. Is it giving up alone time to encourage another? Or recreation time to volunteer? Or a greater percentage of your income? List what comes to mind and seek out ways to display sacrificial generosity.



A young child with dark skin and hair, wearing a light-colored sleeveless top, stands in the doorway of a makeshift shelter. The shelter is constructed from bamboo poles and dark blue plastic sheeting. The child is looking directly at the camera. The ground is dirt, and there are some sandals and bags nearby. The background is dark, suggesting an interior space.

'Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be afraid or terrified  
because of them, for the  
LORD your God goes with  
you; He will never leave you  
nor forsake you.'

DEUTERONOMY 31:6

## NEXT STEPS

*We hope that this Less is More devotional taught you more about God and drew you closer to Him. At Tearfund, it is our goal to restore lives and lift people out of poverty: physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. We work with local churches in the poorest communities across Africa and Asia to help share God's love and help the poor lift themselves out of poverty. It is how we follow Jesus where the need is greatest.*

We have many other resources to help you and your church with your walk with Jesus and to join in His mission of restoring relationships. Learn about the many ways you can engage and get involved with Tearfund below.

### **Tearfund Grow**

Tearfund Grow is a web-portal which contains resources that individuals and churches can download free of charge. There you will find articles, blog posts, booklets and videos designed

to build your faith in reflective and practical ways.

*To explore visit: [Tearfund.ca/grow](http://Tearfund.ca/grow)*

### **The Harvest**

The Harvest is a group of individuals who commit to donate to Tearfund's work on a monthly basis. As a monthly donor, you will help equip churches and individuals with the training and tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty.

With monthly giving, your money is multiplied. Signing-up for automated monthly payments reduces our administration costs allowing more money to go overseas and helps us plan long-term projects with greater effectiveness.

Starting as low as \$14 a month, signing up to give monthly is easy and affordable. You can modify or cancel your commitment anytime you wish and 100% of all

contributions is tax deductible.

To learn more visit:

*[Tearfund.ca/the-harvest](http://Tearfund.ca/the-harvest)*

### **Our Prayer Family**

Prayer is an incredible privilege. An opportunity to talk to the Creator of the universe and call Him "Abba" Father. We simply could not do the work that we do without the faithful prayers of hundreds of donors, supporters and friends.

Being part of our prayer family means you will receive monthly emails on how you can pray for our work and the poor around the world. But we also pray for you. Every week we pray for our supporters and the specific requests we receive. It is the body of Christ, coming together.

To join our prayer family visit:

*[Tearfund.ca/pray](http://Tearfund.ca/pray)*

### **Lives Transformed E-newsletter**

Stay connected by subscribing to our *Lives Transformed* E-newsletter. Sent monthly, *Lives Transformed* features inspiring stories of God's faithfulness and

restored lives, answers to your questions, devotionals and the latest news.

What are you waiting for?

Sign-up Today:

*[Tearfund.ca/newsletter-signup](http://Tearfund.ca/newsletter-signup)*

### **Tearfund Church**

Working with the church is one of our core values. Not only do we work with churches abroad, we also desire to work with churches here. Becoming a Tearfund church partner has many benefits including access to matching funds from the Canadian FoodGrains Bank, access to partners and projects around the world, multipliers on emergency relief funds, exclusive access to resources and more.

To learn more how we can work with your church and start the conversation visit:

*[Tearfund.ca/your-church](http://Tearfund.ca/your-church)*

# ABOUT TEARFUND

## ABOUT US

We are Christians passionate about ending poverty, following Jesus where the need is greatest. We believe that poverty is more than a lack of money; it is a result of broken relationships. A broken relationship with God, within ourselves, between us and our neighbours, and with creation. This brokenness is at the root of poverty in all its forms – economic, social, emotional, and spiritual.

Just like a car won't start without a sparkplug, we believe that without Jesus, all our efforts to solve poverty will fall short. When Christ came 2000 years ago He came with a mission to restore these relationships!

We work with local churches across the developing world to continue on this mission and restore people living in poverty.

Through local partnership and training, we empower people to lift themselves out of poverty using their God-given abilities and resources.

## OUR PROGRAMS

### Conservation Agriculture & Food Security

We train farmers on simple, sustainable agricultural principles: no-till cultivation, mulching, and smart crop rotation that help them grow three to four times more food. Families have more to eat and some to sell, and the land itself is enriched and protected.

### Village Savings Groups and Loans

Self-help and Savings Groups are quietly revolutionizing the lives of people in poverty. These

groups help members save small amounts and receive loans which they use to start new businesses, send kids to school, or pay for essentials. Moreover, these groups will often come together to form associations and take on larger projects that radically transform their communities.

### Church-based Community Transformation

We work with local church pastors and leadership across Africa and Asia to help their churches see the vision that God has given them regarding the poor and how they might be able to make a difference. Through a series of bible studies and practical training, churches are equipped and empowered to identify areas of need within their communities and create solutions to address them.

### Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Programs

Sexual violence is a common weapon of war. In South Sudan,

a country ravished by years of civil war and famine, 72% of women over the age of 12 have been sexually assaulted and are living with deep emotional, social, physical and spiritual scars. Tearfund is working with the local church to train church leaders on topics of mental health after-effects, gender-based violence, psychosocial support services, and a Biblical response to trauma, healing, forgiveness and protection.

### Disaster Response

When disaster strikes the poor are usually hardest hit: 69% of all people killed by disasters around the world live in poverty. Tearfund works alongside various Christian partners to provide immediate relief to those suffering from disaster. We also work with local churches in affected areas to provide training and rehabilitation so to help the poor regain their livelihoods and be better prepared for the next emergency.

*To Learn More Visit: [Tearfund.ca](http://Tearfund.ca)*

**tearfund**

*Following Jesus where the need is greatest*

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