Transformation Tree Curriculum

Version 3.0

world relief
The Transformation Tree Curriculum

A training manual developed by World Relief
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“Special thanks to Darrow Miller who originated the Transformation Tree concept.
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This curriculum is for God’s church, the body of Christ. The goal is to foster decisive action by the church that embraces both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, resulting in a seamless integration and implementation of Word and Deed. This goal sees the local church as initiating, participating in, and owning these transformational ministries.

The “Transformation Tree Curriculum” has been designed to be an instrument that will mobilize the Church to rise up like never before to engage the great causes of our day as they stand for the vulnerable and meet the needs of our neighbors as Jesus did. And, to regard being, doing and saying as inseparable dimensions of our witness of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is our hope that the development work that will spring forth from this curriculum will be instrumental in transforming the lives of entire communities physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. We are hopeful because these interventions will have evangelistic consequences and, at the same time, the gospel proclamation through the churches will have social ramifications as they bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ in all areas of life.

Through the lessons in this manual we have endeavored to create an environment where the participants can wrestle with Paul’s call in Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will. This mind-set change is imperative for sustainable, lasting community transformation.

May you be strengthened by God’s unfailing love and guided by His Spirit as you facilitate these lessons.

Using this manual:

The manual is divided into 10 lessons that offer step-by-step guidance for group facilitation using a group-based dialogue and reflection approach. Each lesson blends Biblical truths and development concepts. As the facilitator, you will help guide participants to discover God’s plan and power in their lives, how to live a meaningful and abundant life in Him, and to serve those in need.

During His time on earth, our Lord taught His disciples and others around Him about how we should live. We have tried to follow His example by using many of the same methods of teaching in this guide. Please refer to and read Jesus the Master Teacher: Helping People Learn the Truth, found in the resource section after the lessons.

Each lesson begins with Notes to the Facilitator which provides helpful background information. This is followed by specific Learning Objectives, reflecting what participants will do during each lesson, and a list of Materials/Preparation needed to remind the facilitator what materials or activities should be prepared in advance for the lesson. The total Time for the lesson appears at the beginning of the lesson and an approximate delivery time in minutes precedes each section to help the facilitator allocate time for each learning activity. Helpful Hints, offering suggestions to facilitators, and Main Idea boxes, summarizing the main point of a particular section, are also provided in each lesson.

Finally, a step-by-step guide of the lesson follows, with headings to indicate themes for discussion and specific activities. The lessons are scripted as a support to facilitators and to reinforce learner-centered, dialogue-based principles and practices.
Lesson Format

What the facilitator says to the group appears in normal type.

*Italics are used to indicate instructions to the facilitator. These should not be read aloud to participants.*

- Discussion questions appear in bold
  
  » Possible answers: are offered after each question in italics.

  These answers provide the facilitator with an easy reference while probing the group during discussions to ensure all key points are covered.

A series of stories provide a real life context to explore the content and new concepts. Feel free to change the names in the stories to make them more typical of names in your area.

Things to remember as you lead these sessions

- Be prepared. Practice the session beforehand and review it again on the day of the training. Arrive early and prepare the training room. Prepare flip charts with questions and scriptures ahead of time.
- Save lists from discussion, and drawings created during the sessions to use during the final review in Lesson 8.
- Follow the script provided, but be natural and use your own words.
- Use different voices when reading stories, including Bible stories, to make them more interesting.
- During discussions or when debriefing an activity, allow participants time to answer the questions, encourage them to share ideas, listen carefully and affirm their responses.

Learning Principles

(From Helping People Learn the Truth: Jesus the Master Teacher by Muriel I. Elmer, Ph.D.)

Jesus shows us that to help people learn, we must:

1. **DEMONSTRATE LOVE** - People need to know that the teacher cares about them, that he or she is concerned that they learn well and practice truth. All of the remaining marks of an effective teacher display this love.

2. **CREATE SAFETY** - Learners need to feel safe with you as a teacher, they need to know that you will never judge or humiliate them.

3. **USE STORIES AND WORD PICTURES** - People learn well when a truth is set in a story or an illustration that is familiar to them.

4. **POSE QUESTIONS** - Questions help learners discover truths for themselves, and think about how to solve the problems that the teacher poses.

5. **ENTER INTO DIALOGUE** - Talking together about a truth gives both the teacher and the learner the opportunity to explore what they really think. It gives the teacher the chance to identify and correct any misinformation and finally, it helps the learner remember the truth better.
6. **RESPOND TO QUESTIONS** - Adults learn best when the truth to be learned deals with pressing questions they have.

7. **ADDRESS FELT NEEDS** - Adults learn best when the teacher addresses their immediate problems.

8. **PROVIDE AFFIRMATION** - Teachers need to encourage learners in even their smallest efforts to understand and change.

9. **OFFER CORRECTION** - Learners will not grow and change unless we confront them gently but kindly with the truth and point out the ways in which they are deceived in their thinking.

10. **ENCOURAGE APPLICATION** - Adults usually want to use what they learn immediately. In order for them to begin to practice a truth in their life we must help them do two things:

    » **A chance to think about how that truth can be practiced in their everyday lives.**

    » **Encouragement to actually practice the truth with the support of the facilitator and the group.**

    » **Time to talk about what happened after they have tried to practice the truth**
Introduction to Lessons

Welcome to our first session together! We are happy you can join us. Before we begin the first lesson we will spend some time with introductions, hearing what you expect to learn during our time together, and planning for breaks and meals.

*Take time to do introductions with everyone.*

Introduction to World Relief

World Relief is a Christian Organization whose mission is to empower the local Church to serve the most vulnerable. Through its vision, WR in community with the local church sees the most vulnerable people transformed physically spiritually and economically.

At WR, we believe that obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22) demands that ministry is seamlessly integrated on the spiritual, physical, emotional and social wellbeing of those Christ is calling us to minister to - which is His call to His church to Integral Mission.

Expectations for the Lessons

Today is the first day of our meetings together. We will talk about many different ideas and we will discuss many different actions we can take based on those ideas. Putting ideas into practice will be a big part of our learning. We learn best when we learn by doing.

Together we will learn more about loving God, loving our neighbors and putting that love into action.

We will see how loving God and loving our neighbors can help us to work against poverty. We will look at our own needs, and then we will think about the needs of our neighbors and our communities.

It is important to know what you hope to learn from these lessons.

*Write their answers on the flipchart using one or two words.*

- What are your expectations for our time together?

*After you have written their thoughts, read the expectations one by one and say which expectations will be met in the lessons and which ones you will not address.*
We have 10 lessons to cover during our time together. Some lessons are longer so we need you to come on time so that we can end on time. It will be important to get your questions answered. There are no wrong questions. As you talk, we expect you to show respect to each other.

*Explain when the lesson will begin and end and what the plan is for breaks and meals. Ask for a volunteer to be the timekeeper.*
LESSON 1 - UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

Notes to Facilitator

The purpose of the first lesson is to introduce participants to some of the main ideas in this curriculum. This session contains an overview of development and how we can grow and develop into the people God intended us to be.

It is very important to help people feel welcome. It is also very important that people enjoy themselves. As the facilitator, you have two goals: to help the participants learn well and to help them feel that they want to come back for the next sessions.

You will need to plan for one break during the lesson.

Learning Objectives

- Define “Development.”
- Discuss development of the whole person and apply it to everyday life.
- Examine God’s call to love Him and love our neighbor.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: A small seed, preferably one that grows into a large plant or tree - whatever seeds you have in your region. An extra chair or bench. Flipchart paper and markers for the facilitator to use. Write out Luke 10:27 on a flipchart page.

HELPFUL HINT

You may change the names in the stories to local names. Be sure to plan for a 15 minute break somewhere in the middle of the lesson. A break will help the participants to feel refreshed and pay better attention to the last half of the lesson. Be sure to practice the development game ahead of time, so you are ready to lead it with the group.
Read the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

It is in our nature to grow and develop. We want to see our families and our communities grow too. To further illustrate the growth process, I have brought with me a small seed. *Show the seed.*

**Encourage participants to be creative and share ideas.**

- **This seed is very small, but what do you imagine it will be when it is grown? What sort of results would you hope for?**
  
  » Possible answers: A large plant or tree. One that bears fruit.

*Again, encourage them to share ideas and write them on the flip chart.*

- **Now, think about your family. What sort of results, or fruit do you hope for in your family? Imagine a time in the future when your life is better than it is now. What will it be like?**
  
  » Possible answers: Education for their children, nice home, money, needs met, happiness.

We have many dreams for the future. It is good to have dreams - they give us hope.

One reason for meeting together is to work towards reaching those dreams. We will learn about how we can overcome difficulties and change our lives.

We will also learn how we can work with our churches and communities to help others too.

Let us return to the seed. *Hold up the seed again.*

- **What does this seed need to grow into a tree?**
  
  » Possible answers: Soil, sun and water, protection, weeding.

- **What changes happen as this seed grows into a tree?**
  
  » Possible answers: It sprouts, then puts out shoots that grow into roots and seedlings, a trunk and branches form and eventually it will produce fruit.
It takes time for a seed to become a tree and to produce fruits. It is a process.

Our “seeds” are our hopes for what will happen in the future. We want those seeds to grow and become real in our lives and in our communities.

In this lesson we will talk about how people and communities grow. We will use a special word for how growth happens. This word is “development.”

(main idea) Development means to grow and change over time.

**Developing the Whole Person**

TIME
15 MIN

Write their answers to these questions on the flipchart.

- **What does a person need to simply stay alive?**
  
  » Possible answers: Food, water, shelter, safety, air.

- **What does a person need to have the best possible life?**
  
  » Possible answers: Love, friends, family, church and God, education, health care, job, peace of mind, money, house, clothes.

- **Who does the Bible say makes things to grow?**
  
  » Possible answers: God helps us to grow. He makes our bodies grow, plants and animals to grow.

God also helps us grow in our thinking and what we believe.

*Ask someone to read I Corinthians 3:6-8:*

◊ “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”

We can see that all of us need many different things to grow into the person God intends us to be. We can group these needs into different areas.

*Hold up your hand and count on your finger as you list these areas.*

- **Physical needs** are the needs of our bodies. This includes things like food, proper medicine, shelter, clean water, and safety. Our bodies need all of these things to be physically well.

- **Mental needs** are the needs of our minds. This includes our abilities to think, learn, and solve problems. Mental needs include education in school. It also includes learning outside of school - learning from our experiences and people in everyday life.

- **Emotional needs** are the needs of our hearts. Here we talk about the feeling part of us.
The calls it the “heart”. All of us need to experience love in our lives. All of us need to have hope and joy. When we are sad or angry, we need to be able to deal with these feelings in a helpful way. Emotional needs also include feeling good about who we are as individuals - having a positive view of oneself.

Social needs are the needs to have relationships with other people. We need to give and receive love and kindness. We need others to support us and care for us, and we also help others by caring for them, too. This includes relationships with our families, friends, neighbors and the community.

We also have the need to make healthy choices. Unlike animals, people have a greater ability to think carefully before they act, to make choices, to plan ahead and determine how they will live their lives in the future. This includes making a choice and taking action to carry out the decision.

Draw a picture of a hand on flip chart.

To help us remember this, we can use our HAND. Everyone hold up your hand! Each finger can remind us of one of the areas of development.

Encourage the entire group to participate by holding up their hands and calling out each area of development counting off on their fingers.

• What are the five different parts of our lives? I will write them on the flip chart as your say them.

Label each finger and the thumb: Physical, mental, emotional, social, choices.

Just as all of our fingers are part of one hand, these areas of development belong to each person. All people - men and women, babies and old people - have within us these areas of need.

Hold up your hand and touch the palm of your hand.

Holding it all together is our need for God and growing in the knowledge of Him.

• What do you think the palm represents?
  » Possible answer: The spiritual area of our life.

Every other area of development is touched and controlled by our spiritual life.

Show how the fingers are all connected to the palm of your hand.

Spiritual development includes knowing and loving God with every area of our life and having a relationship with Him. This can only happen by believing that he sent his son, Jesus, to die for our sins, and asking God to forgive us and make us his child.

Once we have Jesus in our lives, we can pray (talk to him), worship him and learn about him from reading the Bible and grow spiritually. World Relief works to empower churches because it is only the church that can address the spiritual growth of a person.

Just as the fingers are all part of the hand, being a whole person means that every area of our life is spiritual. Label the whole hand “spiritual.”
• Everyone lift up your hand. Without looking at the picture, who can name all the areas of development?

  » Let participants try to do it, using their fingers for physical, mental, emotional, social, and making choices and their palm for spiritual.

God wants us to grow spiritually as well as in these other five areas. The spiritual part of us is like a light switch. When the switch is on it lights up the whole room. As we grow spiritually it has a positive influence on the other areas of growth.

• How do we develop spiritually?

  » Possible answer: By having a relationship with Jesus Christ.

• What questions or thoughts do you have about what we have said so far?

  » Listen to comments and answer questions from participants, if there are any.

**MAIN IDEA:** Every person has the need for the physical development, mental development, emotional development, social development and development of healthy choices. And God wants us to grow spiritually by getting to know him.

**Application Through Stories: Mr. Mafu**

Break the large group into smaller groups. Then read the story to the large group and let people discuss the questions that follow in their smaller groups.

Mr. Mafu had a very nice bicycle. As he rode to work one day, the bicycle hit a rock. Mr. Mafu fell off and broke his leg. His neighbor, a good friend, took him home and the family called the traditional healer. The healer said the neighbor brought this evil on him. The healer also advised him to go to the hospital. At the hospital the doctor put his leg into plaster of Paris. In the hospital Mr. Mafu kept saying, “It shows you cannot trust your best friend!” He thought of bad things he could do to his neighbor to pay back the evil he had done. When he returned to the hospital to have the plaster removed, he met a pastor there. He told the pastor his story and the pastor said he should love his neighbor and even if that neighbor did curse him, he should bless him instead. When the plaster came off, Mr. Mafu was so glad the leg was healed. But he decided that he would still do something bad to hurt his neighbor.
• Who can summarize this story in their own words?
  » Allow participants to summarize the story in their own words.

Allow 3 minutes to discuss the next question in pairs.

Turn to the person sitting next to you and discuss this question:

• Was Mr. Mafu healed? Why or why not?
  » Possible answers: Healed because his leg was healed. Not healed because he planned to hurt his neighbor.

Mr. Mafu was healed physically, yes. But the social areas and the spiritual areas in his life still needed to be healed.

Ask the large group:

• Does this happen in our communities? If so, why?
  » Possible answers: Fear, lack of trust, ignorance, beliefs that explain trouble.

• What lessons have we learned from Mr. Mafu?
  » Possible answers: Beliefs in evil lead to evil actions.

In our story, Mr. Mafu was not healthy, even after his leg was healed. He was still angry and resentful, and was treating his neighbor badly. He will not be truly healed until he deals with these problems.

Growing well in all areas of our lives makes us more complete as people. And whole, complete people can contribute to healthy communities. In healthy communities everyone grows individually and together.

Growing and developing as children of God, is not just about things, the physical. It is about meeting the different needs of the whole person. God created us with the need to develop in the physical, mental, emotional, and social areas and the need to learn how to make good choices.

God’s desire is that every human being attains well being in all those areas. Each of these areas of our development connects to one another.

If one part improves, there will also be positive benefit to another part.

• If a child is well fed, what other areas of that child’s life is affected?
  » Possible answers: Mental, the child can pay attention and learn better.

• If a woman has a close relationship with God, what other areas of her life are affected?
  » Possible answers: Emotional - she is hopeful because she knows God loves her, she sees herself as worthy and special because she is made in the image of God.

If one area suffers, other areas of development will also suffer.

• If a child suffers physically and is hungry, what other area of his life will suffer?
  » Possible answers: Mental - it is hard to think and do well in school.

• If a woman suffers physically with HIV, in what other areas of her life will she suffer?
  » Possible answers: social - she may be shunned, emotionally - she will be discouraged.
**MAIN IDEA:** God has created us to be whole and complete people, with the areas of development linked together in our lives.

**Application Activity: Group Discussion**

**TIME 15 MIN**

*In the large group:*

God created Adam and Eve as whole, complete people. When they sinned, brokenness entered the human race and all the world. Without salvation through Jesus, we are like Adam and Eve after the fall. We are broken and need to become whole again. This is God's intention for us.

*Ask someone to read Luke 10: 25-27. Turn to verse 27 written on the flipchart paper.*

◊ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

◊ "What is written in the Law?" He replied. "How do you read it?"

◊ He answered, "‘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, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’"

◊ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

Here we see Jesus talking about the development of the whole person.

*Ask one of the participants to underline the key areas of development. Verify with the whole group.*

- What areas of development does Jesus mention?
  - Possible answers: Emotional (love God with your heart); mental (with your mind); physical (with your strength); social (love your neighbor); choices (choosing to do what God says).

In verse 27, we see the key areas of development reflected in our model of the hand.

*List each area of the verses on your fingers - heart (emotional), soul (choices), mind (mental), strength (physical), and social (your neighbor).*

- What does this tell you about how we should love God?
  - Possible answers: We are to love God with every part of our life. All areas of our lives are spiritual - they serve God or they don't.

- What does this verse, tell you about how God sees our development?
  - Possible answers: God views each of us as a whole person, with every area of our life important. All aspects of our growth should work together to love him.
The expert asked for only the most important commandment.

- **Why do you think Jesus answered him with TWO most important commandments?**
  - *Listen to responses. Affirm them by saying:*

So, these are the two main things God wants from us. In other words, we cannot separate loving God from loving our neighbors.

*To close out this section read, I John 4:20.*

- “Anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

*Hold up your hand to make this next point.*

To remind us of how important it is to develop all areas of our lives, we can also think of our hand picture. Just as all areas of our lives are to work together to serve God, we can remember to use all aspects of ourselves to help others.

*Hold up your smallest finger to make this next point.*

If we lift only one finger to help someone we will not do much for them! We must use all of ourselves if we will accomplish something.

*Raise your open hands and encourage others to do so.*

- **What questions or comments do you have about what we have discussed so far?**
  - *Listen to comments and questions and review a bit more if it is needed.*

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**MAIN IDEA:** All five areas of development have a connection back to God. God wants us to love and serve Him with our whole life.

