

HOPE  
for LA

# Loving the Poor

A Hope for LA Community Group Study

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for trying this new Community Group study on loving the poor. It’s great to think about how God loves the poor even before we do. He talks about the poor a lot, in both the Old and New Testaments. And in God’s plan of reconciling the world to himself, he describes ‘that though *he* was rich, yet for your sake he *became* poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich’ (2 Corinthians 8:9).

We hope that these four weeks would be a rich time for your group to share thoughts and experiences, study a passage of scripture, and serve at a local ministry together. We would encourage you to have your Hope for LA Rep lead this study. It was designed with that possibility in mind, and it would give you a much needed break. Our hope is that through doing this study in community, your group would not simply serve *more* but that their hearts would change – through knowing God’s heart.

***Studying together (First 3 weeks):***

This study is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan – you will actually read it every week for 3 weeks straight. This may be a very familiar passage to you and your group – try not to let the familiarity quench its relevancy to us.

There are many things to talk about in studying the poor. We have chosen to highlight these themes based on Luke 10:25-37:

- Who is our neighbor?**
- Who are the poor?**
- Being a neighbor**

Each week, on the first page of the study, we’ve given you a couple quotes, the big idea, a few objectives for you to focus your group’s conversation on, and a prayer for you as you prepare for the study. In the discussion guide, we elaborate on some themes that will come up in the discussion with your group.

We must approach loving the poor with humility and not jump to conclusions. And as in all community group gatherings, you should encourage your group to be honest about the difficulties and questions that this topic presents to their lives and hearts.

At the end of your 4-week experience, it would help us if you could fill out the *survey* printed on the last page of this guide. You can either fill it out by hand and return it to us or use the electronic copy on the Community Groups leaders’ website.

***Serving together (4<sup>th</sup> week):***

At least a week before you start this study, you should plan a service opportunity for your group for the 4<sup>th</sup> week of this study. The next page has a form for you to collect the info you need. On the CG Leaders website you will find a list of opportunities, or Hope for LA can help you find an opportunity.

We have provided optional scripture passages for personal study in the week leading up to your service opportunity. You will also find questions to help your group reflect together afterwards.

We are all on a journey of loving the poor. We are really excited for your group as you journey together to know God and to love your neighbor as yourself.

In Christ Our Hope,

Dave Kleinknecht and Jeremy Weese

**Community Group Service Opportunity**

**Our Service Opportunity (description):**

**Org Name:**

**Address:**

**Date:**

**Time (start and end):**

**Name of Contact at Site:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Additional Notes: (details, what to bring, who is doing what)**

## Loving the Poor

### Overview of the Study

We will be looking in depth at the story of the Good Samaritan over the next few weeks. In the first week, we will be looking at the conversation between Jesus and the lawyer, which prompts the story in the first place. We will see the way in which Jesus was challenging the lawyer, and us, in how to think about loving your neighbor. In the second week, we will look at how Jesus tells the story, and how the way he sets it up reveals who the lawyer is, and who we really are. In the third week, we will look at the way the Samaritan is an example for how we are to care for the poor.

### Acknowledgements

Much of the material in this study is drawn from Tim Keller’s *Ministries of Mercy* and *Generous Justice*, as well as material from Harbor Presbyterian Church, with some expansion and modification.

## The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup>He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup>And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

<sup>29</sup>But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

<sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" <sup>37</sup>He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

## Week 1: Who Is Our Neighbor?

“And, seeking to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘But who is my neighbor?’”

Luke 10:29

“Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.”

John Wesley

### Reading: Luke 10:25-37

#### Big Idea:

- ❖ Loving the poor is more than simply serving the poor; to love the poor, we need a changed heart.

#### Objectives:

- Get an idea of the group’s experience loving the poor.
- Examine our hearts about our motivations in serving the poor

#### Prayer for the Week:

*Father, as we begin this study on the poor whom you love, and for whom you have a special care, would you prepare my heart as I lead this study? Would you expose the sinful and selfish ways I make assumptions about the poor, and the ways I presume upon my own righteousness? Would you change my heart through your word and your Holy Spirit, and the hearts of the members of our community group as well? Thank you for your grace in my sin, your patience in my stubbornness, and your love in my neediness. Amen.*

## Discussion Guide: Who is Our Neighbor?

### Setting the Scene:

There are two levels to this story: the real life conversation between the lawyer and Jesus, and the parable that Jesus tells in response to the lawyer’s second question. If we want to understand the story of the Good Samaritan, we have to understand what was happening in the conversation, and what prompted Jesus to tell this story.