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**Application Activity: Development Game**

To help us better understand that our needs are related to one another, we will do an activity. *Ask for 5 volunteers. Have them stand next to one another in the front of the main group. Also have one empty chair or bench up front near the volunteers.*

- *Say to the volunteers:* All of you together represent one person. You represent a young man named Peter. Each of you represents a different part of Peter’s areas of development.
- *Say to one volunteer:* You represent Peter’s physical health. He suffers from poor nutrition and is sick a lot. To represent this, you must keep one arm behind your back.
Say to the next volunteer: You represent Peter’s mental wellbeing - his mind. He has had few opportunities to learn and cannot read. To represent this problem in his life, you can only use your left leg.

Say to the next volunteer: You represent Peter’s emotional health. Peter is very sad and angry all the time. He has no hope for the future - he believes that a man like him will never amount to anything. To represent this, you must only use your right leg.

Say to the next volunteer: You represent Peter’s social wellbeing. He works very hard and spends no time with friends or family. He is very lonely. To represent this, you cannot move at all - you are paralyzed.

Say to the next volunteer: You represent Peter’s need to make healthy choices. Peter feels very helpless. He does not think his life can make a difference. To represent this, you must keep both arms behind your back.

Say to the volunteers: In addition, all of you are part of Peter’s spiritual wellbeing. Peter does not follow Christ with his life. To represent this, all of you must also close your eyes. Put a blindfold on each person.

Say to all: Remember you are all ONE person. And Peter must try to get through his daily life. To represent this, you must all work together to move this chair across the room.

Let them try. Remind them that they must work together since they are one person. It will be very difficult for them.

If the group fails call them all back to where they started. Say, “Let’s try it again. This time, you are still one person, Peter. BUT, now imagine these needs have been met in Peter’s life. He has had good development in his physical, mental, emotional and social health and in making healthy choices. He loves God with his whole life. You have no handicaps this time. You can use all arms, legs, and eyes. This time, try to move the chair.”

Let them try. This time it will be very easy. Thank the volunteers for helping with the activity. Then ask the group:

- How was it when they tried to move the chair the first time?
- And the second time, how was it?
- What does this teach us about the importance of meeting all areas of need in a person’s life?
  » Possible answers: Unmet needs hold them back. All areas must work together with the others. If there is a problem in one area, it will slow the other areas down.

Application Through Stories: Meet Sarah and Her Family

God’s intention for us is to grow. In John 10:10, Jesus tells us, “I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” Abundant life means we are improving in each area of our life. We are well in each area - when our physical, mental, emotional and social needs and needs to make good choices are being met.
Our lives might not always seem abundant. Sometimes it is easier to see our problems than our strengths. But, if we take a close look at our lives, all of us can find strengths. We can find good points about ourselves and positive aspects to our situations. It is important to name our strengths, so we can build on them.

Listen to the following story about Sarah and John. While you listen, think about this family’s needs in all the areas of development - their physical, mental, emotional, and social needs and their need for healthy choices.

Sarah is a woman who lives in a rural village. She is married to John. Sarah and John have 5 children and own their house. The house is small, and often filled with children’s laughter. Sarah works hard each day in their small plot of land, growing crops to feed her family. She sells the surplus at the market. With the profit she pays for her children’s school fees. She can only afford to send the two boys to school.

Sarah came from a family of many children; they were often hungry. After she finished grade 3, she had to stay home, to help in the garden and care for the younger children, so Sarah did not learn to read or write. She believes that she is not smart enough to make good decisions, so she often seeks advice from others.

John works as a day laborer. Because he has a weak leg, he is always the last one chosen for a job. Some years ago John was accused of cursing someone from a neighboring village. The men from that family beat him badly and now he has a bad limp. There is still anger between their families.

In general, Sarah and John get along well with their neighbors. But Sarah thinks they may look down on them because they are poor. Sarah is happy that John is a faithful husband who works hard. They always talk about their problems together.

Sarah and John do not attend any church regularly but she feels happy and less worried when she is there.

Today, Sarah is working in her garden. The sun is very hot and the ground is hard. She squints to look at clouds on the horizon. “Will it rain?” She wonders. She is very worried that her family will be hungry if the crop does not do well.

Think about this family’s situation in relation to the areas of development.

• Which of their problems relate to their physical needs?
  » Possible answers: Not enough food, husband has a disability, not earning enough money to send all children to school.

• Which of their problems relate to their mental needs?
Possible answers: Sarah has little education, cannot read or write, not all children are in school.

• Which of their problems relate to their social needs?
  » Possible answers: Fighting with family from neighboring village, discrimination because of their lack of resources.

• Which of their problems relate to their emotional needs?
  » Possible answers: They worry, Sarah worries about feeding and educating their family; John does not feel safe, he is worried about the family that beat him.

• How does Sarah’s situation relate to her need to make good choices?
  » Possible answers: Sarah believes she cannot make good choices, seeks others for advice.

• How does Sarah’s situation reflect her spiritual needs?
  » Possible answers: Sarah does not know God.

Now think about the strengths of Sarah’s family.

• What physical strengths do you see?
  » Possible answers: Have their own house, have their own land, hard workers.

• What mental strengths do you see?
  » Possible answers: Two children are in school.

• What social strengths do you see?
  » Possible answers: They get along well with their neighbors. Sarah and John talk about their problems together.

• What emotional strengths do you see?
  » Possible answers: They are happy together as a family.

• What good choices have John and Sarah made?
  » Possible answers: Sending their children to school; John has chosen to be faithful to Sarah.

• What spiritual strengths do you see in Sarah?
  » Possible answers: She has an awareness of God, she is happy when she does attend church.

We will hear more about Sarah and John and their family as we go through these lessons.

MAIN IDEA: God has given us all strengths. But we also have needs that hinder our development in every area of our lives.
We learned some very important things in this lesson. Let’s review.

- **What does it mean to “develop”**?
  » Possible answers: To grow and improve over time just as a seed grows over time.

- **What different areas of a person need to grow and develop for us to be whole and complete?**
  » Possible answer: Physical, mental, emotional, social, the need to make good choices and the spiritual areas.

- **What does God ask us to do with each of these areas of our lives?**
  » Possible answers: To love Him with every part of our beings and love our neighbors.

**Reflection For Action**

After every lesson, we will ask you to think about a question in preparation for the next lesson. This question will help us practice what we learn. After we finish here, think about the five areas of need that we covered in today’s lesson.

*Hold up your open hand when you say this to emphasize their recall.*

Then, consider your own life. **Name one strength you have in each area of development.** If you can name more strengths, that is great! Next time we meet, you can share your thoughts.

**Closing and Prayer**
The purpose of the lesson is for people to think of poverty in a new way. This lesson will also help participants understand what the Bible says about poverty. Just as in Lesson 1, it is very important that people feel free to speak openly and honestly. We want people to enjoy themselves as they are learning.

**Learning Objectives**

- Identify some of the characteristics of very poor and vulnerable people in the community.
- Explore what God says about the origin of poverty.
- Discuss how broken relationships are part of the cycle of poverty.
- Discover how God’s plan to rescue people and the world from sin can change our own lives for the better.

**MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION:** Flipchart paper/markers or blackboard/chalk for the facilitator. Write out the following questions on a flipchart page:

- How did sin break the good relationship between people and God?
- How did sin break the good relationship between people (Adam and Eve)?
- How did sin break the good relationships between people and the created world around them?

Bible application activity: Have a sheet of flipchart paper and a marker for each of the 4-5 small groups. Write out on the flipchart the following verses, one per page: John 3:16; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 2:8,9, John 1:12.

**HELPFUL HINT**

This lesson offers a lot of information. It will make learning more effective for participants to discuss concepts together in small groups of 4 or 5 people. Practice telling the stories in an interesting way, with different tones of voice, so it is easy for people to engage with the story. Be ready with examples of different levels of poverty from the local contexts so that participants can see that there are some people in the community in extreme need. Adapt all examples to your local context.
Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson. Last time we learned a term that we will use during these lessons.

- **What does the word “development” mean?**
  » Possible answers: To grow, the process of growing or improving.

- **What are the areas of a person’s life that need to develop and grow?**
  » Encourage participants to use their hand to help them remember.
  » Possible answers: Physical, mental, emotional, social, making choices, and the spiritual.

- **What areas of a person’s life are controlled by the spiritual?**
  » Possible answers: ALL parts of our life are spiritual. God created us this way and wants us to love him with our whole life.

In Lesson 1 for your Reflection for Action assignment, I asked you to identify your strengths in each of the areas of development. Turn to the person next to you and take a few minutes to share the strengths you each identified.

Allow 3 minutes for the pairs to discuss. Then gather everyone’s attention again.

We can find strengths in ourselves if we look for them. It might be surprising how many strengths or positives we can find in our lives.

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**Thinking About Poverty**

We all have strengths; we also have needs and challenges in many areas of our lives. Maybe we lack enough food and shelter. Maybe we struggle to afford schooling for our children. Maybe we have strained relationships with some of our family members.

During these lessons, we want to consider our needs. But we also want to consider people in our communities whose needs are even greater than our own, people who have even less than we do. Let us take a closer look this.

Close your eyes for a few moments. Think of someone in your community who lacks the basic resources they need to survive. Someone you consider to be very poor. Think of what makes this person vulnerable in terms of their health, their welfare and their relationships.

Imagine this person is standing before you. Describe his or her appearance. What happens in a typical day? What is their family like? What problems do they face in the five areas of development that we discussed last time?

Give the group a minute to think.
Why is there poverty in our world? To understand the root causes of poverty, we must go back to the very beginning. When God created the world it was not with poverty and suffering. His plan was good and for our benefit. God’s original plan for mankind and our relationships are found in the Bible in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

In the beginning, God made the heavens and earth. He made land and sea, night and day, and all the animals.

- **What did God say after he created each thing?**
  - Possible answer: God said that it was good.

- **How did God create man and woman?**
  - Possible answer: God made man and woman in His own image.

God created Adam first. He saw it was not good for man to be alone, God created woman, Eve. Eve was also made in the image of God.

- **How did Adam and Eve relate to each other?**
  - Possible answers: They were partners. Both Adam and Eve needed each other.

Both Adam and Eve were blessed by God. He told them to “be fruitful and multiply.”

People and the created world also needed each other. God gave Adam and Eve the Garden of Eden for food. Their job was to work the land and protect the garden.
• How would you describe God’s relationships with Adam and Eve in the garden?
  » Possible answers: God had a close relationship with Adam and Eve. They walked and talked together.

God would walk in the garden with them. And he would talk with Adam and Eve face to face.

• In the creation story, what different types of relationships do you see?
  » Possible answers: Between people and God; between people, between people and the world God created.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s physical needs?
  » Possible answers: Plants for food, safety, shelter.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s emotional needs?
  » Possible answers: Created by and loved by God.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s social needs?
  » Possible answers: They needed each other, they were partners.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s mental needs?
  » Possible answers: God gave tasks that used their mind and creativity - tending the garden and naming the animals.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s need to make good choices?
  » Possible answers: He gave them the ability to make good choices, He gave them guidelines.

• How did God provide for Adam and Eve’s spiritual needs?
  » Possible answers: They had close relationships with God and they talked to Him face to face.

As we can see, healthy relationships helped meet all areas of Adam and Eve’s needs. Then and now, God wants us to know and love Him. He wants us get along well with others and to care for the world He created.

**MAIN IDEA:** God’s plan is for us to have strong relationships with Him, with one another and with the world he created.
Creation is the story of perfect relationships between God and people, people with each other, and people with the world God created.

But we know that is not what our world is like today.

Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve believed the lies of Satan in the form of a snake instead of God’s truth, and they chose to disobey God. Their sin broke their good relationship with God, and with each other as well as with the world God created.

Life was much more difficult after that, and their needs were not met. Along with sin, suffering and poverty entered the world.

Genesis Chapter 3 tells us the story of the fall of mankind:

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden. God told them to enjoy everything, except they were not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

• What did the snake - which really was Satan - tell Eve?
  » Possible answer: She would not die if she ate fruit from the tree and Satan tempted her to eat it.

• Did Eve and Adam believe the lie of Satan? What did they do?
  » Possible answer: Yes. They believed Satan’s lie and disobeyed God, they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

• What did they do after that?
  » Possible answer: After they ate, they became ashamed of themselves because they saw they were naked and they hid from God.

They hid from God, but God knew they had disobeyed him and had sinned. Adam tried to blame Eve, and Eve tried to blame the snake.

• What were the consequences of their sin?
  » Possible answer: Life was much more difficult for them.

God told Adam that instead of the enjoyable work he was doing in the garden, his work would become hard. Despite Adam’s efforts, the ground would not produce much food. Instead of much fruit, the ground would produce thorns.

• What did God tell Eve?
  » Possible answer: That childbirth would be painful and dangerous.

In addition to having difficulties in childbirth, God also told Eve that there would be conflicts in her relationship with Adam.

Adam and Eve were forced to leave the garden. As time passed, they had two sons.
Their son Abel kept herds of animals and Cain grew crops in the fields. When Abel’s sacrifice was accepted by God but Cain’s wasn’t, Cain became angry and jealous.

- **What did Cain do?**
  - Possible answer: He killed his brother.

And so, death also entered the world.

The story of the fall of mankind into sin teaches us that broken relationships are a major cause of poverty and suffering - a broken relationship with God, broken relationships with each other, and broken relationships with the world that God created.

Form small groups of 4-5 people to discuss the following questions:

*Post the following questions on a flipchart page. Allow 5 minutes for them to discuss the questions then debrief with the large group bringing out the key points if necessary.*

- **How did sin break the good relationship between people and God?**
  - Possible answers: They lost the close relationship with God. They were separated from Him.

- **How did sin break the good relationship between people (Adam and Eve) and within themselves?**
  - Possible answers: A broken relationship with God also broke their relationship with each other. There was conflict between Adam and Eve. They blamed each other. They were ashamed of themselves. There were problems in their family. Cain murdered Abel out of anger and jealousy.

- **How did sin break the good relationships between people and the created world around them?**
  - Possible answers: The soil no longer produced much food to eat. Work became hard, not enjoyable. They could not stay in safety in the garden. Childbirth became much more dangerous and painful. All of Life became much harder - when before all their needs were met in the garden.

*Summarize by saying:*

God’s plan was for peaceful, strong relationships. Sin broke these good relationships. Even though they were sinful, Adam and Eve and their children still needed God. The image of God inside them still remained but it was damaged by their rebelliousness against God.

**MAIN IDEA:** Sin breaks relationships between God, between people and with the world around them.
By understanding how broken relationships cause hardship and poverty, we realize poverty is more than just a lack of things. Broken relationships make life much harder and increase our poverty in many ways.

**Large group discussion:**

- **Think of some examples of broken relationships between people that can lead to poverty and suffering.**
  
  » Possible answers: Fighting and war; corrupt leaders who do not help their people; violence in families; abuse of children, husbands who leave their wives and children; cheating to make more money; the powerful taking advantage of the weak.

- **Give some examples of broken relationships with God that causes suffering.**
  
  » Possible answers: Not knowing God’s love, not praying to him for help, not trusting God or believing his promises and truths, worshiping other gods and spirits with fear; paying traditional healers for help, lacking hope, becoming bitter and not trying to improve.

- **Give some examples how people began to suffer because the world around them was damaged by their sin.**
  
  » Possible answers: Crops failing, unclean water that causes diseases, standing water that increases mosquitoes, natural disasters, like floods or earthquakes, dumping trash and polluting the environment, cutting down too many trees.

**MAIN IDEA:** Broken relationships contribute to poverty.

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**Application Through Stories:**

**Sarah’s Story - A Very Sad Day**

TIME 15 MIN

Do you remember Sarah and her family from the last lesson? Listen to another story about them and think of all the ways poverty is affecting this family. Pay attention to the different types of relationships in the story.

*Tell the story to the large group:*

Today was the saddest day of Sarah’s life. Today her baby died.

Two days ago, her baby son had a high fever and would not stop crying. Sarah was so afraid. On the advice
of her grandmother, Sarah took her baby to the healer. She paid him with the money she had saved for school fees, and he performed a ritual for her son, and said: “Tomorrow your son will be back to normal.”

But the next day, he was still burning with fever and her son was very still. Sarah begged a neighbor to loan her money for transport. Still, she had to wait a long time for the taxi. Several hours passed before they reached the health clinic. Soon after she arrived, the baby died. “Your baby died from malaria caused by mosquito bites.” “You stupid village woman,” the nurse shouted. “Why did you wait so long to come to the clinic? If your baby had treatment sooner, he may not have died.”

Tears ran down Sarah’s cheeks as she remembered her baby’s face. She felt helpless and hopeless and alone. “God, where are you when I need you?” She cried.

Allow for a moment of silence after this story. Then say:

This is a sad story. Maybe it is similar to the story of someone you know. Maybe people in this room have experienced tragedies like this.

- **How did poverty affect Sarah when her baby was sick?**
  - Possible answers: Lack of money to go to the clinic, lack of transportation, and lack of knowledge about what to do.

- **What were some of the reasons Sarah did not take her baby to the clinic right away?**
  - Possible answers: She took the advice of her grandmother, she went to the traditional healer instead, she did not know her son needed immediate treatment at the clinic, the clinic was far away.

Think about some of the broken relationships in this story.

- **In what ways is the relationship broken between God and Sarah:**
  - Possible answers: Sarah used traditional healing rituals. Sarah doubted God’s love and feels abandoned by Him. She feels hopeless.

- **How does the story show broken relationships with others?**
  - Possible answers: The clinic nurse blamed her and was unkind in her grief. Her child has died.

- **How does this story show a broken relationship between mankind and creation?**
  - Possible answers: Her village had a problem with mosquitoes that caused Sarah’s baby to get malaria and die. The land does not produce much food.

- **How is this story similar to some people’s situations in our own community?**
  - Listen to participants’ thoughts and ideas.
In this story, Sarah felt very helpless and hopeless. But we know that Sarah - and others like her - are not forgotten by God. After Adam and Eve sinned God began his great work of bringing people and his broken world back into a loving and healthy relationship with Him.