An important point here: when the lawyer is asking, “Who is my neighbor?” he wants to know who he is responsible to help. The heart of this conversation between Jesus and the lawyer is loving the poor. But who are the poor? Two simple characteristics: **The poor are needy**, and **the poor are powerless**. The poor are needy because they have little or nothing of what the world values. The poor are powerless because they are subject to oppression. We see this in the man set upon by robbers in Jesus’ story – he was needy (everything was taken from him) and he was powerless (he could not help himself).

### Main Players

- *Jesus*: We are just under halfway through Luke’s account of Jesus’ life. Luke has set up Jesus as the one to redeem Israel, through the account of his miraculous birth and the prophecies surrounding it. Jesus has burst on the scene in both Judea and Galilee, proclaiming that in him the kingdom of God is at hand. He is drawing crowds, healing and teaching them. He also has drawn enemies, mainly the Jewish religious leaders of the day. Already, up to this point, they have tried to trick him into saying something that they could use to condemn him, either in the religious courts or the legal courts.
- *The Lawyer*: Literally, an expert in the law. One of the religious leaders that are opposed to Jesus. His initial question, although it could be seen on the surface as innocent, was really an attempt to trap Jesus, to test him, to get him to say something incriminating. We see this in verse 25, “A lawyer stood up to put him to the test.”

### The First Question: The challenge

The lawyer asks a simple and yet profound question: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Remember he was testing Jesus, to see if Jesus’ answer would contradict Jewish law. But Jesus, seeing through the lawyer, turns the question back to the lawyer. The lawyer responds with a well-known summary of the law, taken from Deuteronomy 6 and Leviticus 19: essentially, love God and love your neighbor. Jesus presses the lawyer on this with the simple statement – “do this and you will live.”

### **The Second Question: The excuse**

The lawyer just gave his answer to the question, “How do I inherit eternal life?” by quoting directly from the law. Jesus, in hearing his answer, challenges him. Jesus basically is saying, “Okay. Go do that!”

Here’s the problem: the lawyer knows he cannot keep it. So he tries to narrow his responsibility into a more manageable one. And so he asks a follow-up question: “Who is my neighbor?” It’s an excuse (in the words of Luke, he is justifying himself). In other words, the lawyer is implying, if we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, this cannot possibly mean that we have to love *everyone* as ourselves, just the people who fall into this category of “neighbor.” And so, in the lawyer’s mind, if he can just define the limits of who counts as his neighbor, then keeping this law is possible.

We are like the lawyer, aren’t we? We ask similar questions about who we are ‘supposed to’ love. “Do we have to help the drug addict? I mean, he got into it himself.” Or, “Do we have to help people who aren’t going to our church? Who aren’t in our neighborhood?” We, like the lawyer, want to narrow our responsibility.

*[Now, you might get questions about whether we really are to care for everybody – which we will discuss more fully in week 3. For now, Deuteronomy 10:17-19 is a helpful reminder that we are called to be people of mercy: <sup>17</sup>“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. <sup>18</sup> He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup> Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” See also Deuteronomy 15:7-11.]*

### **Jesus Responds: The Good Samaritan**

Jesus responds again to challenge the lawyer, yet this time he does it with a story. There is a lot going on in this story, which we will explore in later weeks. For now, notice how Jesus ends the story with a similar question to the lawyer: “Who was the neighbor in this story?” See how they use ‘neighbor’ to mean very different things. ‘Neighbor’ for the lawyer was who he was obligated to help. ‘Neighbor’ for Jesus was a person who helps others. The lawyer was asking, “Who do I have to love?” Jesus says, “Who is the loving person?”