**Main Idea:** Poverty is complicated. Poverty has many causes and those causes create great suffering.

**Biblical Application:** God’s Rescue Plan for the World

TIME 15 MIN

In this story, Sarah felt very helpless and hopeless. But we know that Sarah - and others like her - are not forgotten by God. After Adam and Eve sinned God began his great work of bringing people and his broken world back into a loving and healthy relationship with Him.

- **What is it that Sarah needs to know and we need to remember?**
  - Ask someone to read John 3:16.
  
  
  ◊ “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

- **What can Sarah learn about God from this verse?**
  - Possible answers: That He loves her so much He gave His only son, Jesus, to die for her. If she will believe that God did this for her, God will give her eternal life.

  But that isn’t the whole story. After Jesus, God’s son, died on the cross, God raised him from the dead on the third day.

  We could have no hope of eternal life if God had not raised Jesus from the dead. He is alive today and calling us to repent of our sins, in order to restore our relationship with Him.

**Main Idea:** A relationship with God is not possible without the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

- **Can we earn a relationship with God through our own efforts? What does God’s word say?**
  - Ask someone to read Ephesians 2:8, 9.
  
  ◊ “For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”

- **Then how does someone have a relationship with God? What does God’s word say?**
  - Ask someone to read 1 John 1:9.
Let’s review what we learned today.

- **In what ways can a person be poor?**
  
  » Possible answers:
  
  - Physically: Lacking resources, sickness, disease.
  - Socially: Through broken relationships with others.

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**MAIN IDEA:** You cannot become God’s child by earning it. Becoming God’s child is a gift from God once we have repented of our sins and received Jesus into our life.

If appropriate you may want to ask if anyone who is not yet God’s child would like to invite Jesus into their hearts now. You can have them pray this prayer with you:

» I confess to God that I am a sinner and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross and was raised for my justification. I do now receive and confess Him as my personal Savior. Amen.

If anyone wanted to become God’s child and prayed that prayer with you, invite them to talk with you after the lesson about how to start living this life with God.

Many of us here have received and believed in Him and now have eternal life with God. And now as Christians, we have the honor to belong to the church that God has set up to do His will in this world. God has given us an important job to do. He wants us to help people know Him and what He has done for them.

He also expects us, with His help, to begin to restore this world into what He intended it to be. As His children we can begin to help the sick, protect our forests, care for the widows and orphans and do many other things that God is calling us to do.
- Emotionally: By not trusting God or believing His truths and promises.
- Mentally: By not having an education or responsibilities.
- Making good choices: By choosing harmful beliefs over God’s truths.
- Spiritually: By denying God and worshiping other gods, following harmful beliefs.

**• How can broken relationships lead to poverty?**

» Possible answers:
  - With God: By believing the lies of Satan instead of God’s truths; following harmful beliefs and practicing rituals.
  - With others: Fighting and war; corruption, husbands who leave their wives and children; being cheated by powerful people.
  - With God’s creation: Polluting the created world around us, cutting down all the trees.

**• How does God’s Rescue Plan restore broken relationships?**

» Possible answers: By confessing our sins to Him and believing and accepting God’s gift of salvation through the sacrifice of His son Jesus, we can have a relationship with God; by following the example of Jesus we can have good relationships with others and respect God’s creation.

**Reflection For Action**

We talked a lot about poverty today, how it first came about. People disobeyed God and turned their back on Him. Life became hard and people became poor. We also saw how God loves His world and the people in it, and sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sinful ways.

For further reflection, think about what God did and how He wants you to believe in what Jesus did for you.

- If you believe in Jesus, thank Him for saving you and ask Him to show you how you can join in loving and caring for the people around you.
- If you have not yet believed that Jesus died in your place for your sin, speak to the pastor or one of the church leaders. Ask them to show you how to pray for God’s forgiveness for your sins and become one of God’s own children.

**Closing and Prayer**

*Thank everyone for participating!*
The purpose of the lesson is to help participants better understand God’s compassion for the poor and to reflect on how God’s church can show compassion to people in need in their communities. Just as in Lesson 2, it is very important that people feel free to share their thoughts openly and honestly. We want people to enjoy themselves as they are learning.

**Learning Objectives**

- Consider God’s compassion for the poor and what God thinks of those who oppress the poor.
- Express why the church should help people in need.
- Describe the characteristics of the most vulnerable in our communities.

**MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION:** Flipchart paper and markers for the facilitator. For the Bible application activity write out the following Bible verses on separate pieces of paper: Isaiah 58:6-7, Matthew 25:34-40, James 2:15-17.

This lesson offers a lot of information. During discussions, allow participants to reflect and ask questions. It will also make learning more effective if participants can discuss concepts together in small groups; use pairs or small groups of 4-5 people where indicated.
Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

We discussed how sin and suffering came into the world when Adam and Eve intentionally disobeyed God.

- **What happened to their relationships with God and each other when Adam and Eve sinned?**
  » Possible answers: Their relationship with God was broken. They began to experience conflict and hate in their relationships with each other.

- **What happened to the relationship between Adam and Eve and the world God created after they sinned?**
  » Possible answers: The land produced less, growing food became difficult. Life was hard. Disease and death became common.

We talked about how these broken relationships increase suffering. We also discussed the different ways a person can be poor.

- **In addition to lacking resources, what are other ways a person can be poor?**
  » Possible answers:
    - Physically: Sickness, disease.
    - Socially: Through broken relationships with others.
    - Emotionally: By not trusting God or believing his truths and promises, being filled with fear.
    - Mentally: By not having an education or responsibilities.
    - Making Good Choices: By choosing harmful beliefs over God’s truths.
    - Spiritually: By denying God and worshipping other gods, following harmful beliefs.

When God created men and women, He made them in his very own image. When Adam and Eve disobeyed their maker, the image of God in them was distorted but not destroyed. God still loved the world and the people in it. Ever since human beings and all of creation were altered by sin, God has been at work restoring creation and reconciling people to Himself.

In Colossians 1:19, we read that God’s intention through Jesus Christ is “to reconcile to Himself all things whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

We called this God’s “rescue plan” for us.

- **Because God loves us, and wants to restore the broken relationship caused by sin, what did he do for us?**
  » Possible answers: God sent his son Jesus to die for our sins so that he could restore his relationship with us. Jesus rose from the dead; he is alive today!
Who can summarize what happened to Sarah’s baby in the story in the last lesson?

» Possible answers: Sarah’s baby was sick; she took him to the traditional healer, then to the clinic but the baby died. Sarah thought God had abandoned her. She was very sad.

Let’s hear another story about Sarah:

Sarah sat under a tree shelling beans; she was deep in thought. “What could the clinic workers have done to save my son?” She wondered.

That evening, Sarah’s noticed her four-year-old daughter, Annie, did not eat the food Sarah had prepared for her. The next morning Annie’s skin felt hot when Sarah washed and dressed her. She shared her worry with her husband John.

“Another sick child! Is our family cursed?” Shouted John. “And we have no money for the healer.”

But Sarah remembered what the nurse had said to her, how her son had died because she did not bring him to the clinic sooner. She borrowed money for transport from her sister Grace and took Annie to the clinic without delay.

At the clinic, the same nurse who had scolded Sarah two weeks earlier examined Annie. “It is good that you brought your daughter to the clinic, “ the nurse said to Sarah. “She has symptoms of malaria, but I can give her medicine that will help her.” The nurse provided the medicine and instructed Sarah on how to care for her at home.

As Sarah walked back home carrying Annie on her back, she felt happy for the first time since her infant son had died. In spite of not having much education, she knew she had done a good thing for Annie.

Why was the outcome different for Sarah’s daughter Annie, than for her baby son who died?
Possible answers: Annie recovered because Sarah made a good decision and acted quickly. She realized that going to the traditional healer didn’t help her son.

Form pairs by asking participants to turn to the person next to them to discuss this next question for several minutes, then ask the group to share their thoughts.

• What does this story tell us about the ways God helps us and shows us that He loves us?
  » Possible answers: God provides people and good information and skills to help us.

Medicine that fights malaria is also part of God’s rescue plan. He wants to alter the negative consequences of sin on his broken creation. He has helped people learn how to make this medicine to save the lives of many people who would otherwise die from malaria.

**Biblical Application: God’s Love**

TIME 5 MIN

• What does God’s word tell us about the ways God shows His love and cares for us?
  » Ask someone to read James 1:17
    ◊ “Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”
  » Ask someone to read Matthew 7:9-11
    ◊ “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to you children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him?”

Ask the group to form pairs and discuss the next question for two minutes and then ask them to share their ideas.

• Why should we trust God, and believe that He will provide good things for us?
  » Possible answers: We are God’s children, He loves us and wants the best for us.

Life saving medicine is a good gift from God. We can thank God for the gift of this medicine.

• What other gifts has God given us to deal with the results of sin on our world?
  » Possible answers: Laws that protect us, hospitals and clinics, church programs that aid those in need; aid organizations, government programs that help those in need.

**MAIN IDEA:** God gives us good gifts to make our lives better. He gives people the knowledge needed to deal with the terrible effects of sin in our world, such as disease.
God is especially concerned about people who are in need or are vulnerable.

Let us hear another story about Sarah and her husband John:

While she was helping Annie get well, Sarah’s gardening hoe and spade went missing. She needed these tools to prepare her garden for planting.

John did not blame Sarah, he suspected that someone had stolen the tools. They had no money saved to purchase new tools, so he went to town on his bicycle to visit the moneylender.

The moneylender always had money to loan, but John knew he could be cruel if loans were not repaid on time.

“I need a loan to buy gardening tools,” said John. “Without the tools, we cannot plant, and my children will not have food,”

He thought that if he explained the problem, the moneylender would show some mercy. But the moneylender only shook his head and said, “What do you have that is worth anything that I can keep until you pay back your loan?”

John owned very little, except his bicycle. But because of his lame leg, his bicycle was the only way he could travel the long distance to town in one day.

“What about that bicycle?” Asked the moneylender. John felt afraid.

“If you want the money, you must leave the bicycle. Or maybe your children are not that important to you?” John looked away but nodded in agreement.

“OK we have a deal,” said the money lender. “I will keep the bicycle, until you repay the loan. And, because I am so generous, the interest rate will only be double the loan. But if you don’t pay it back on time, along with the interest rate, the bicycle will stay with me, do you understand?”

“Yes,” said John, “I understand.” John took the money, purchased the tools and started the journey back to his home. He knew he would not arrive before nightfall.

“Why is life so difficult for me and for Sarah?” He thought as he limped down the road. “We work hard, but it doesn’t seem to make a difference. Maybe the ancestors and are unhappy with us, or, maybe someone has put a curse on us.” John felt sad and alone as he walked toward his home in the dark.
• In this story, what is causing some of John and Sarah’s hardships?
  » Possible answers: Theft, lack of savings, heartless money lender, greed, fear.

• What did John think was the cause of his troubles?
  » Possible answers: Anger of the ancestors, sin, curses.

From this story, we see that the suffering of the poor is often a result of other people’s sin - their hard hearts, corruptions, greed, and cruelty toward others.

God is concerned for the poor.

• What does God’s Word say about the person who oppresses the poor?
  » Ask someone to read Proverbs 14:31.
    ◊ "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

Here God is telling us that an oppressor actually shows “contempt” for God Himself when he mistreats someone who is poor because God created that person. It is as though the oppressor is grinding God’s face in the dirt when he is unkind to someone who is poor.

• How does this verse say we can honor God?
  » Possible answer: By being kind to the needy.

Think about your community:

• Where have you seen people showing kindness to the needy?
  » Listen and affirm their responses.

We are all created in the image of God. So, every human being still carries within them some reflection of God himself. Because this is true, we must honor and respect every person we ever meet. God loves each person equally, even those who sin are still loved by God and still bear God’s own image.

**MAIN IDEA:** When we are kind to the needy, we honor God. When we oppress the needy we “show contempt for their maker” who is God.

**Biblical Application:** Caring for the Needs of Others

TIME 15 MIN

In these stories, we saw how easily needy people can be oppressed by others. But we know that Sarah and John - and other people in need - are not forgotten by God.
Throughout the Old Testament and New Testament, God shows His concern and His love for very poor people. God also instructs His people, the Church, to help people like John and Sarah, who are vulnerable and in need.

As followers of Christ we have to do what Jesus did. In John 20:21 Jesus said to his disciples: “As the Father has sent me, so send I you.”

Post the three verses on flipchart paper on the wall.

Let’s hear more about what God’s word says. As we read these passages think about what God is saying to us about how we should respond to the needs of the poor.

Ask someone to read Isaiah 58: 6, 7

◊ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

Ask participants to discuss the following question with the person next to them for two minutes and then ask the large group:

• What is God saying to us in this passage?
  » Possible answers: To share what we have, to not turn away from others in need.

Ask someone to read Matthew 25: 34-40

◊ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

◊ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Ask participants to discuss this question with the person next to them for two minutes and then ask the large group:

• What does this verse say about why we should care about people who need help?
  » Possible answer: When we help others we honor God.

Ask someone to read James 2: 15-17

◊ “Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
What does this verse say about how God wants us to respond to those in need?

> Possible answers: We need to do things to help others in need, not just wish them well.

These different passages help us see that God is concerned for all of the needs of the poor, not just their physical needs. God shows us that to care for poor people is the same as caring for Christ himself.

As we saw in the earlier verse in Proverbs 14:31; to oppress the poor is to show contempt to God who created them; to show kindness to the poor, honors God.

Ask participants to discuss the following question with the person next to them for two minutes and then ask the large group:

Why should our church respond to people in need, according to these verses?

> Possible answers: God expects us to help them, as part of our service to Christ.

We care for the poor, not to gain salvation, but because, as Christians, we are already saved and want to live for Christ. In the last lesson we learned that we do not get to heaven by doing good works. Our salvation is a gift from God.

**Main Idea:** God loves all people regardless of their status. God expects the church to help the poor as part of our service to Christ.

*Application Activity: Who Are the Most Vulnerable?*

The Bible teaches us that God cares about poor people. As members of His church, He expects us to help them.

In an earlier lesson, we discussed what a person needs in order to grow and develop. We also learned that our needs are more than just physical.

**Hold up your hand.**

What are the areas in which a person needs to develop?

> Possible answers: Physical, mental, emotional, social, making good decisions, and spiritual.

We have needs in all of these areas. But we also know that some in our community are more needy than we are. God tells us that we are to help them.

The purpose of the next activity is to identify the characteristics of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our community.
Often we focus on only our material needs when we talk about poverty. But in our activity today, we will think about poverty and need in all areas of our life and development.

Let's use this example from the story of Sarah and her husband John.

They are poor, and have problems in their life. But, Sarah and John have a good relationship. John works as hard as he can for the family and is a faithful husband. Sarah has a sister named Grace, who is also married with children. Grace and her family earn more money than Sarah and John, and have a nicer house. But, Grace’s husband often comes home drunk. He badly beats Grace and the children, shouting curse words at them. Grace and her children live in fear because of this.

- **In this example of Sarah and Grace, who is better off in terms of material goods? Why?**
  - Possible answers: Grace. She has more money and a nicer house.

- **In terms of social relationships, who is better off? Why?**
  - Possible answers: Sarah, because she has a good marriage. The relationship between Grace and her husband is violent.

- **In terms of emotional development, which family is better off? Why?**
  - Possible answers: Probably Sarah’s family, because there is no violence in the home. Both Grace and her children are very afraid and unhappy.

As you can see, money is not everything! Keep this in mind as we think about who is well off and healthy in a particular area of development, and who is doing poorly in this area.

*Instruct participants to divide into six small groups.*

*Assign each group one of the six areas of development, (emotional, mental, physical, social, healthy choices, spiritual); ask them to make a list of characteristics of a person who is well off in that area and a person who is not well off in that area. Ask them to choose a member of their group to report to the large group at the end of the discussion.*

- **What are some characteristics of a person who is well off emotionally? What are characteristics of a person who is NOT well off emotionally?**
  - Possible answers: Well off - have peace, have hope for the future and good self-esteem. Not well off - easily angered, fearful, lack peace, worry a lot.

- **What are some characteristics of a person who is well off mentally? What are characteristics of a person who is NOT well off mentally?**
  - Possible answers: Well off - educated, have a skill. Not well off - little or no education, cannot read, have few life skills.

- **What are some characteristics of a person who is well off physically? What are characteristics of a person who is NOT well off physically?**
  - Possible answers: Well off - have housing, sufficient food, has clothes. Not well off - lack shelter, food or clothing.
Let’s review what we learned today.

• **What are some of the good gifts that God has given us?**
  
  » Possible answers: Medicine, sunshine, rain, knowledge of how best to live.

• **What does God say the person is doing when he oppresses the poor?**
  
  » Possible answer: He shows contempt, he dishonors God.

• **Thinking back to the verses we read, how does God view poor people?**
  
  » Possible answers: God is very concerned about them. He wants to help all their needs.

• **What are some things God tells Christians in the church to do for the poor?**


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**Ask the large group:**

• **Why is it important to keep in mind these other types of needs as we talk about poverty, in addition to physical needs?**

  » Possible answers: God created us as whole people - problems in one area can have a negative effect on the other areas of our life. We are more than just the needs of our bodies - we also have the needs of our souls and minds and hearts.

**Ask someone to read Galatians 6:2.**

◊ "Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

We obey God by helping people carry their burdens when they are too heavy to carry alone.
» Possible answers: God tells the church to care for the physical needs of poor people as well as the spiritual needs.

- **What are the characteristics of the most vulnerable poor people in your community?**
  » *Use the hand to review the areas they identified in the last activity.*

**Reflection For Action**

We talked a lot about poverty today. Think about a very poor person you know with whom you could talk with later. Plan to respectfully ask them to tell you about what their life is like. Ask them why they think they are poor, and how the challenges they face make their life more difficult. Listen to how they understand their own situation.

- **What are your questions about this activity?**

**Closing and Prayer**

*Thank everyone for participating!*
Notes to Facilitator

This lesson introduces another main idea in the curriculum - transformation. It also brings together the ideas of development and transformation, using the picture of the tree to aid understanding.

As the facilitator you will need to help participants understand how changes in their beliefs, values, thinking and attitudes (their inward self) relates to changes in their actions, behaviors, choices and results of their actions (their outward self.)

Learning Objectives

- Explore the idea of personal transformation where positive changes in what we believe and value changes how we behave and what results we see.
- Compare how the different parts of a tree can help us think about the relationship between beliefs, values, actions, and results.
- Review how God created us as “whole” or complete people, and relate this to growing in all areas of our life to be truly transformed.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: Flip chart paper and markers and tape. Picture of the healthy-looking tree that shows roots, trunk and branches, and fruit.

Before the lesson, draw the outline of the tree: roots, trunk, several branches and fruit, on flip chart paper in light pencil as a guide to help you draw the tree with markers during the session.

Prepare 4 large labels to stick on the tree: BELIEFS: what is true; VALUES: what is important; BEHAVIOR: what we do; and RESULTS: what is seen. Add tape to the back of the labels so the participants can stick these labels to the tree once it has been drawn.

HELPFUL HINT

Personal transformation is a very important - and sometimes difficult - idea to understand. Practice explaining the transformation tree ahead of time, pointing to different parts of the tree as you explain them. Be enthusiastic as you go through this session with participants and engage them as much as possible during the session to help them better understand these concepts.
Welcome and Review

Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

In our last lesson we talked about the good gifts God gives us,

- **What were some of the good gifts we receive from a good God?**  
  » Possible answers: Sunshine, rain, medicine, food, shelter.

We learned about God’s compassion for the poor and needy and what God thinks of those who oppress the poor.

- **What is God’s response to those who oppress the poor?**  
  » Possible answers: God says they “show contempt for (Him) their maker”; they demean and dishonor God Himself.

In the Bible we saw that God expects us, his children, to care for the poor and needy around us.

- **What are some things God tells the church to do for the poor?**  
  » Possible answers: feed the hungry, stand for the vulnerable, help them grow spiritually.

Finally we asked you to speak with someone you considered to be poor and to learn more about how they see themselves and details about their day to day life.

- **What were the very poor and vulnerable people like in our community?**  
  » Listen to their responses.

Application Activity: Introducing the Transformation Tree

One purpose of these lessons is to learn together about how we can respond to the challenges of poverty.

In our first lesson, we realized that God wants us to grow. We used the word “development” to mean “the process of growth and positive change.” We talked about how God created us, with different needs for growth.

*Hold up your hand and let people call out the 5 areas on your fingers and thumb.*

- **What are the areas where we need to grow?**  
  » Possible answers: Physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and in the way they make their choices.

*Hold up your hand again and point to the palm.*

Our entire lives are influenced by how we love God (the spiritual).
And we have said that just as our fingers and palm are part of one hand, all of our needs are linked together. Imagine if only one finger were to grow on our hand!

*Hold up your closed hand with just the little finger standing.*

It would not be very useful. In the same way it is the important that all areas of our life grow together.

*Hold up your open hand with all fingers and thumb spread out.*

Also in our first lesson, we talked about how growth and development happens. How a large tree begins with a small seed.

Today, we will use the transformation tree to help us understand how growth happens in our lives. We will use the parts of a tree to show the connection between what we believe, or what we think is true; and what we value, what we think is important or best.

We will also look at how these beliefs and values influence our actions and behaviors and lead to the consequences of our choices, or the results of our actions and behaviors.

*Invite two participants to come forward and draw all parts of the tree that you have already traced. Be sure the tree has fruits. After the two participants have drawn the tree, put it in a place where everyone can see it.*

- **What are the four major parts of the tree in this picture?**
  - Possible answers: Roots, Trunk, Branches, and Fruits.
- **If this tree were a picture of our lives, what part of the tree would represent what we believe (what we think is true)?**
  - Pause for them to answer and have a volunteer place the “BELIEFS” label where the group thinks it should be.
- **What part of the tree would be what we value, or think is important?**
  - Pause for them to answer and have another volunteer place the “VALUES” label on the tree where they suggest it should go.
- **What part of the tree would represent our actions and behaviors, what we do?**
  - Pause for them to answer. Have a volunteer place the label on the tree where they think it should be.
- **And finally, what part of the tree shows the consequences of our actions, or results of our behavior?**
  - Pause for them to answer. Have a volunteer place the label on the tree.

*Invite the group to make suggestions or corrections to the position of the labels and move them as they suggest.*
Now that we can see the connections we have made between the tree and these areas of our lives, is there anything you wish to adjust in terms of where the labels have been placed?

Adjust the labels according to their responses. If the labels are still not what you expect, leave them there and continue with the lesson. Then when you come to that label in the discussion, help the group see the connection more clearly, and once they do, move it to its correct position if necessary.

- **What parts of the tree are above the ground and easily seen?**
  » Possible answers: Trunk, branches, leaves, fruit.

- **What parts of a big tree are below the ground and not visible?**
  » Possible answers: The roots.

- **What happens to the tree if its roots are very weak and shallow?**
  » Possible answers: It will be weak. There will be no fruit. The wind could blow it over.

- **What happens to a tree with very strong and healthy roots?**
  » Possible answers: It will grow well. It will have a strong trunk and branches, lots of leaves, flowers, and fruits.

So, the roots help the rest of the tree - branches, leaves and fruit to grow well. If the roots are healthy, the tree will be healthy.

It is the same way with people. The roots of a tree, our beliefs, what we think is true, may not be visible, but they determine our values, which in turn direct our actions and decisions, what we do, and the consequences of those actions.

At this point, make sure that the label “BELIEFS what is true” is on the roots now and the label “VALUES what is best” is on the trunk.

Change, whether for the good or bad, starts with what we believe to be true and what we value, what we think is important. These positive changes in our beliefs and values will move us to begin acting in new and positive ways.

Make sure that the label “BEHAVIOR or ACTIONS what is done” is now on the branches.

These actions then will bring good results in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Make sure not that the label “RESULTS what is seen” is now on a piece of fruit.

When the change in our life that starts with our beliefs and continues to the result in our lives is positive, we call this change “transformation”.

**MAIN IDEA:** Transformation happens when positive changes in our beliefs and values result in positive actions and positive results.
• What questions do you have so far about this idea of transformation?
  » Listen to their questions and answer them.

Let’s keep using the picture of the tree to help us understand and review it once more.

• What part of the tree represents our beliefs, what we think is true?
  » Possible answer: The roots of the tree represent our beliefs.

In our hearts and minds, we think some things are true and other things are not. Like the roots of the tree are not easily seen, so our beliefs can be hidden. Just as the roots determine whether the rest of the tree grows well, our beliefs shape all aspects of our lives.

• What part of the tree represents our values, what we think is important or best?
  » Possible answer: The trunk of the tree represents values.

A “value” is what people or a group of people think is the best way to live. Our values are what we think is important. And our values have a direct connection to what we believe.

• What part of the tree represents our behavior or actions, what we do?
  » Possible answer: The branches of the tree represent our behavior or actions.

This includes what we do and say. Just as many different branches are on a tree, so our lives are full of many different actions.

• What part of the tree represents the results of our actions, what is seen?
  » Possible answer: The fruit of the tree represents the visible results in our lives.

These are the consequences of our actions. Just as the fruit hangs from the branch of the tree, our actions lead to results we can see that may be good or may be bad depending on what we believe and what we value.

As we have noticed from our tree diagram, a tree with good deep roots and a well-developed trunk will not produce only good fruits, but it will produce a lot of fruit. Good growth starts from the roots of a tree.

In the same way, only changes that start from the roots or the heart of a person that are based on beliefs that are good and true, will lead to transformation, or a changed life.

• Who can summarize, using the parts of the tree, how our beliefs lead to the results or fruit in our lives?
  » Possible answers: Our beliefs tell us what is important and of value. These values lead to actions. And our actions lead to the visible results, or the fruit in our lives.

MAIN IDEA: If you believe what is good and true, your life will show it. Everything you do in your life comes from what you believe.
Do you remember Sarah and John from the last lesson? Sarah and John have neighbors named Elizabeth and Jacob.

As I tell a story about Elizabeth and Jacob, think about what they believe, what they value and how these relate to their behaviors or actions and the results of their actions. We will discuss this at the end of the story.

Elizabeth and Jacob have four children. They believe all of their children are made in God’s image just as Adam and Eve were made in God’s image when they were created. They believe children are a gift from God and entrusted to their parents to nurture and protect as they grow.

Elizabeth and Jacob know how to keep their children healthy from information they received from the village health workers and staff at the local clinic. They know that good food is important and that it helps children grow and develop both physically and mentally. Elizabeth breast feeds her babies and gives them fresh fruits and vegetables from her garden and eggs, meat and fish that she purchases at the market.

They also know that immunizations protect children from preventable diseases, so all of their children have been immunized. They know the importance of clean water for drinking and cooking and provide that for their family. They know how to prevent malaria by removing standing water where mosquitoes multiply and using bed nets when they sleep. They know the importance of hand washing, especially after using the latrine, and what to do if their children have fever or diarrhea. As a result, their children are strong and healthy and are doing well at school.

- **What are the beliefs of Elizabeth and Jacob in this story, what are the “roots”?**
  
  » Possible answers: All children are created in God’s image and are gifts from Him. They are responsible for their care as they develop.

- **What are their values, what do they think is important? What represents the trunk of the tree in this story?**

  » Possible answer: They value healthy practices they learned from health workers, including providing good nutrition, clean water, hygiene, and disease prevention.

- **In this story, what are the branches - what are Elizabeth’s actions?**

  » Possible answers: Elizabeth breast feeds her babies and gives them good nutrition. Elizabeth has put into practice the health practices she has learned. She is willing to go to the clinic when necessary.
• What is the fruit in this story - what are the results that Elizabeth and Jacob see?
  » Possible answer: The children are healthy and growing well.

Jesus also used the example of a tree and its fruit to explain how what we believe, what is stored in our hearts, affects the kind of “fruit” or results we can expect to have in our lives.


◊ “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”

In pairs ask participants to discuss the following question then ask the whole group:

• What does this teach us about the relationship between what we store in our hearts and what we say and do?
  » Possible answers: If we have a good heart, we will have good fruit. It is not possible to have good fruit in our lives if inside we remain full of darkness and evil.

• According to this verse, where must transformation in our lives begin?
  » Possible answer: In our heart, with what we believe.

If we wish to be transformed, we must first consider what we believe to be true, and what is important. What we believe on the inside ultimately determines how we live.

Here is a story that will help us think about the difference between change and transformation.

THE SNAKE AND THE CATERPILLAR

One day the snake and the caterpillar were wondering why people disliked them. They decided that the needed to change their bodies, change how they looked to others. The snake went away for a while and removed his skin. He returned to where the people lived so they could see him. And when people saw him they took up stones to kill him.

The caterpillar, on the other hand, took the same amount of time and was transformed into a butterfly. When people saw him they were delighted and said to the butterfly, “Come and stay in my garden.”
• What was the difference between what happened to the snake and what happened to the caterpillar?

» Possible answers: The snake only made small surface changes. The butterfly was changed from inside.

It is possible for people to make surface changes like the snake, but internally they have changed nothing. Sooner or later, others will see that their nature has not changed. They are still the same.

But others, like the butterfly, experience changes deep within and their whole life is affected. When we begin to believe God’s truth we are truly transformed. That is why we call our tree, the “Transformation Tree.”

Ask someone to read Galatians 5:22.

◊ “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

• In this verse, where do the fruits come from?

» Possible answer: From the Spirit of God working in our lives.

These fruits can appear in our lives when we begin to believe God’s truths in our hearts and allow his Spirit to work in our hearts.

Just as the tree starts growing as a seed underneath the ground and then develops deep roots, transformation starts inside of us - in our hearts. When we turn out lives over to God, his Spirit lives inside us, his children.

As we study God’s word the Spirit begins teaching us what is good and true and our beliefs change. Then we begin valuing what God values and our actions reflect the truths we believe. Finally, we act in ways that honor God and shows love to our neighbors. This is process of transformation within us.

MAIN IDEA: True transformation takes place when we go through this process, aligning our beliefs with God’s truths, valuing what God values, and acting in ways that honor Him.

As Christians, we believe true transformation comes through Jesus Christ. There are many examples in the Bible where people’s hearts were changed as a result of God’s love, and as a result, their behaviors and actions also changed.

• Can you think of people in the Bible whose lives were transformed by God?

» Listen to their responses and affirm them.

Matthew, one of the 12 disciples was also transformed by meeting Jesus. Before he followed Jesus, he was a tax collector. Most tax collectors were corrupt. But Matthew believed that Jesus was
God and followed Him. Everything in his life was transformed. He left tax collecting and became a well-known preacher of the gospel telling others about Jesus Christ.

- **How did God start changing Matthew’s life?**
  
  » Possible answer: First God changed what he believed - he started believing in Jesus. After that, he started to live in a new way.

**MAIN IDEA:** God wants to transform us, beginning with what we believe is true, and to what we do every day. Asking Jesus into our lives and believing his words can transform our entire life, our beliefs, our values, our actions, and the results of our actions.

**Application Activity: Discussion About Growth that Brings Transformation**

Now we will bring together the idea of development that we learned in the first lesson and the idea of Transformation that we have just learned.

The best development - the best growth - is the sort of growth that changes both the way we think and the way we act. God created us as whole people. God wants us to grow in all areas of our lives.

*Hold up your open hand and ask:*

- **What are the 5 areas of our lives where God wants us to grow?**
  
  » Possible answers: Physical, emotional, mental, social, and how we make choices.

- **And, what is it that controls all these areas of our lives?** *Point to the palm of your hand.*
  
  » Possible answer: The spiritual, our relationship with God.

*Using the transformation tree, point to the roots*

- **As we think about the transformation tree, how does God begin to grow and transform us?**
  
  » Possible answer: By changing our beliefs to God’s truth.

- **And as our beliefs, what we know to be true, begins to change, what else begins to change?**
  
  » Possible answer: Our values, they begin to change our actions which lead to good fruit.

We are transformed when positive growth begins to happen in all areas of our lives - the physical, emotional, mental, social and how we go about making choices.

Like a tree, we grow and develop as we begin to adjust how we live (our actions) to what we know is God’s truth (our beliefs). Development that transforms us or Transformational Development means we grow as a whole person—we improve in all areas of our lives.
God’s intentions for us are that we grow into healthy whole people. As we learned in lessons 2 and 3, sin and wrong beliefs have caused problems in every area of our lives and our relationships. Our own sins can keep us from growing into the people God intended us to be. But also, the sins of others affect all areas of our lives as well.

Our own brokenness and the brokenness around us contributes to poverty - poverty in our relationships, poverty in our thinking, and emotional poverty like feelings of hopelessness and despair and so we make unwise choices.

**MAIN IDEA:** God has given all of us everything we need to grow and change. If we believe in Him we have His Holy Spirit living inside us to help us grow and transform our lives.

**Application Through Stories:**

Sarah’s Neighbor Elizabeth

Development that transforms happens in everyday life, gradually changing people’s hearts and minds and resulting in new actions and fruits in their lives. Development that transforms is something that can happen to each one of us.

Let’s listen to another story about Elizabeth, Sarah’s neighbor:

Life was hard for Elizabeth a few years ago. She used all the money she had to feed and clothe her children and never had any left over. Some of the women in Elizabeth’s church encouraged her to join a group called a Savings Club. Elizabeth didn’t believe she could save money each week as the club required. However, she faithfully attended the meetings and learned useful information about managing the resources she had and how to make more profit.

Every week Elizabeth saved a small amount of money. It was very hard at first! But the other women in the group encouraged her. Little by little, the amount of money she had saved grew. Elizabeth used her savings to expand her kitchen garden. She started selling the extra vegetables and saved a little more each week. She began to see herself in a new way - as a person who could improve her life. She believed that God had given her talents and was thankful to Him. Through a Bible study after her group meetings, Elizabeth grew in her knowledge and relationship with God.
Because she believed God loved her, she was more confident. Her actions reflected this, she attended other lessons about keeping her children healthy and she also saved money for emergencies. Eventually with her savings and profits she had enough money to send all of her children to school, even her two daughters. Other women admired Elizabeth and would often ask here for advice.

When Elizabeth heard the sad news about the death of her neighbor Sarah’s baby, she gathered some vegetables and began preparing a stew to give to Sarah’s family. “I will do what I can to help them,” said Elizabeth.

- **What were Elizabeth’s beliefs at first?**
  
  » Possible answers: She believed she couldn’t save, that she would never have enough money.

- **What new beliefs helped her change her actions?**
  
  » Possible answers. She believed that she could save, that God loved her, that she had talents, and that she could learn.

- **How did her new beliefs help her accomplish good things in her life?**
  
  » Possible answers: Helped her to persevere, even when it was difficult to keep saving money. They encouraged her to learn more and to help others.

Jesus said that God’s greatest commands are that we should: “Love the Lord with all our heart and all our soul and all our strength and our entire mind” and to “love our neighbor as ourselves”

- **How did Elizabeth’s actions and choices show her love for God and others?**
  
  » Possible answers: She grew closer to God, she improved her mind, she showed love to her neighbor by helping Sarah’s family.

**Application Activity: Create A Song**

We have been learning many different ideas. Today, we will do an activity that will help us find a good way to remember these things.

*Divide the group into two teams (about 10 people each).*

Your task is to create a song. Each group will get a different idea to put into a song. Be creative - add actions or a dance if you wish!

- The first group will create a song about transformation - how God’s love for us changes what we believe, our values, our behaviors and our actions.
- The second group will create a song about how God’s commandment that we love Him and love our neighbors changes our churches, our home and our communities.
We used the example of a tree to show how our lives can be transformed.

- **Who can label the parts of the tree?**
  - Give the labels to a volunteer and have them place them on the parts of the tree that correspond to beliefs (roots), values (trunk), actions (branches), results (fruit).

- **How do our beliefs influence the results of our actions?**
  - Possible answers: What we believe is true, determines what we value and what we think is important. Our beliefs and values direct our actions. And our actions bring results.

- **How can we be sure that the results of our actions will honor and please God?**
  - Possible answer: By believing God’s truths, our values and behaviors will be transformed and we will do good things that please God.

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**Review**

**TIME**

**5 MIN**

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**Reflection for Action**

**TIME**

**5 MIN**

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**Closing and Prayer**

Pray for God’s Holy Spirit to empower the participants to follow God’s truth and be transformed.