This illustrates the problem for the lawyer, and for us as we think about our lives. We focus on what we have to do to get by – “what is my moral obligation?” God wants us to become a different sort of person. He wants us to become people who are motivated to love others, not out of obligation, but out of their hearts. The lawyer wasn’t there yet. None of us are, on our own. The lawyer asked for a definition of a neighbor; what he got was an invitation to a changed heart. And that invitation is for us as well. Next week we will look more closely at *how* our hearts are changed – simply put, the gospel. How do we become loving people? How do we become neighbors? We look to Jesus. John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood.”



**Opening Discussion:**

- Does God love the poor? How do you know?
  - What have been some of your experiences in loving and serving the poor?
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**The Good Samaritan (Read Luke 10:25-37)*****Looking at the Text:***

- What are the 2 stories in this passage? Who are the main characters?
- What were the lawyer’s intentions in questioning Jesus? How do you think that affects Jesus response?
- What does the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor?” reveal about the lawyer? About his driving motivation?
- How does the lawyer define ‘neighbor’? How does Jesus define ‘neighbor’?

***Looking at Our Hearts***

- According to Luke 10, who are our neighbors?
- When have you experienced someone being a neighbor to you?
- What actually motivates you to love your neighbor?
  - Performance?
  - Image?
  - Guilt?
- What *should* motivate us to love our neighbors?
- How does God’s love change the way we care for each other in our group? How we care for those outside the group?

## Week 2: Who Are the Poor?

“But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.”

Luke 10:33

“Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too.”

Frederick Buechner

**Reading: Luke 10:25 - 37**

### **Big Idea:**

- ❖ To love the poor well, we need to be aware of our own deep poverty.

### **Objectives:**

- Compare and contrast a middle class mindset with that of the poor.
- Acknowledge our own spiritual poverty, and our need for God’s grace.
- Discover how knowing and embracing our own poverty affects how we love the poor.

### **Prayer for the Week:**

*Father, I acknowledge that I often do not see myself as one of the poor. I take pride in my gifts without any thought given to the Giver. What do I have that I have not received from You? Would you change my heart, so that I recognize myself as one of the poor? Would I come to you in need, looking only to your grace? And would that picture of myself change the way I view the poor around me? I ask all of these things in Jesus’ name, trusting in the one who, for my sake, became poor, so that he might make me an heir of God. Amen.*

## Discussion Guide: Who are the Poor?

### Setting the Scene:

We mentioned last week that there are two levels to this passage – the conversation between the lawyer and Jesus, and the story Jesus tells in response to the lawyer’s second question. Last week we focused on the conversation; this week we will look closely at the interaction between the parable and the conversation; and next week we will look almost exclusively at the parable.

If we read the parable, we see the basic structure of the story. A man is robbed and injured. People pass by. Two people don’t help him. One person does help, and does so to an amazing degree. But just as important as the structure of the story are the identities of the people in the story.

### Main Players:

- *Man robbed and injured*: implicitly a Jew. That stretch of road was known to be dangerous. There is no mention in the story about why he was traveling alone.
- *The Priest*: One of the highest temple officials, a Jewish leader. Involved with the temple rituals such as sacrifices.
- *The Levite*: A temple official, but not on the level with the priest. Sort of a priest’s assistant.
- *The Samaritan*: A ethnic group related to the Jews, but distinct from the Jews. Ancestry is half-Jewish, half-Gentile. Hated by both sides. People from Judea would avoid Samaria and Samaritans like the plague.

### The Point of the Story?

Remember, we saw last week that Jesus was being tested by the religious leaders. He is choosing his words carefully; he sets up this story in a specific way to make a specific point. Remember, as well, the ethnicity of Jesus’ audience, specifically the lawyer. He was a Jewish religious leader. To help us understand what Jesus is getting at, let’s think of other ways he *could* have told the story, and compare them with how he *actually* told the story.

### Option 1: We must help people in need.

One of the ways people read this story is as a general call to help those in need. The lawyer asks, “Who is my neighbor?” And Jesus tells this story to show that he should be a neighbor to one who is in need. But if Jesus wanted to say that, he would have told a much simpler story. He could have told a story of a Jewish man, who was not helped by some people, but eventually someone, a fellow Jew, stopped to help (the road between Jerusalem and Jericho was in Judea – so the usual travelers are Jews).