Thank them for their participation and ideas.
This lesson builds participants’ understanding of development that transforms people and communities. It does this by helping them apply the model of the transformation tree - beliefs, values, behaviors/actions and results - to everyday situations.

It helps them see how what a person believes is true influences what they value and how they think and act. It may be difficult for participants to understand the connections at first. Take plenty of time to review the transformation tree.

Learning Objectives

- Recall the idea of transformation, using the tree as a model.
- Discover how to identify beliefs, values, actions and results in everyday situations.
- Practice teaching others about the transformation tree model.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: Facilitator’s picture of a healthy tree. Labels that say: Beliefs, Values, Behaviors, Results. Enough paper and markers for all participants to draw their own transformation tree in the application activity.

Write the following questions on a flipchart page for the small group activity:
- What is true - what are the beliefs?
- What is best - what is valued, and important, what are they willing to sacrifice for?
- What is done - what are the actions or behaviors?
- What is seen - what are the results?

Write each of the following passages out each on its own flipchart page: Romans 12:1-2, John 15:5-8, and Mark 12:30-31.

HELPFUL HINT

Feel free to adjust the names and details in the stories about Sarah and her friends to fit with your local context. Just be sure every story you use includes an example of beliefs influencing values, values leading to action, and specific actions leading to results.
As we discussed in the last lesson, development that transforms us, or transformational development, is a process of growth that is based on God’s truths that helps us improve in all the areas of our lives.

Show your outstretched hand as you identify the areas:

This includes our physical, mental, emotional and social needs, and the kinds of choices we make each day.

Point to the palm of your hand

All of these areas can be transformed by the power of God if He is living within us - if we are spiritually alive.

We can use the model of the transformation tree to help us understand how transformation happens in all of these areas - in our physical body; in our mind and the things that we learn; in our emotions and how we feel; in our social relationships with others; and in the way we make our choices.

This model of growth and change helps us understand how God wants us to grow and improve and how we can help those around us who are in greatest need.

Refer to the picture of the healthy tree:

When we think about how to grow in a particular area, we should ask ourselves:

- **What is true?** *(point to the roots)* In our heart and mind, we believe that certain things are true.
• **What is best?** *(point to the trunk)* Our beliefs determine what we will value, what is important to us; what we are willing to sacrifice for, what we make time for.

• **What is done?** *(point to the branches)* Our actions are the things that we do and the way we behave. The different branches stand for the many different actions we do every day.

• **What is seen?** *(point to the fruits)* These are the visible outcomes of the actions and behaviors we choose. The fruit of the tree stands for the results we see in our lives.

The roots are not seen, but they are very influential, they determine how the rest of the tree grows. The trunk, the branches and the fruit all get their life and health from the roots.

Development that transforms us is development that changes us for the better. It so happens in the same way.

1. What we believe tells us what is true.
2. What we believe is true helps us decide what we value and what is important.
3. What we think is best or important helps us decide how we are going to act.
4. And these actions lead to the visible results in our lives.

**Hold up your hand to review**

This applies to every area of our lives - the physical, mental, social, emotional, and how we make our choices.

**MAIN IDEA:** Our beliefs shape what we value which then determines the actions we take. Actions lead to visible results in our lives.

Let us consider a good fruit in the area of mental development. Let us use the example of a child who has completed schooling. If this is the result, or the fruit - what was done to achieve this result?

• **What were some of the specific actions that lead to this result?**
  » Possible answers: Enrolling a child in school, supporting them throughout their school years, encouraging them.

Imagine the parents of this child - they enroll their child in school, they work hard and save money to support them throughout their schooling, they encourage the child to do well.

• **What does the parent who does this think is best? What is important to them? What do they value?**
  » Possible answers: They think that schooling is best for their child. They value their child and want the child to complete their schooling and develop mentally.

• **What does a person who thinks it is best to educate a child believe about that child’s mental development?**
Possible answers: Growing mentally can bring a good life. God has created us with good brains and the ability to learn many things.

What a person does, and the results that come from what he or she does, helps us to know what he or she believes.

Let's take the opposite example: A child who is not educated.

- **What are the beliefs that led to this result?**
  
  Possible answers: The child does not need education to have a good life. Education is not a good investment. People don’t need to develop mentally and learn many things.

If parents don’t believe their children need to develop their minds, they will not value education, they will not save their money to send their children to school. They will spend their money on other things. They will not enroll their children in school or encourage them to do well.

- **What are some of the results if a child does not get an education?**
  
  Possible answers: They will not get a good job. They will not develop their potential. They are more vulnerable. They will not be able to teach their own children well.

**Form groups of 4-5 people.**

I will read several very short stories about Sarah and her neighbors that focus on positive outcomes. As you listen to each story try to identify the beliefs that influence what the person thinks is best, what they value, how their values lead to action, and the specific actions they take that lead to the good results.

After each story I will let you discuss this in your small groups for 5 minutes. Then you can share what you have discussed with the large group before we go on to the next story. In your groups you will identify the following for each story:

**Post the flipchart with the following questions.**

- What is true - what are the beliefs?
- What is best - what is valued, and important, what are they willing to sacrifice for?
- What is done - what are the actions or behaviors?
- What is seen - what are the results?

You may want to draw a chart like the one below and fill in as participants respond and provide information:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jacob &amp; Elizabeth</th>
<th>Elizabeth</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Daniel &amp; Agnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is seen?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safe delivery of</td>
<td>Less child sickness and death in community.</td>
<td>A good crop; pleases God by caring for His creation.</td>
<td>Widows and orphans are able to keep their land and houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a healthy child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is done?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior/Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensured good care for wife; used money for clinic; both tested for HIV.</td>
<td>Attended training sessions; shares health lessons with other mothers; mothers follow advice.</td>
<td>Practices crop rotation so the soil is not depleted or used up.</td>
<td>Work with their church to protect inheritance rights of widows and orphans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is best?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To protect wife and baby; to receive prenatal care; values the life of his child; wants to protect from HIV.</td>
<td>Values knowledge that will keep her children and other children in her community, healthy.</td>
<td>Values training; values God’s creation; best and important to care for the land.</td>
<td>Values widows and orphans; willing; best to protect the vulnerable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is true?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All people are created equal; women and children are just as important to God as are men.</td>
<td>Children are a gift from God; health and development of a child is important.</td>
<td>People are protectors of God's creation. It is important to care for the land.</td>
<td>God calls people to defend the rights of widows and orphans; all people deserve a safe place to live.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let's hear a story about Jacob and Elizabeth:

Sarah’s neighbors, Elizabeth and Jacob, have four healthy children. They have been married for 15 years. Jacob believes that all people - men and women - are equal because they are both created in the image of God. When Elizabeth was pregnant with their first child, Jacob thought it was best for her to receive prenatal care and learn how to take care of herself. Jacob gave Elizabeth money for transport to travel to the clinic. At the clinic, Elizabeth was encouraged to come with her husband to be tested for HIV in case she needed to take medicine to keep the baby from getting HIV. Jacob agreed and they both tested negative. When she was ready to deliver, Jacob took Elizabeth to the maternity clinic. Elizabeth gave birth to a healthy baby. They thanked God for this child.
Let the small groups discuss the questions for no more than 5 minutes. Then call everyone’s attention together and ask the questions to the whole group; let different groups answer each question:

• What are Jacob’s beliefs, what does he think is true?
   » Possible answers: All people are created equal. Women and children are just as important to God as are men.

• What does Jacob think is best? What does he value, what does he think is important?
   » Possible answers: He thinks it is best to protect the life of his pregnant wife and their baby; that it is best for a woman to go to the clinic or hospital and receive prenatal care and learn how to take care of herself, he values the life of his child enough to have an HIV test along with his wife.

• What did Jacob and Elizabeth do? What actions did they take?
   » Possible answers: Jacob ensured that his wife has good care when she was pregnant, he gave her money to go to the clinic for prenatal visits and delivery. He and his wife had an HIV test is case they needed to take medicine to keep the baby from getting HIV and protect the life of her baby.

• What was the result?
   » Possible answers: Elizabeth gave birth to a healthy child.

Let’s hear another story about Elizabeth:

Elizabeth loves her children and believes that children are a gift from God and that they need her help to develop and grow. She values the information she has learned from the health workers about the importance of hygiene, good nutrition, and how to prevent diseases. Because she values this information, she gives her children good food, clean water, teaches them good hygiene; she makes sure they are immunized against preventable diseases, and that they receive treatment if they are sick. She has encouraged other women in her family, church and community to attend the health lessons. Because of this, Elizabeth’s children are healthy and there has been less sickness and death among infants from diarrhea and malaria in this community.

Let the groups discuss the four questions in their small groups for a few minutes. Then call everyone’s attention together and ask the questions to the whole group; let different groups answer each question:

• What beliefs or truths are at the root of this good outcome?
   » Possible answers: Children are a gift from God; a child’s health and development are important.

• What does Elizabeth think is best? What does she value? What is she willing to make time for?
   » Possible answers: She values knowledge that will keep her children and other children in her community healthy.
• What is done? What are her actions?
  » Possible answers: Elizabeth takes time to go to the training sessions; she shares health lessons with other mothers. The mothers do what she recommends to keep their children healthy.

• What is seen? What are the results?
  » Possible answers: There is less sickness and death among her neighbors’ infants.

Let’s hear a story about Daniel:

Sarah has a cousin named Daniel. They started school the same year. When Sarah had finished Grade 3, her parents stopped sending her to school and she stayed home to help in the garden. Daniel attended school up to Grade 8. After leaving school, Daniel learned from some agricultural extension workers about how to keep the soil fertile. Daniel believes that God made the earth and people should be protectors of God’s creation. He values the land and thinks it is important to take care of it and not just use it up. For example, Daniel practices crop rotation - he switches what crops he plants on his land each season. This way, the soil remains fertile. Daniel has very good crops because of this.

Let the small groups discuss the four questions for no more than 5 minutes. Then call everyone’s attention together and ask the questions to the whole group; let different groups answer each question:

• In this story, what are Daniel’s beliefs?
  » Possible answers: People are protectors of God’s creation. It is important to care for the land.

• What does Daniel think is best, what does he value?
  » Possible answers: He values the training he received. He thinks it is best and important to care for the land. He values God’s creation.

• What does Daniel’s do? What are his actions?
  » Possible answers: Daniel practices crop rotation so the soil is not depleted or used up.

• What are the results of Daniel’s actions?
  » Possible answers: Daniel has a good crop and pleases God by taking care of His creation.

Let’s move on to the final story that is about Daniel and Agnes:

Daniel is married to Agnes. Daniel and Agnes believe that having a good house - a good shelter - helps people have a better life. They know that often in their community, when a woman’s husband dies, she and her children are forced out by other family members who want the house for themselves.
They know this causes great suffering for families and it troubles them. They believe the Bible when it says that it pleases God to care for widows and orphans. James 1: 27- "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress. “

Daniel, Agnes, and their church congregation think it is best to protect the rights of widows and orphans and it is important for them to stay in their house even after the man of the house dies. When the head of a house dies in their community they go with their church group to the local government and ask the officials to protect the inheritance rights of his widow and their children. As a result, the government began to take action. Now, widows and children in Daniel’s community are much more likely to keep their homes and land after the man of the house dies.

Let the groups discuss the four questions, and then ask:

1. **What do Daniel and Agnes believe is true?**
   - Possible answers: God calls people to defend the rights of widows and orphans. All people deserve a safe place to live.

2. **What is best - what do they value, what is important, what are they willing to make time for?**
   - Possible answers: Value widows and orphans, important to protect the vulnerable, make time to help the vulnerable.

3. **What actions do they take?**
   - Possible answers: Daniel and Agnes work with their church to stand up to the government to protect inheritance rights of widows and orphans.

4. **What are the results?**
   - Possible answers: Widows and orphans are able to keep their land and houses.

This model helps us understand that many of the positive results and outcomes that we see around us had their beginning in positive beliefs and values. We have seen that what we believe is true and what we value are both very important. As we said earlier in our lesson, our beliefs and values shape our behaviors, our actions and the results.

Let’s relate this to the areas in our lives that need to be developed.

1. **What actions and results in these stories relate to the physical area of our lives?**
   - Possible answers: Healthy women and children, less sickness, good crops, shelter for widows and orphans, being tested for HIV.

2. **What actions and results relate to the mental area of our lives?**
   - Possible answers: Learning new information, developing ourselves, sharing information with others.

3. **What actions and results in these stories relate to the emotional area of our lives?**
MAIN IDEA: What we believe and value in our hearts and minds determines if we are to have good results. The fruits of good beliefs and values can improve all areas of our lives and the lives of the poor.

Let’s read more Bible verses that talk about beliefs, values, actions and results.

Ask someone to Romans 12:1-2.

◊ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

• What does the “renewing of the mind” mean to you?
  » Possible answers: Changing our beliefs to align with God’s truth, being born again.

• In what way does a “renewed mind” relate to our beliefs?
  » Possible answers: We can renew our mind if our beliefs align with God’s word and His truth.

• How can having a renewed mind transform us?
  » Possible answers: It helps us see the world in a new way, in a way that is pleasing to God. Then our values and actions will be based on God’s word and truth.

Ask someone to John 15:5-8.

◊ “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. If you do not remain in me,
you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

- **What does this verse mean to you?**
  » Possible answers: Our lives are dependent on Jesus; we cannot have life or grow without Jesus we stay connected to Jesus, the vine for fruit to grow.

- **According to this verse, how do we bear fruit?**
  » Possible answers: We must stay connected to Jesus. We cannot produce fruit on our own. Just as the branches need the vine, we need Jesus to bear fruit.

- **How do we stay connected to Jesus?**
  » Possible answers: Reading the Bible, God’s word; prayer and trust, being faithful to Him.

- **If we remain in Jesus Christ and keep his words what does he promise?**
  » Possible answers: That we can ask what we wish and he will do it.

This is an amazing promise! But what does it mean? Can we ask God for anything? We must look at what Jesus is talking about to understand how God wants us to think and act. Jesus has been talking about bearing fruit.

- **If we stay attached to him, what kind of fruit does he expect to see from us in verse 8?**
  » Possible answers: Good and plentiful fruit.

The fruit Jesus is talking about here is growth in the areas of our life that we have been discussing together. As we grow and mature in these areas, it helps others see God working in us.

When we are attached to Jesus, we will bear the same fruit that came from him during his life. His fruit was helping people:

- Come to know him as the giver of eternal life;
- Overcome obstacles in their lives that kept them in bondage to unhealthy life decisions;
- To see that they had worth and value in the eyes of God;
- To realize that there would be difficulties in this life but that he would provide strength, guidance and peace as they stayed connected to him.

We need to remember that we must remain connected to Him and follow his Word if we want him to hear and answer our prayers. Too often our prayers are for what we want and not what God wants. This explains why some of our prayers are not answered.

**MAIN IDEA:** Development that transforms is the process of growth that is based on God’s truths and that brings change to all areas of our lives.
We have seen how when we believe God’s truths, our minds are renewed and we see life differently. We do what is pleasing to God. When we follow God’s ways it results in good things.

But as we know, not all outcomes we see in our communities are good. Our lives can have good results or bad results, good fruits or bad fruits.

Ask someone to read Matthew 12:33.

◊ “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.”

In our communities we see many people who are suffering and don’t have their basic needs met, and no one is helping them. We see untreated sickness and children who are not educated. In the next lesson we will look at how bad or false beliefs lead to actions that may result in the “fruits” of poverty.

Application Activity: Practice Explaining the Tree to Others

Participants will form pairs for this activity. You will need paper and markers for each person to draw their tree.

I hope you are enjoying what we are learning and doing in our meetings together. We do not want this learning to stop here! We want you to teach others, too.

Everyone find a partner to work with for this activity. The purpose of this activity is to begin practicing how to teach others about the transformation tree.

Hand out a flip chart page and marker to each person.

First, every person will draw their own transformation tree. The picture that we have been using can help guide you. Make sure the tree you draw has roots, trunk and branches, and fruit—all the parts you will need to talk about the model of development that transforms us.

Then, you will practice explaining the model of transformation to one another, using the tree you have drawn. Imagine that your partner has never heard of this before and you are the first one to tell them about this. Use your picture to help you explain about beliefs, values, behaviors and results. Use some of the stories we’ve used as examples, if that is helpful to you.

You will have 5 minutes to draw your trees. Then, one partner will practice explaining the transformation tree while the other person is listening and learning. Then you will switch places so that the other person can practice.

Let participants ask any questions they have.

After all have practiced explaining the tree to each other in pairs, ask the group:

- How did the Transformation Tree help you share what you learned?
- What was the easiest part of explaining the Transformation Tree?
- What was the hardest part of explaining the Transformation Tree?
Let's review what we have learned in this lesson.

- **How does what we believe in our hearts, affect what we think is best and important and the outward actions and the results in our lives?**
  
  » Possible answers: What we believe is true determines what we think is best and important, our beliefs and values guide our actions, our actions lead to results, the fruits.

- **If we want to be sure to have good results, good fruits, then what kind of beliefs do we need to have?**
  
  » Possible answers: Beliefs that are good, beliefs based in God’s truth.

- **How would you define development that transforms us?**
  
  » Possible answers: It is the process of growth that is based on God’s truths and that brings change to all areas of our life.

### Reflection for Action

Think about how you will use the model of the transformation tree to tell one person in your church or community about what we have been learning about development that transforms our lives. Plan to explain to them how beliefs and values lead to actions, and actions lead to results.

### Closing and Prayer

*Pray for God’s help in identifying harmful beliefs in our lives and churches and ask God for his power to overcome these lies of Satan.*

*Thank everyone for participating.*
LESSON 6 - HARMFUL BELIEFS AND POVERTY

Notes to Facilitator

This lesson continues to build on the idea that what believe in our hearts and minds determines how we grow. Our beliefs inform our values, which direct our actions, and our actions bring results. The closer our beliefs and values align with God’s word and truth, the easier it is to act in ways that are pleasing to God and to bear good fruit, the fruit of his Holy Spirit. However, when our beliefs are based on harmful or ungodly values, our actions will follow and we have negative outcomes or bitter fruit.

In this session, we focus on these negative outcomes - signs of “poverty” in our lives. It is important for participants to understand that our beliefs can bring either good or ill results. It all starts with what we think in our hearts and minds.

Learning Objectives

• Consider how harmful beliefs lead to poor values and actions that, in turn, result in a life that is not pleasing to God and does not produce good things.
• Identify harmful beliefs that lead to poverty.
• Conclude that transformational development means changing people’s hearts, minds and actions to align with God’s truth.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: Picture of the three trees - a sick tree, a struggling tree, and a healthy tree. Bring plenty of flip chart paper and markers for small groups to use in the application activity. Write out the following questions on a flip chart page:

• What do you see in the picture? (Ref: Activity page 63)
• What is happening? (Ref: Activity page 63)

• What can we learn from the pictures of the trees and the soils they are in? (Ref: Activity page 63)
• What does the Bible say about Satan’s plan to destroy people and nations? (Ref: Biblical Application page 65-66)
• What are the fruits? What is seen? (Ref: Application Activity page 69)
• What are the actions that led to the fruits? (Ref: Application Activity page 69)
• What values prompted this type of behavior? (Ref: Application Activity page 69)
• What are the beliefs? (Ref: Application Activity page 69)

HELPFUL HINT

Adapt the stories and all examples of traditional beliefs to what is common in your local community. Remember that you will not change people’s minds all at once - it takes time to change deeply held traditional beliefs and convictions. Your role as the facilitator is to encourage participants to start the process of seeing the world in a new way and living in a way that is pleasing to God, by examining whether these beliefs bring good results or deepen poverty.
Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

During the previous lesson we focused on Biblical truths and how they affect what we think is best, and how that can lead us to positive actions and behaviors and good results.

Hold up the picture of the tree and point to the different parts as you ask the questions.

I will tell you another story about Elizabeth and Jacob, Sarah’s neighbors, who you met in our last lesson. While I tell the story, listen for what they believe, what they value, what they do, and the results of their actions:

When Jacob and Elizabeth were married, they promised to be faithful to one another. They believe marriage and sex within marriage is a very special relationship, ordained by God. They value being faithful and following God’s commands. Jacob is a trader and when he travels to other towns he is tempted to have sex with other women.

But he resists and stays faithful, because he loves Elizabeth and believes that God expects him to keep his vow to her. Elizabeth has always been faithful to Jacob and has only had sexual relations with her husband. As a result, they have a happy and strong marriage; in addition they do not have sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Point to the roots of the tree.

• What do Elizabeth and Jacob believe that helps them stay faithful in marriage?
  » Possible answers: They believe that God commands men and women to be faithful in marriage.

They believed God’s truth about marriage.

Point to the trunk of the tree.

• What did Elizabeth and Jacob value, or think was important for their lives?
  » Possible answers: They think it is important to live by God’s commands, His truths.

They think it is important as Christians to live according to God’s Word and do His will.

Point to the branches of the tree.

• What did Elizabeth and Jacob do because of what they believed and valued?
  » Possible answers: They remained faithful to each other even when tempted not to do so.
Point to the fruit on the tree.

- What were the results of their actions?
  » Possible answers: They trusted each other, they had a strong marriage, they did not have HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmissible diseases.

We see how what they believed transformed what they thought was important, what they valued, for their marriage. And, because they valued God’s commands they remained faithful (actions) which led to good results (fruit) in their marriage and their lives.

- Were you able to tell someone else about how transformation can happen, using the tree? What was it like to do that - who did you talk to? What was this person’s reaction to what you shared?
  » Let people share their experiences if they had an opportunity to do it.

In Elizabeth and Jacob’s story we saw how their marriage was transformed because they believed God’s truth about marriage.

In our last lesson we also saw how we can be transformed in all areas of our lives. We learned how our beliefs help us decide what we will value, and how what we value leads to our actions. Our actions then lead to results we can see in our lives.

For example, we talked about children having a good education.

- What are some of the other fruits of development that transforms?
  » Let participants list some of the things they remember from the last lesson’s stories.
  » Possible answers: Mothers have healthy babies, good relationships between husbands and wives, widows and orphans keeping their property.

Ask participants to form small groups of 4-5 people. Provide a picture of the three trees to each group, instruct the groups to look carefully at the trees in the picture, then respond to the questions on the flip chart.

- What do you see in the pictures?
- What is happening?
- What can we learn from the pictures of the trees and the soils they are in?
After the groups have had a chance to discuss for 10 minutes, ask the questions to the entire group. Try to engage members of each group as they respond to the questions.

- **What do you see in the pictures?**
  
  » Possible answers: Trees in soil fertilized with lies are barren and/or dead.

- **What is happening?**
  
  » Possible answers: Trees in soil fertilized with some truth show some life and vigor.

- **What can we learn from the pictures of the trees and their soils?**
  
  » Possible answers: The more truth in the soils fertilizing the trees, the stronger the tree.

Then ask the large group:

- **If these trees were churches or communities describe what kind of churches or communities they would be and why?**
  
  » Possible answers:
    - **First tree:** Undeveloped, because bad beliefs and lies bring destructive actions, lack of cooperation.
    - **Second tree:** Not productive, because lies bring mistrust, there is no agreement, not all are participating.
    - **Third tree:** Developed, productive, because people have good beliefs and values, all are cooperating and improving their lives.

Believing the truth is the foundation for good personal and community development.

- **What happens in our churches and communities if people believe harmful lies?**
  
  » Possible answers: People can be divided by believing lies; lies can cause mistrust and conflict; lies result in harmful behaviors.
• If these trees represented a person, what would be their beliefs?
  » Possible answers:
    - First tree: They don’t believe in God or His truths.
    - Second tree: They believe God’s truth in some things, and the lies of the devil in others.
    - Third tree: They believe in God truth almost completely.

Biblical Application: Satan, The Father of Lies

TIME 10 MIN

Use paired discussions for this exercise.

Allow participants to discuss the question with one other person as it relates to the scripture for 2-3 minutes after each verse is read.

Post the following question on the flip chart.

• What does the Bible say about Satan’s plan to destroy people and nations?
  » Ask someone to read John 8:44.

Here in the gospel of John, Jesus is speaking to the Jews who wanted to kill him.

◊ “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Pause for the pairs to discuss the scripture as it relates to the question on the flip chart.

Ask someone to read II Corinthians 4:4.

◊ “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.”

Pause for the pairs to discuss the scripture as it relates to the question on the flip chart.

Ask someone to read 1 Timothy 4:1.

◊ “The Spirit (Holy Spirit) clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”

Pause for the pairs to discuss the scripture as it relates to the questions on the flip chart.

After all verses have been read and discussed in pairs, then ask the questions of the whole group:

• What does the Bible say about Satan’s plan to destroy people and nations?
  » Possible answers: By blinding people’s minds; lying to people, giving them information that is harmful, encouraging unhealthy, destructive behaviors or values.
In the Bible we have just read that Satan destroys people and nations by deceiving them with lies - telling them things that are not true.

- **What did Satan, in the form of a snake, tell Eve in the garden of Eden?**
  
  » Possible answers: He told Eve a lie saying that they wouldn’t die even though God said they would.

If we believe a lie instead of God’s truth, as Eve did, our actions will bear bitter fruit in our lives. Those lies also contribute to poverty in all areas of our lives - physical, mental, social, emotional and our ability to make good choices.

**MAIN IDEA:** Satan is a liar and a deceiver who wants to lead people away from God’s truth and prevent them from having an abundant life.

**Lies That Lead to Bitter Fruit**

Poverty is caused by many things that we cannot control. But what we believe and think - what is in our hearts and minds - also contributes to the problem. Together, let us think of an example of how believing a lie can lead to bad result, harm and poverty in our lives.

*Hold up your open hand and point to one of the fingers.*

For example, let us take one of the bitter fruits of poverty in the area of mental development. One bitter reality is that many women and girls have not had the same amount of education as boys and men.

Let us look at all the things that led up to this bitter fruit.

*Explain the following example to the participants.*

*Point to the fruits.*

First, what is the result? What are the fruits? Let us look at the result when girls don’t receive an education:

- She has less knowledge to pass onto her own children when she becomes a mother.
• She cannot read or get a good job to help support her family.
• She will be dependent on her husband, she may not know her legal rights or be able to defend herself if she is exploited or abused.
• She may lack self-confidence and think she cannot improve her life.

**Point to the trunk.**

• *What are the parents’ values? What did they think is best or important?*
  » Possible answer: They think it is best for boys to be educated and girls are not worth the money for education.

**Point to the branches.**

• *What is done by her parents? What actions did they take?*
  » Possible answer: Her parents spent money on her brother’s education but did not invest in her education. Her brother was sent to school and she was kept at home.

**Point to the roots.**

• *What do her parents think is true?*
  » Possible answer: They believe that boys are better than girls - they are not equal. So, the harmful lie is that girls are not worth the trouble of paying for their education.

• *If the whole country believed this lie, how would the country develop?*

**Hold up your open hand and point to two fingers.**

Let’s take another example of the bitter fruits of poverty in the area of both physical and social development. We will start with the belief.

**Point to the roots of the tree.**

A person may believe that having sex with a virgin cures HIV.

**For this example, let participants provide the answers:**

• *What is believed? What does this person think is true?*
  » Possible answers: Sex with a virgin cures HIV.

**Point to the trunk.**

• *If a man believes that having sex with a virgin will cure his HIV, what are his values?*
  » Possible answers: He values his own life and health more than that of a little girl. He does not value the life of the girl.

**Point to the branches**

• *If he values his life more than the little girl, what is the action, what will he do?*
  » Possible answers: He will have sex with younger and younger girls to be sure he finds a virgin.

**Point to the fruit.**
If HIV positive men are having sex with very young girls, what will be the result? What are the outcomes, what is seen?

» Possible answers: The infected men remain HIV positive.
  - They infect many younger girls with the disease - the girls may also become sick and may die.
  - These girls may also become pregnant and the baby may have HIV/AIDS.
  - These girls may drop out of school.
  - These girls are injured physically and emotionally, they feel used and discarded.

These are the bitter fruits that we see that come from the harmful lie that having sex with a virgin cures HIV/AIDS. This is another one of Satan’s lies.

Here is another example of a negative outcome or bitter fruit:

Consider a man who has no money saved to help his family in times of need. He spends any extra money on alcohol or roasted meat rather than saving it for the future.

» What are some bitter fruits that can come from not having any money saved?
  » Possible answers: No money for emergencies, medicines, or to pay school fees, etc.

» What are some of his actions that led to a lack of savings?
  » Possible answers: He spends it on roasted meat in the market or alcohol instead of saving it.

» What are some of his values that led to these behaviors?
  » Possible answers: His own desires are more important than the welfare of his family. He values the present moment more than saving for the future. He does not value who he is in Christ and that God will watch over his future.

» What are some beliefs that led him to spend his money this way?
  » Possible answers: His life will never change or improve, he should enjoy life now.

» Can you think of other harmful beliefs that are common in your communities?

Make a list of their ideas on a blank flipchart page; Pick one of the lies or harmful beliefs from their list. Then ask the following questions to the group:

• What do people who believe this think is important? What are their values?
• What do people do as a result of valuing this?
• What are the results of their actions or behaviors?

Application Activity: Discussion About Poverty, the Fruit of Harmful Lies

TIME

30 MIN

Divide the participants into small groups of 4-5 people.

Put these questions up on the flipchart:
• What are the fruits? What is seen?
• What are the actions that led to the fruits?
• What values prompted this type of behavior?
• What are the beliefs

In your groups, think of one bad fruit that happens when a person doesn’t have sufficient resources to survive or improve their life. Then, using the questions posted on the chart, work your way down the tree from the fruits, or results, down to the roots, or beliefs.

Ask, yourselves:

• What actions led to that negative outcome or bad fruit?

Next look at the trunk and ask yourselves:

• What were the values that caused those actions?

Finally, look at the roots and ask:

• What are the beliefs that led to those values and that behavior?

Decide who will share what you find with the large group.

After 10 minutes in their small groups ask one member from each group make a brief presentation of their tree.

If necessary, help guide the participants in understanding the relationships between beliefs, values, actions and fruits.

As we have seen from these presentations, harmful beliefs in homes and communities can lead to very bad things happening in our communities.

Beliefs, whether good or bad, will always shape what we value, and what we do in our families and communities. Many people do not see the connection between what they believe and value in their hearts and what they do everyday.

As Christians and local church leaders, we must faithfully teach God’s truths from the Bible. We must pray for wisdom to identify these harmful lies and speak against them.

Then people will recognize harmful beliefs and the terrible consequences they bring. You can use the tree to explain how this happens.

Ask someone to read Ephesians 3:20,21.

◊ “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”

• Where does the power come from to transform our lives?
  » Answer: God’s power is working within us.

• Whose power is greater, God’s or Satan? What does the Bible say?
  » Answer: God’s power is far greater than Satan’s power.
MAIN IDEA: Some beliefs are harmful lies that lead to actions which ultimately bring bitter fruit and poverty in all areas of our lives.

To reinforce the answer to this question, ask someone to read I John 4:4.

◊ “You dear children, are from God and have overcome them (false spirits), because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”

As we faithfully teach God’s truth, and pray for His help, His power will be at work within us. His truth and His power is able to withstand and silence all of Satan’s lies. To God be the glory!

• What questions do you have so far?

Give the group time to ask questions. Go through the two examples again if needed.

Review

• What are some things you have learned in this lesson?
  » List their responses on the flip chart.

• How do we overcome Satan’s harmful lies that many people believe?
  » Listen to their responses.
  » Possible answer: That we faithfully teach God’s truth from His Word.

• Where do we get the power to stand against Satan’s deception?
  » Possible answer: From God Himself.

In the next lesson we will continue looking at how harmful lies destroy people and contribute to poverty. Then we will see how the church with God’s help can overcome the power that these lies have in people’s lives.

Reflection for Action

Consider how easy it is to believe a lie. Make a list of any times that believing a lie has led to bitter fruit in some area of your life.

Closing and Prayer

Pray for God’s help in identifying harmful lies and His power to stand against those lies.
Thank everyone for participating.
In this lesson, we focus on some of the harmful beliefs that result in bitter fruit - signs of “poverty” in our lives. It is important for participants to understand that our beliefs can bring either good or ill results.

It all starts with what we believe in our hearts and minds. The work of the church is to counter these harmful beliefs with God’s truth and trusting in God’s power to help us.

**Learning Objectives**

- Consider the role of the church in replacing harmful beliefs with God’s truth.
- Identify some harmful beliefs that lead to poverty and replace them with God’s truths.
- Conclude that transformational development means changing people’s hearts, minds and actions to align with God’s truth.

**MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION:** Picture of the three trees - a sick tree, a struggling tree and a strong tree. The picture of the transformation tree. Flipchart papers and colored markers for the application activity.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Adapt the stories and all examples of traditional beliefs to what is common in your local community. Remember that you will not change people’s minds all at once - it takes time to change deeply held traditional beliefs and convictions.

Your role as the facilitator is to encourage participants to start the process of seeing the world in a new way and living in a way that is pleasing to God, by examining whether these beliefs bring good results or deepen poverty.
Prior to the lesson, photocopy (if available) or write out these questions on a flipchart page:

- What is true - what are the beliefs?
- What is best or important - what are the values?
- What is done - what are the actions?
- What is seen - what are the results?

Prior to the lesson, also photocopy or write out the following stories, each one on a different piece of paper:

Grace’s Beliefs:

Sarah’s sister Grace believes the traditional advice given to pregnant women. For example, when she became pregnant, her grandmother firmly told her that pregnant women should not eat any meat. So, Grace did not eat any meat during her entire pregnancy. But, without this important food, Grace became malnourished and weak. When the baby was born, the baby was very weak and small.

Beliefs About Curses:

Sarah and John are very sad after the death of their baby. They believe someone cursed them. They become suspicious of their neighbors. They think, “Is this person angry with us? Maybe he put a curse on us?” As a result, Sarah and John speak less with their neighbors. When they do talk, they often argue. When there is a community clean-up day, Sarah and John refuse to cooperate with their neighbors, even though a cleaner neighborhood would benefit their family, too.

Beliefs About Ancestors:

Sarah is happy when she attends church, and she says she believes in God and His Word. But, since the time she was a young girl, she was taught to respect the ancestors, the spirit world, and the witch doctor. Whenever she has a problem, Sarah first turns to the witch doctor. When her crop is failing, when a child is sick - she goes to the witch doctor for help. It costs her a lot of money each year. People tell Sarah that instead she should spend money on fertilizer for her crops or visits to the clinic. But Sarah isn’t sure that spending money on these things instead of the witch doctor will help. She doesn’t feel able to make the decision to live in a new way.

Beliefs About HIV/AIDS:

John, Sarah’s husband has heard a lot of information about HIV from clinics, but deep in his heart, he believes that HIV/AIDS is caused by a curse. He believes people with AIDS are cursed.
Because of this, John will not enter a shop owned by a woman named Martha, because he heard she has HIV. He will not buy food from Martha’s store, and he tells other people not to go to that store. As a result, Martha has fewer and fewer customers. She earns little money and eventually loses the store. Martha becomes very poor because John and people like him will not buy from her.

*If the class size is more than 20, you will need to provide additional copies of the stories to ensure that each group of 5 people has a story to discuss.*

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**Welcome and Review**

**Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.**

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

In our last lesson we discussed the problem of how harmful beliefs destroy good development and transformation in our lives and in our communities. First we looked at 3 different trees.

*Show the picture of the 3 trees.*

- **What do you remember about these trees? Describe each one to us.**
  
  » Possible answers: The first tree is a very poor tree because it is rooted in many lies.

  The second tree is growing a little better because it is rooted in more truth but there is only a small amount of fruit.

  The third tree is growing well because it is rooted almost completely in truth and there is plenty of good fruit.

- **What does the Bible say about Satan’s plan?**
  
  » Possible answers: He is a liar and a deceiver. He is the father of lies. He tricks people to believe his lies.