**Option 2: We must help people in need, and those religious leaders have it all wrong!**

Some people have highlighted that Jesus had the religious elite cast as the ones who don’t help. And, because of that they have interpreted this story mainly as a critique of the religious establishment. But if Jesus was only saying that, he would simply have had an everyday Jew as the hero, there would have been no need to make the rescuer a Samaritan.

**Option 3: We must help people in need, even those who are different from us.**

Most people have noticed that Jesus includes a hated Samaritan in the story, so they argue that the point is that we must help those in need, regardless of their race, nationality, or relationship with us. But, if that were the point Jesus wanted to make, he could have made it much more strongly with setting up the story with a Samaritan as the one in need, and a Jew as the one who helped him.

**The Real Story: We are the ones who need help!**

Jesus does none of the above, and so, while elements of those interpretations are true as far as they go, Jesus is actually doing something more. Remember, his audience is Jewish. And all of the characters in the story are Jewish, except for the one Samaritan. But, even more importantly, the victim is Jewish. By making the victim Jewish, and the helper a Samaritan, Jesus invites the Jewish lawyer to see himself as the one in need of help. How is this significant? Jesus is setting up a hypothetical situation for the lawyer: what if you were alone and helpless and that the only person who can help you is one who has no reason to do so? What if you were the one on that road, with no call of kinship or loyalty on the Samaritan, nothing to give, and nothing to promise in reward? What if your only hope was the unmerited mercy of someone you were by nature hostile toward?

Of course, if we word it that way, we see rather quickly that this is no hypothetical situation. As Paul reminds the Ephesians: “You were dead in your trespasses and sins... and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy...” You see what Jesus is doing in this parable. He is saying to the lawyer, and to us, “You are the poor man! You are the one who needs help!” This is where our “middle-class mindset” sets in. We think that we are basically okay. And we believe that the things we need to change are things we can do ourselves. We are a lot like that lawyer – we think we just need an outline of our obligations, and we can go do them. But our situation is much more desperate. Remember our definition of the poor from last week: the poor are needy and the poor are powerless. That is our condition! We are needy, we are powerless!

**The Compassion of Jesus**

Jesus is incredibly kind to the lawyer here. Not only does he answer his question, but he diagnoses his real problem, and points him to the solution. In essence, Jesus is saying to the lawyer, “You think you are the one in the position to give help. But before you can do that, you have to realize that you need help.” And, if we stick with Luke’s story to the end, we see that Jesus is the one who brings help to

those in need, Jesus is the one who gives everything for people who hate him. We too, like the lawyer, need this diagnosis from Jesus. Before we can even think about how we should love the poor, we must realize that ***we are the poor***. We are the ones in need; we are the ones with nothing to offer.

### **A Changed Heart: The poor loving the poor**

The people who love the poor the best are those who have been broken, those who have realized that they are poor. This is what Jesus meant when he said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Tim Keller, in his book *Generous Justice*, puts it this way:

My experience as a pastor has been that those who are middle-class in spirit tend to be indifferent to the poor, but people who come to grasp the gospel of grace and become spiritually poor find their hearts gravitating toward the materially poor. To the degree that the gospel shapes your self-image, you will identify with those in need... In other words, when Christians who understand the gospel see a poor person, they realize they are looking into a mirror. Their hearts must go out to him or her without an ounce of superiority or indifference. (102-103)

It is only as we grasp the gospel – the true desperation of our lives without God, and his incredibly mercy and grace toward us in our condition – it is only then that we begin to become people who help others out of love, not to meet obligations, but out of the heart.

## Opening Discussion

- At what time in your life have you felt most rich? Most poor?
  - How do middle-class people tend to answer these questions:
    - How do people become poor?
    - How do people get out of poverty?
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## The Good Samaritan (Read Luke 10:25-37)

### *Looking at the text*

- Who are the main characters in Jesus’ parable?
- Who is the poor man in this story? What made him poor?
- How was the lawyer’s mindset similar to our middle class mindset?
- With whom in the story does Jesus want the lawyer to identify?
- Why does Jesus make the helper a Samaritan, and the one in need a Jewish man? What does that reveal about how Jesus wanted the lawyer to see himself?
- Who are the poor, according to Jesus?