*Post the transformation tree on the flipchart and point to the roots/beliefs.*

- **How do we overcome Satan’s harmful lies that many people believe?**
  
  » Possible answers: By faithfully teaching God’s truth from His word, by trusting in His power over Satan, by being obedient to God’s teachings and following Jesus.

- **Where do we get the power to stand against Satan’s deception?**
  
  » Possible answer: From God Himself, from believing His truths, by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Ask someone to read Ephesians 3:20.

◊ “Now unto Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen!”
In our culture, we have many traditions and beliefs that have been taught to us by our parents, our grandparents, or maybe others in the community. Some of these beliefs are helpful to our families and communities. But other beliefs are harmful and can increase the challenges we face and cause much suffering.

**Say to the group, while using the picture of the tree:**

Consider the following belief: “If a baby eats an egg, he will become a thief.”

- **What are the values that underlie this belief? What does this mother think is best?**
  - Possible answers: It is best to follow the traditional teachings to keep children from becoming thieves; it is important that her child not become a thief.

- **What happens as a result of this belief and value? What is done?**
  - Possible answers: The mother does not feed the baby any eggs.

- **What is the result?**
  - Possible answers: The baby lacks protein, which eating eggs could have provided. Without this important food in his nutrition, the baby is weak and his growth is stunted.

Here is another traditional belief: “It is wrong to talk to your children about sexuality in order to educate them.”

- **If that is the belief, what does it say about what parents think is best, what do they value?**
  - Possible answers: They value their traditional beliefs and practices.

- **If this is what they value, how do they act?**
  - Possible answers: Parents do not teach their children about sex. They stay silent on the subject even as their children grow into youths.

- **Do youth stop being interested in sex simply because their parents don’t talk to them about it? What are the results if parents do not talk to their children about sex?**
  - Possible answers: Youth go elsewhere for information about sex - such as their friends or the radio or the TV. They may hear incorrect information about sex that encourages them to engage in risky sexual behavior.

**Application Activity: Discussion About How Some Traditional Beliefs Lead to Poverty**

*Divide the participants into small groups - of 4-5 people. If there are four groups, give one of the following stories to each group. If there are more, then, give the same story to two different groups.*

In this exercise, you will use stories about Sarah and her family to identify how belief and values lead to actions that may cause poverty and suffering.
Once you are in your group, one member will read a very short story about Sarah and her family. Just as we did last time, your group will then discuss the following questions for 10 minutes. Choose someone in your group to present the ideas your group discussed.

*After participants are in their groups post the 4 questions on the flipchart.*

- What is true - what are the beliefs?
- What is best or important - values?
- What is done - what are the actions?
- What is seen - what are the results?

Provide each group with one of the following stories that you have written out prior to the lesson. If there are more than 4 groups, you may give the same story to a different group.

**Grace’s Beliefs:**

Sarah’s sister Grace believes the traditional advice given to pregnant women. For example, when she became pregnant, her grandmother firmly told her that pregnant women should not eat any meat. So, Grace did not eat any meat during her entire pregnancy. But, without this important food, Grace became malnourished and weak. When the baby was born, the baby was very weak and small.

**Beliefs About Curses:**

Sarah and John are very sad after the death of their baby. They believe someone cursed them. They become suspicious of their neighbors. They think, “Is this person angry with us? Maybe he put a curse on us?” As a result, Sarah and John speak less with their neighbors. When they do talk, they often argue. When there is a community clean-up day, Sarah and John refuse to cooperate with their neighbors, even though a cleaner neighborhood would benefit their family, too.

**Beliefs About Ancestors:**

Sarah is happy when she attends church, and she says she believes in God and His Word. But, since the time she was a young girl, she was taught to respect the ancestors, the spirit world, and the witch doctor. Whenever she has a problem, Sarah first turns to the witch doctor. When her crop is failing, when a child is sick - she goes to the witch doctor for help. It costs her a lot of money each year. People tell Sarah that instead she should spend money on fertilizer for her crops or visits to the clinic. But Sarah isn’t sure that spending money on these things instead of the witch doctor will help. She doesn’t feel able to make the decision to live in a new way.

**Beliefs About HIV/AIDS:**

John, Sarah’s husband has heard a lot of information about
HIV from clinics, but deep in his heart, he believes that HIV/AIDS is caused by a curse. He believes people with AIDS are cursed. Because of this, John will not enter a shop owned by a woman named Martha, because he heard she has HIV. He will not buy food from Martha's store, and he tells other people not to go to that store. As a result, Martha has fewer and fewer customers. She earns little money and eventually loses the store. Martha becomes very poor because John and people like him will not buy from her.

After participants have discussed their story for 10 minutes in their small groups, ask one person from each group to read the story to the whole group and then present what they found to the large group.

Remind them to identify the beliefs and values in these stories, as well as the actions and the results. Write each group's answers on the flipchart under the categories for beliefs, values, actions and results.

Here is a summary of possible answers from the small groups' discussions on traditional beliefs that contribute to poverty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Behavior (Actions)</th>
<th>Results (Consequences)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace's Beliefs</td>
<td>Pregnant women should not eat meat.</td>
<td>It's important to follow traditional beliefs. It is important to avoid having bad things happening during pregnancy.</td>
<td>Grace does not eat meat when she is expecting a baby.</td>
<td>Both Grace and her child are malnourished. The baby was very weak when he was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Curses</td>
<td>People can use spiritual powers to harm and curse one another.</td>
<td>Value traditional beliefs, more important than God's power to protect them.</td>
<td>Sarah and John are suspicious of their neighbors and argue with them.</td>
<td>There is less support in the neighborhood for clean-up day. Sarah and John have bad relationships with their neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Ancestors</td>
<td>Traditional spiritual practices are the most powerful source of help and protect a person from evil.</td>
<td>Value traditional beliefs as, more important than God's power to protect them.</td>
<td>Sarah spends her money on rituals instead of using for family needs.</td>
<td>Sarah lacks money for things that would definitely benefit her family (fertilizer, the clinic). The rituals do not bring a benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>HIV and AIDS is caused by a curse.</td>
<td>Avoid people with HIV/AIDS so you are not cursed too.</td>
<td>John will not go to Martha’s store and tells other people not to go there too.</td>
<td>Martha becomes very poor and has to close her store from the lack of customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• As we considered these stories about traditional beliefs, what did you find interesting?
  » Let people share their thoughts and ideas.
• Some of us may have been raised with these beliefs or similar beliefs. Who taught you the traditional beliefs?
  » Possible answers: Family members, respected community leaders, friends.

Sometimes it can be uncomfortable to look closely at traditional beliefs. We might feel disrespectful towards the people who taught us. Or, it might be taboo to discuss these practices.

• How did you feel as we went through the stories?
  Let people share their thoughts. Some people might have felt self-conscious, nervous, or troubled to discuss these things so directly and openly. Be sensitive to these feelings and understanding as people share.

• Even though it can be difficult, why is it important to examine all of our beliefs - including our traditional ones?
  » Possible answers: If beliefs are harmful, we will be negatively affected; we should examine our beliefs and values to see which ones lead to positive change and which beliefs hold us back.

Some people, families and communities will not change for the better, because of long standing beliefs. As we saw in each of the stories, people’s lives can be harmed and, in some cases, even whole communities can be damaged.

Sometimes you will see changes happen in communities but then discover that they don’t last very long. People sometimes make changes because they are asked or forced to make them but never change their beliefs and their values to support those changes. So the community falls back into the old way of doing things.

We see from these stories that there is a connection between what people believe and value and poverty.
Point to the palm of your hand

The church must help people change their harmful beliefs and turn towards beliefs rooted in God's truth.

It can be difficult to let go of beliefs that we have held on to for a long time. From the time we were young, people may have said we need to do these things to protect ourselves and our families. But God - the Almighty God - promises to be our one and only protector.

Ask someone to read Romans 8:35-39.

◊ “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Does this verse promise us we will not have problems?
  » Possible answers: No, there are still problems. Christians still get sick and die. Christians often don’t get rich.

- But will our problems be greater than God’s own love for us?
  » Possible answers: No, nothing will separate us from the love of God. God’s love overcomes them. No angels or demons or any other power can separate us from the love of Christ.

This passage says that no spiritual powers like angels or demons or anything else in all creation will separate us from God’s love. God is more powerful than any Satanic curse or power.

- How can this encourage us to serve Christ alone?
  » Possible answers: It says Christ is greater than these other powers. Christ’s love is stronger than any other spirits or powers.

We talked about how some beliefs and values lead to bad outcomes. Our beliefs may lead to suffering and poverty in our lives. As Christians, what are we called to do?

Ask someone to read Romans 12:2.

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

- According to this verse, what are we Christians to do with our mind?
  » Possible answers: Do not keep thinking in the same way as those who do not fear God. Our minds should be renewed, changed. What we believe must change to God’s truth.
• **What do you think it means to have our minds renewed?**
  » Possible answers: Renewing our minds means having new beliefs and values in line with what Christ teaches us. It means being able to think like Christ. It means we leave behind our old negative beliefs and values.

• **What is the result of the renewing of our minds?**
  » Possible answers: We are changed. We are able to use our minds to know what God’s will is. We can use our reason to think and test so we see what is God’s will. It will change our values and our behaviors.

**MAIN IDEA:** God wants us to love Him with our whole heart and whole mind. God promises to be with us as we let go of harmful beliefs. Nothing can separate us from His love.

### Application Activity: Building a Transformation Tree

*TIME 30 MIN*

*Divide the participants into small groups of 4-5 people. If possible, divide them so that each group is from the same church congregation or community.*

We have practiced using the tree to talk about transformation. We’ve heard stories of how negative beliefs and actions lead to poverty and problems. Now, you will have a chance to make a tree that illustrates this.

Start at the top of the tree and focus on a problem, a negative, bitter fruit of poverty.

Write down a specific problem in a community. For example, many children with diarrhea, many children living on the street, failed crops, violence in families.

Then, on the branches, list the actions that led to the negative outcome.

On the trunk write the values, what is important.

On the roots write the underlying beliefs.

Then, think of one of God’s truths that should replace this harmful lie.

If you prefer, you can work from the roots of the tree upward and start with a specific local belief and explore how it leads to negative outcomes.

*Provide an example to get them started.*

For example: What is a consequence of poverty? One result is that, many mothers die in childbirth.
What actions lead to this result? Women are unwilling to go to the health clinic because it is inconvenient and prefer to give birth at home, or they do not have money or their husbands do not want to spend the money for the clinic or for transport.

What do these women value? They value their time and familiarity. What do the men value? They value money, more than their wife’s health.

What beliefs produced these values and determined this action? Women may believe that health clinics are not a good place to give birth. Men may believe women are not as important as they are, and don’t need or deserve special help during pregnancy and childbirth.

Christians in the church need to replace these harmful beliefs with God’s truth by teaching God's Word.

- **What is God’s truth that must replace the belief that women are not important and don’t deserve special help during pregnancy and childbirth?**
  - Possible answers: God created women in His image as well as men. They are equal before God and loved by Him

It is time now to build your trees.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this assignment. Then, each group will present their tree to all of us.

- **Is the task clear? What are your questions?**

*Allow 10 minutes to make their trees. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions. At the end, have each group share what they have created.*

*Be sure they think of one of God’s truths that should replace the harmful lie they presented.*

*After they have shared ask participants to hand in their trees and remember who was in their group.*

*We will use these pictures of trees again in our next lesson together.*

*Collect all the papers from every group.*

**Review 5 MIN**

Let’s review what we learned today.

- **How can our beliefs contribute to poverty and suffering?**
  - Possible answers: Some beliefs are not true and lead to actions that contribute to poverty and suffering.

- **Why is it important to closely examine our beliefs?**
  - Possible answers: Because some of our beliefs are lies and do not lead us to Godly living.

- **How can churches be very helpful in correcting harmful beliefs?**
  - Possible answers: By teaching more of God’s truth; helping us recognize some of the lies we believe.
As Christians and church leaders we can be sure that God will help us and be with us when we teach people about His truths and tell them of the dangers of harmful beliefs.

Ask someone to read I John 4:4-6.

◊ “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”

- Who is greater than the one who is in the world?
  » Answer: Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of truth.

- And where does this Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Jesus Christ live?
  » Answer: Within us - God’s own children.

Reflection for Action

Reflection for Action

Think about a harmful belief that you know is common in your family or community. Ask God to show you what His truth is that confronts that particular harmful belief.

Then think about how you would begin to share that truth with someone that needs to believe God’s truth rather than Satan’s harmful lie.

Closing and Prayer

Pray for God’s power to help us identify Satan’s harmful beliefs, replace them with God’s truth and stand against Satan’s deceit and deception.

Thank everyone for their participation.
The purpose of this lesson is for participants to understand that development that transforms us is more than just an individual effort. True change demands healing our relationships with God, with other people, and with creation.

The lesson reviews how poverty has affected these relationships. Then, it uses the story of the Good Samaritan to illustrate how transformed people take action to love their neighbors. Restoring our relationships is an essential part of development that transforms.

Learning Objectives

- Discover God’s truth in Jesus’ story of the good Samaritan.
- Discuss how healing relationships contributes to improving the lives of the vulnerable.
- Identify practical ways to demonstrate love towards our neighbors.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: Flipchart paper and markers for participants to work in small groups. Pictures of the transformation trees that the small groups drew in the last lesson.

Write out all the questions to be used in the stories and with Luke 10 on the flipchart:
- What are some reasons that people don’t help others?

Write out these questions for the last application exercise:
- How did broken relationships contribute to this negative outcome?
- What actions could be taken to heal these relationships?

HELPFUL HINT

Feel free to adapt stories to fit your local context. For example change the names, references to village life. Keep the emphasis on transformed people reaching out to help others.
Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Welcome, participants. Let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

- In the previous lesson, we talked about the negative results of poverty. Why is it important that we examine our beliefs and values when we consider these negative results?
  - Possible answers: Our beliefs and values determine our actions.

Some beliefs are harmful and lead to bad results. Some can be lies planted by Satan to deceive us.

As Christians, we believe it is best when our roots, our beliefs, are planted in the truths of Jesus. If you see good “fruit”, you know you have good “roots”.

When you created your transformation trees in our last lesson, you considered a problem, or negative fruit, and then identified what the underlying beliefs and values were, along with the outward actions that led to this problem.

- Who can name one of these beliefs and then share the Biblical truth that replaced this lie of Satan?
  - Refer to responses from the last lesson if they need help.

I asked you to think about a harmful belief that you know is common in your family or community. I encouraged you to ask God to show you what His truth is that confronts that particular harmful belief.

And, finally, I asked you to think about how you would begin to share that truth with someone that needs to believe God’s truth rather than Satan’s harmful lie.

- Did any of you tell someone about a harmful belief and replace it with God’s truth? If so, who could share their experience?
  - Let several participants share their experiences.

Application Activity: Discussion About Healing Relationships

In the last few lessons, we talked about how transformation can happen in all areas of our lives. It can change our entire lives. When we are transformed we can begin to do something about poverty in our own lives and in our communities.

We have said that God created us to be whole people.

- As whole people God created within us several different areas for development - let us review these parts of the whole person. What are they?
  - Hold up your hand and encourage others to do so. Using their fingers, have people mention each area of development: physical, mental, emotional, social and making choices.
• What does the palm represent and what is its function?
  » Possible answer: The spiritual area, that holds all areas together.

The Creation story in Genesis taught us that God’s plan was to meet our needs in all of these areas. In the Creation story, we also learned that God created us to live in relationships.

• What were the different relationships in the Creation story?
  » Possible answers: Relationship between people and God; relationships between people, and people’s relationship with the created world around them.

In the story of the fall of human beings into sin, we heard how sin had broken these relationships. We also learned how broken relationships make people vulnerable to many other problems.

• How can broken relationships between people make people more vulnerable to problems?
  » Possible answers: Wars, violence in families, discrimination where people shun others who are different, there is tension between different tribal groups.

• How can a broken relationship with the created world increase a person’s problems?
  » Possible answers: Disease from bacteria or viruses, natural disaster and famine, insects or wild animals that destroy gardens, pollution of water (that causes diarrhea) and air pollution.

• How can a broken relationship with God make people more vulnerable to problems?
  » Possible answers: Following harmful beliefs, lack of knowledge about God, lack of hope without Jesus, fear of spirits.

We have said that God wants us to grow in all areas of our life. When all these areas of a person’s life are in line with God’s truths and His plan for them, we say they are living a “transformed life.”

God wants all of us to be transformed in how we think and how we act.

As we learn God’s truth, we begin to believe it and reject old false beliefs. As our beliefs and values change, our actions will also change. If we follow God’s truth, we do His will each day, this will lead to good fruits, that is, good results in our lives.

In the same way, God also wants to heal our relationships. We cannot do anything to help the vulnerable and needy among us without first repairing broken relationships.

Healing relationships transforms people and problems. If we ignore broken relationships between God, people and creation, we cannot bring about true and lasting change.

MAIN IDEA: Repairing broken relationships transforms people and allows us to begin helping the vulnerable and needy in our communities.
Post question on flip chart. Have participants form groups of 4-5 people.

Ask someone to read Luke 10:27.

◊ “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 love your neighbor as yourself.”

In previous lessons, we discussed this verse and how it teaches us to love God with all areas of our lives. It is very important that Jesus tells this story of the Good Samaritan immediately after sharing God’s command to love Him with all areas of our life.

The expert in the law asked: Who is my neighbor? Jesus answered his question with this story.

Ask someone to read Luke 10:30-37.

◊ “In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

◊ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

◊ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

◊ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

◊ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Ask the large group:

• What was the condition of the man after “he fell into the hands of robbers”?
  » Possible answers: He had been robbed, was naked, wounded, half dead, unable to help himself.

• Jesus said we are to have mercy on our neighbors. Who are our neighbors?
  » Possible answers: Anyone who needs help; anyone created by God; who are desperate; who cannot help themselves

In your small groups think about all the reasons that people don’t help each other. You will have 2-3 minutes to discuss this, then we will hear your ideas.
After the group has discussed the question for 2-3 minutes, bring them together and hear their ideas. List their answers on the flipchart. Get ideas from all groups.

- **What are some reasons that people don’t help others?**
  » Possible answers: Lack of love for others, not being transformed, fear, thinking they are better than the person who needs help, not wanting to add to their own problems, they don’t want to trouble themselves.