### *Looking at our Hearts*

- How are we poor (needy and powerless)?
- Why are we blind to this?
- How does seeing ourselves among the poor change our attitudes about serving them? How might it change the way that we serve them?
- What do the poor teach us?
- How do we become a community group that reflects these characteristics?

## Week 3: Being a Neighbor

“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’

**Luke 10:36-37**

“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.”

**Mother Teresa**

### Reading: Luke 10:25-37

#### Big Idea:

- ❖ Caring for the poor is about helping to meet needs; physical needs, relational needs, and spiritual needs.

#### Objectives:

- Think about guiding principles for caring for the poor
- Emphasize the place of human dignity as we care for the poor

#### Prayer for this Week:

*Father, thank you for being a God who cares for the poor, and a God whose concern for the poverty of the people you made compelled you to come down to us. Jesus, thank you for taking on all the poverty of our condition, and redeeming us, and in your victory securing us a place of inheritance. Would we be compelled by your love to walk in your steps in caring for the poor? Would you prepare my heart so that I serve and love out of gratitude? Would you prepare the hearts of our group as we serve next week? I ask all of these things, trusting that you are a God who hears and answers prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## **Discussion Guide: Being A Neighbor**

### **Setting the Scene**

In the first week we looked at how the interaction between Jesus and the lawyer revealed the broken way the lawyer thought about who he should care for. He wanted guidelines: “Who am I obligated to help?” Jesus’ response? Become the kind of person who helps others. But how do we get there? Last week we saw the way – the Gospel. It is only in realizing that we are poor, in need of rescue, and that Jesus is our rescuer, that we can begin to have a changed heart. This is the foundation of obedience: we see what God has done for us, and that truth motivates us toward a faithful response. In this case, we see what Jesus calls us to: “Go and do likewise.”

### **Main Players:**

- The Samaritan: This week, notice what he did. The Samaritan had compassion. He went to the man, bound up his wounds, poured oil and wine. He put the man on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. He paid the innkeeper to care for him and made plans to come back.
- The poor man: Completely dependent. In need of a lot of care.

### **Caring for the Poor: Helping with Physical Needs**

What does it mean to care for the poor? First, caring for the poor requires dealing with physical need. The ways the Samaritan provided for the man were immediate, and they were physical. Humans are both spiritual and physical beings, with no apology for the physical side of things. God loves matter – he made it! God is concerned with physical needs. To focus on spiritual needs with no regard to people’s physical welfare is both unchristian and unbiblical. Meeting physical needs is good, in and of itself, with no need to justify it as a path to reach people spiritually.

### **Caring for the Poor: Helping those who are different from us**

Second, we must care for the poor, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status. In other words, the only thing the poor must be to deserve our care is to be made in the image of God. The priest and Levite, in order to pass by, would have had to forget or disregard that the person on the road was a real human being, flesh and blood, and imbued with the inherent dignity that comes with being human. The Samaritan did not forget the man was a human, apparently. Notice the dignity with which he treats the wounded man – cleans his wounds, puts him on the donkey, spends the night taking care of him. As Proverbs 14 states most clearly - “Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.”

### **Caring for the Poor: Helping at whatever cost**

Third, we must care for the poor even though it will cost us. Of all the costs the Samaritan incurred in aiding the injured man – from likely sacrificing his own clothes for bandages, oil and wine from his own supplies, and at least two days



wages for the man’s continuing care – of all of these, maybe the most striking in our world is the cost of his time. The Samaritan stopped; the whole story is found in these short words. And perhaps that cost explains what people have always wondered – why the priest and Levite did not stop. Jesus, however, makes no mention of their reasons, probably because there are no legitimate reasons for them not to stop (notice that even the expert on the law did not defend the priest’s actions). More likely the reasons of those who passed by were much more mundane – the same reasons we all pass by those who need our help.

### **Loving the Poor**

We began this study with the question, “Who is my neighbor?” and seeking to learn how to love our neighbor well. But to begin to answer that question, we need to see that we are the ones in need, we are the ones who are poor. And our hope is found in the gospel - that Jesus became our neighbor. With that gospel working in our hearts, we begin to love the poor in three main ways:

- **Identifying with the poor:** You are not the hero – Jesus is. The poor are just like you; you are just like them. And so working with them will be a partnership of equals. This is the antidote for one of our major mistakes in working with the poor: patronization. Instead of doing things *for* them, we do things *with* them.
- **Being generous to the poor:** As we love the poor, we give away our time, energy, and resources as if our treasure really is in heaven.
- **Standing up for the poor:** Loving the poor means fighting injustice against the poor. “A poor man’s field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away” (Proverbs 13:23). We recognize that there are systems and people who prey on the poor, both here and abroad, and we must stand with the poor against oppression.

## Opening Discussion

- What is your best memory of a neighbor? How were they a good neighbor?
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## The Good Samaritan (Read Luke 10:25-37)

### *Looking at the Text:*

- List the ways the Samaritan provided for the man’s physical needs.
- In what ways did the Samaritan sacrifice for the man?
- What obligation did the Samaritan have to stop and help the man?
- What does the way the Samaritan cared for the man reveal about how he saw the man? How does our usual reaction to the poor reveal how we see them?

### *Looking at Our Hearts*

- How does seeing the way the Samaritan loved his neighbor help us as we follow Jesus’ call to “Go and do likewise?”
- Where else in Scripture do we find encouragement to love the poor? (See next page for some examples). What does that tell us about God’s concern for the poor?
- What is the difference between compassion and patronization? Why is that difference important in relating to the poor?
- Why is it significant that we serve *together* in loving the poor?
- As you think about serving next week, what excites you? What makes you nervous? How can we be praying for each other in preparation for next week?

*(Leaders, take some time here to discuss the service opportunity for next week, and work out any remaining details with the group.)*

## Week 4: Our Service Project

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

Mother Teresa

### Optional Personal Study

#### **Scripture Passages for Meditation:**

*For reflection throughout the week prior to the project*

1. James 2: 1-6
  - What makes someone worthy of honor, according to James?
  - What is real wealth in this passage? Where does it come from?
  - How does this passage challenge the way we classify people? In what ways do we honor people above others?
2. Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 24:17-18
  - Note: The orphan, widow, and foreigner (or sojourner) were the most vulnerable people in the land, the ones most exposed to poverty.
  - Why are the Israelites commanded to care for the poor? What was one of the motivations God used?
  - How are we like Israel? How does that recognition fuel our care for the poor?
3. Isaiah 1:10-17
  - What are the signs of true worship God loves in this passage?
  - What are ways which we substitute ritual and outward actions for real love and compassion?
4. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9
  - How does Paul use the gospel to help us think about generosity and giving?
  - How is gospel motivation different than using shame or guilt as motivators?

## Debrief

**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.**

**Revelation 22:1-5 ESV**

### Reflections

- How was it?
- What was the most surprising thing for you about the service project?
- What is one thing that you will remember?
- What was the most difficult thing for you during the project?
- How did this study affect how you approached the project? How did it affect the way you related with the people you served?

### Application

- How has this experience affected how you will approach serving the poor in the future?
- What will you tell your friends and family about this experience?
- How does this experience affect how you see your fellow members of your community group? How might it change the way you relate together as a group?
- How might this experience affect how you approach people at your job? Co-workers? Customers? Supervisors?
- How might it affect the way you think about your family?

## Community Group Study Survey

### Hope for LA - Loving the Poor

*An electronic version of this survey can be obtained on the CG website and  
by emailing Davidk@hopeforla.org*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Community Group (area/time) \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the following:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. The structure of each week was clear and easy to follow. \_\_\_\_\_
2. This study encouraged our group to serve \_\_\_\_\_
3. I feel like our group learned a lot from this study \_\_\_\_\_
4. Our group is likely to serve again in the future \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Have you served as a group before?
  
6. What was helpful about this study?
  
7. What would you change?
  
8. Which elements of the study were the most helpful? (i.e. Questions, Discussion Guide, Prayer, Quotes, etc.). Which, if any, were not helpful? Distracting?
  
9. What was the best part of leading this study? What was the hardest?