We all know people who are vulnerable and in need of our help. It is easy to pass by and think of reasons why we would rather not give the help they need. But when we do that, we do not obey Jesus who wants us to show them mercy.

**MAIN IDEA:** Jesus wants us to have mercy and care for those around us who are in need of our help.

The man who fell among thieves was robbed of his clothes, beaten and deprived of his ability to take care of himself.

- **What are some examples of how we can be robbed, or deprived physically?**
  » Possible answers: Sickness; injury; lack of food or shelter; losing a job, taking drugs or alcohol, being robbed of our clothes, money and possessions.

- **What are some examples of how we can be robbed, or deprived mentally?**
  » Possible answers: No schooling, in or very little schooling, not much teaching from parents; not taught right from wrong.

- **What are some examples of how we can be robbed, or deprived emotionally?**
  » Possible answers: Feeling inferior, fear, feeling hopeless, lacking peace; self-pity; seeing only your own problems.

- **What are some examples of how we can be robbed, or deprived socially?**
  » Possible answers: Discrimination, injustice, robbed of friends and/or family; being shunned by others in the community.

- **What are some examples of how we can be robbed, or deprived and in our ability to make good choices?**
  » Possible answers: Peer pressure; controlled by others, not allowed to make choices; not knowing what is right, the difference between good and bad choices, not knowing about resources that could help.

Ask participants to return to their small groups and discuss the next question for 2-3 minutes.

Then debrief with the large group:
• **How can others and we can be robbed or deprived spiritually?**

  » Possible answers: Not knowing or accepting Christ; not accepting God’s love and forgiveness; being robbed of God’s caring presence, robbed of eternal life, living in fear.

The man who fell among thieves was found naked. Here Jesus is talking about physical nakedness, no clothes. But people are naked or exposed in other ways - ways that make them feel shame or loss of face. They feel humiliated and vulnerable.

*Ask participants to return to their small groups and discuss the next question for 5 minutes. Then debrief with the large group and list their answers on the flipchart:*  

• **Think of people in your community, how do they experience shame?**

  » Possible answers: Someone who cannot read or write, an unfaithful husband or wife, someone who does not have food or shelter, having a parent who is mentally ill, someone who cannot find a job and cannot support their family, someone whose house is not repaired, someone whose clothes are old and ragged, and people living with HIV or AIDS.

There was a time when nakedness was not a thing of shame.

• **Can you think of when that was?**

  » Possible answer: Adam and Eve when they were created.

It was Adam and Eve. When God created them the Bible says: “They were naked and not ashamed.” But sin brought shame and humiliation and made life more difficult.

We all have problems because sin entered the world. But God did something wonderful: he gave them a covering for their shame. It says in Genesis 3:21, “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” He did this because he knew they were vulnerable and had mercy on them. That is our job too as Christians.

What God did was an example of what His church could do. Now, close your eyes and think about someone who is feeling shame or humiliation.

• **How could you help cover that person’s shame? What could you do to show love and mercy and help protect them in their vulnerability?**

  » *Allow 1-2 minutes of silence for them to consider this.*

Consider reaching out to that person in the future.

**MAIN IDEA:** God covered Adam and Eve’s shame after they had sinned. He expects us to show love and mercy and help protect people when they are vulnerable due to shame or humiliation.
• In Jesus’ story who was the person who helped the man who was robbed?
  » Possible answer: A Samaritan.

• In the time of Jesus, who were the Samaritans, how were they viewed?
  » If they don’t know, say: They were people born from a mixed marriage - between a Jew and a Gentile.

The Samaritans were hated and despised by the Jews in those times. The Samaritans were seen as enemies. Yet, a Samaritan comes along, an outcast, a person with no status and probably not much money. What does he do? Let’s reread this verse:


◊ “But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

This is how we show our love for God and our love for our neighbors - even neighbors who may be suspicious of us or even hate us. Jesus said to the expert in the law, “Go and do likewise” - be like the Samaritan.

• Can we do this? Can we help our neighbors, even if we dislike or mistrust one another?
  » Pause to let participants consider this before continuing.

MAIN IDEA: Jesus expects us to help anyone who is in need regardless of his or her position, education, religion, wealth, or tribal group.


◊ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
◊ “What is written in the Law?” He replied. “How do you read it?”
◊ He answered, “‘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, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”
◊ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

• What was the question asked by the expert in the law?
  » Answer: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

• What did Jesus tell him was the right answer?
  » Answer: “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 love your neighbor as yourself.”
So Jesus’ story is a picture of what it means to be a Christian - to love God and to love your neighbor, completely, without holding back anything that is good. Because we have faith in Jesus, we love our neighbor to show that we are God’s children who have eternal life.

• **How do we show our love to God?**
  » Possible answers: Believe in and trust in God, value his teachings, gifts and promise, listen to God, do what His word says, follow His ways.

We show love to God by what we believe what we value and by what we do.

• **Are we showing our love for God if we go to a traditional healer?**
  » *Let the group respond.*
  » Possible answer: No.

• **Are we showing our love for God if we are unfaithful to our spouses?**
  » *Let the group respond.*
  » Possible answer: No.

• **Are we showing our love for God if we prevent our girl children from attending school?**
  » *Let the group respond.*
  » Possible answer: No.

• **How do we show our love for our neighbors?**
  » Possible answers: Sharing the Gospel of Jesus, helping and encouraging them, providing for their needs when they can’t help themselves.

One wonderful way to love our neighbors would be to tell them how Jesus Christ died for their sins, rose again and lives today. He wants to be their savior. This would be helping them by covering their shame from sin with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ’s blood on the cross.

Another way to love our neighbors is to help them with other problems that may cause them shame as we discussed before. Often problems may not be a direct result of their own sin, but are a result of sin and trouble in the world.

We are encouraged in Galatians 6:2 that to fulfill the law of Christ, we should be willing to “Carry each other’s burdens.” This is another way to show love for one another.

Let us now take a few minutes to thank Jesus what we have learned so far and to ask Him what he wants us to do so show our love for God and for our neighbor.

*Pause for a few moments of silent prayer and then briefly close this section with a prayer to encourage one another to do this.*

**MAIN IDEA:** If we truly love God we will love our neighbor.
We are going to hear more about Sarah and John, the family we have been hearing about in previous lessons.

- **What do you remember about Sarah and John and their family that makes their lives difficult?**
  
  » Possible answers: They are not educated, Sarah cannot read and or write, they are poor, they cannot send all of their children to school, their baby died of malaria, John was beaten by because of tribal differences and is lame; it is difficult for John to find work, someone stole Sarah’s gardening tools, a money lender took advantage of John.

- **How have harmful beliefs and broken relationships made them more vulnerable?**
  
  » Possible answers: They believe they are cursed by their neighbors; they are afraid of the family who beat John, they do not believe God loves them, they have not accepted Jesus as their savior; they think they are cursed and seek help from traditional healers.

- **What do you remember about Sarah and John’s neighbors - Elizabeth and Jacob?**
  
  » Possible answers: They have a strong marriage, and four healthy children; they attend church, they believe in God, Elizabeth has learned about how to care for her family from her church.

Sarah’s Story:

Elizabeth has learned good things from health lessons offered at her church. Through her church, she has also joined a savings club and learned how to save and earn money by selling vegetables. She has become more active in her church and has reached out to others that are more needy than her.

One afternoon during the heat of the day, Elizabeth visited Sarah. The two sat in the shade of a large mango tree not far from Sarah’s gardens. Elizabeth could see that Sarah was feeling sad about the death of her infant son. She felt compassion for Sarah. “Sarah, I am sorry that your baby passed away. As a mother myself, I can imagine how difficult it is for you.”

Elizabeth told Sarah about attending the health classes and joining the savings club.

“I have learned so many useful things,” said Elizabeth. Before, I felt helpless when my children were sick. I wasn’t sure how best to help them. But, now I know that I can do things to both prevent and treat their sickness and keep my children healthy.” Sarah was very interested in what Elizabeth was sharing, “Tell me more,” she said.
“The best part of it,” said Elizabeth “is that it has helped me believe and trust in God in a new way. I’m not afraid of curses against my children. I’ve learned that God can destroy the power of a curse. And I know that God has given each of us minds to learn good things that will help us have better lives.

Elizabeth invited Sarah to join the health group and Sarah said agreed to come to the next meeting.

Ask participants to discuss the following question in pairs before asking the group:

- What did Elizabeth do to show love to Sarah?
  » Possible answers: She visited her, she encouraged her, she identified a harmful believe and replaced it with God’s truth, she invited Sarah to attend health lessons at her church.

Jacob’s Story:

A few days later Jacob, Elizabeth’s husband, visited Sarah’s husband John. Jacob is a trader and was encouraged by his Pastor to attend trainings to gain more business skills. Later, Jacob became an elder in the church. Jacob has encouraged men in his church and community to improve their livelihoods using sound business principles; he has also helped them improve their relationships with their wives and to communicate better with their children.

When John saw Jacob walking toward his place, he was suspicious of Jacob. “Why is he here?” John thought. “We don’t know each other very well. “What does he want from me? “

There was another reason John was suspicious. “Jacob is an elder of the local church,” John thought to himself. “He is probably going to tell me I am bad since I am not attending church.”

Jacob showed great respect to John and made him feel at ease. He asked John about his family and John felt more and more at ease. After some time Jacob said, “John, you have suffered a great loss with the death of your child. I know when my brother died of an illness, I was angry all the time. I was looking for someone to blame. Sometimes all I wanted to do was go to the bar and get drunk.”

Hearing Jacob’s story and his honesty helped John feel that Jacob understood what he was going through.

Jacob continued, “What helped me was the encouragement of other people, especially members of my church. They invited me to do things with them, so I would spend my time in a good way. They checked in with me regularly and helped me get through a difficult time. It made a big difference and after some time, I began to feel positive about life again.”
Jacob told John about the business training that was available and invited John to attend.

“I don’t think I could attend...” said John. John was ashamed because of his lack of education.

Jacob sensed John’s lack of confidence, “My group has people with all different backgrounds - some have had only a little schooling.”

John still felt unsure, but he appreciated Jacob’s kindness and felt it was sincere.

Ask participants to discuss this question in pairs then ask the whole group:

• How did Jacob show his love for his neighbor John?
  » Possible answers: Jacob visited John, he was friendly and respectful, did not act in a way that judged John, he showed compassion and encouraged John.

As we see from these stories, when people are vulnerable, and lack needed resources, their beliefs about themselves and feelings of shame can affect their relationships. When God transforms people, their beliefs and relationships are restored. They can connect with God, with creation, and with each other in new and positive ways.

MAIN IDEA: Needy people tend to be ashamed and often break relationships. Transformed people work to bring healing to broken relationships.

Biblical Application: Loving One Another

An important part of the Gospel message is about healed relationships. Jesus came to reconcile God to human beings and people to each other. He showed no favoritism, he valued everyone equally and gladly shared meals with sinners. Through his miracles, Jesus showed his power over creation.

Ask someone to read John 13: 34-35.

◊ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

• How did Jesus show his love for the world?
  » Possible answers: He died on the cross for our sins. He healed people, reached out to others, especially ones that others shunned.
• How can we follow the example of Jesus and show our love for one other?

  » Possible answers: Not fighting, visiting and encouraging people, visiting and caring for the sick, teaching others God’s truth from his word, being a good example for others, providing food, shelter and clothing to people in need, visiting people in prison or who others have shunned.

If we believe that God loves us and that all people are created in his image, we will value every person and will act lovingly toward them. When people see us doing this builds God’s kingdom. They will know that we are believers and followers of Jesus by our love for others.

Ask someone to read Romans 12:9-18.

◊ “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

◊ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

◊ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

In these verses, Paul instructs us in how to restore and keep good relationships. He describes a life that is transformed by God.

• What is God asking us to do to build relationships with others and with Him?

  » Possible answers: Be devoted to each other, honor one another, practice hospitality, be at peace with everyone, relate to people where they are (those mourning or rejoicing), serve God with zeal, be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in our prayers to God, be generous, live in harmony, do what is right, hate what is evil, do not be proud.

• How does God want us to respond to those who mistreat us?

  » Possible answers: To bless them, not to seek revenge, live at peace with them.

• How does God want us to relate and respond to people in need?

  » Possible answers: Be willing to associate with people who have low position, share what you have with them, welcome them into your home.

Application Activity: Healing Broken Relationships

TIME 10 MIN

Be sure to have the pictures of the transformation tree that the small groups created in the last lesson.
Return to the small groups you had in the last meeting, where you drew a picture of the transformation tree.

Return the pictures to each group. Post the two questions on the flip chart.

Looking at your trees, consider the negative outcomes that were the fruit on the tree and the beliefs that were the roots of this outcome. Discuss these two questions in your groups for the next 5 minutes:

- How did broken relationships contribute to this negative result?
- What actions could be taken to heal these relationships?

After the groups have discussed these questions, listen to their ideas. Be sure each group has a chance to share.

• Who can summarize the lessons in Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan?
  » Possible answers: Jesus expects us to help anyone who is need, regardless of their position, education, religion, wealth or tribal group.

• How can healing relationships between people contribute to reducing poverty and improving the lives of the poor?
  » Possible answers: By showing them love, by encouraging them, by respecting them and reaching out to them.

• What are some practical ways that we can show love towards our neighbors?
  » Possible answers: Visiting and encouraging people, visiting and caring for the sick, teaching others God’s truth from his word, being a good example for others, provide food, shelter and clothing to people in need, visit people in prison or who others have shunned.

Think about a time when another person encouraged you and reached out to you when you were going through a difficult time. Think about what they did to help you.

Now, think of a person in your community who is vulnerable or struggling because of their circumstances. Think about one thing you could do to help them. Commit to reaching out them, to showing love to them. Next time we will hear about your experiences.

Thank everyone for participating. Pray for participants to heal any broken relationships in their lives.
LESSON 9 - THE CHURCH’S ROLE IN ADDRESSING POVERTY

Notes to Facilitator

This lesson focuses on the important role of the church in transformational development. It encourages people to think about what the Bible tells the church to do - what God expects of us.

The lesson gives some ideas for how different members of the church can play their part in development. It also helps participants to understand that one of the greatest resources of the church is its people.

Learning Objectives

- Consider the church’s special calling to serve the poor.
- Identify community needs and resources.
- Identify the strengths and resources of participants’ churches and link them to needs in the community.
- Define the role of the pastor and the congregation in ministries to the poor and vulnerable.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: At least 25 pieces of flipchart paper and different colored markers for small group work. You will also need several Bibles.

Write out the 4 mapping instructions on a flip chart page

- Draw the major landmarks of your community.
- Add community resources and strengths.
- Draw, using a different color marker, things in the community that contribute to poverty.
- Draw, using a different color marker, where the poor and vulnerable people live in our community.

Write each question on a different flipchart page:

- List all the resources in your church and congregation that could help the poor.

HELPFUL HINT

This lesson includes several questions that involve brainstorming. Encourage people to give many different answers and examples, listing as many things as they can think of.
Welcome participants and share the learning objectives for today’s lesson.

Before we begin today’s lesson, let’s review what we learned in our last lesson.

In the last lesson we reviewed how God created us to live in relationships with other people, with Him, and with creation. As we change through development that transforms, our relationships will also change.

When we take God’s truth into our hearts and believe the lesson in the story of the Good Samaritan, we will begin to change our relationships with our neighbors who are in need.

Your reflection assignment in the last lesson was to think of a person in your community who is vulnerable or struggling because of their circumstances, and to consider reaching out to help them.

• Who would like to share their experience in doing this?
  » Listen and affirm two or three people’s responses.

If we remember that every person we meet carries within them the image of God, then we cannot ever treat them with disdain or contempt.

• If we are transformed by God’s truths, what could we begin to do to care for the needy people in our communities?
  » Possible answers: Link them to community and church programs that can give them information, skills and knowledge; encourage them and help them identify their own God-given abilities; tell them of God’s love for them and guide them to a deeper relationship with him.

Poverty splits people apart, but acting with mercy brings people back together. Building strong loving relationships can help change beliefs and actions.

You will remember that in our first lesson, the word we used for how growth happens is “development.” When people grow and change for the better we call it “development.” When people in whole communities begin to grow and change for the better we often call it “community development.”

You will also remember in lesson three we talked about transformation. “Transformation” is the word we used for how people make positive changes in their lives. We used the picture of a tree to represent how we can make positive changes in our lives.

Application Activity: Community Mapping

Today, we will consider the needs as well as the resources in our communities and in our church congregations. We will start by doing an exercise called “community mapping.”
In small groups, you will create a map of your community that includes both needs and resources. Each group will make a simple drawing - a map - of your community.

Create small groups with no more than 5 people per group. If possible, group those who are from the same community or church together.

If everyone is from the same church, form groups according to similar types of people - a group of women, a group of younger people, and a group of older people. This helps to identify what may be important to one group of people that is overlooked by a different group.

Give each group a big piece of flipchart paper and markers of different colors.

Post the community mapping instructions on the flipchart. Then read these instructions to the entire group.

1. Start by drawing in the major landmarks of your community on your paper. This could be roads or rivers in your community or the main market. You should take only 5 minutes to do this.

2. Add in the community resources and strengths that might help the poor. Where are the schools? Water points? Churches? Health resources? Think of as many as you can, and draw them all on your map. Keep in mind resources that might assist people physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally. Take only 5 minutes to do this.

3. Think about aspects of the community that contribute to poverty. For example, maybe a river contributes to a lot of mosquitoes and malaria. Maybe there is a garbage dump that brings many flies that spread disease. If there is a witch doctor who is promoting harmful beliefs include their location as well. Draw these problems on your map. Use a different color marker for this. Take no more than 5 minutes to do this.

4. Where do very poor and vulnerable people live in our community? Maybe there is a very poor neighborhood or a slum where many poor people live. Or maybe there are small clusters of very poor families that live throughout the community. Think about people who are poor in areas other than physically poor. Use your open hand to visualize the mental, social, emotional and the ability to make good choices. Put these on your map. Use a different color marker for this. Take 5 minutes to do this.

Work quickly together. You can refer to the instructions, and remember, try to take only 5 minutes for each question. It is more important to have an accurate map than a beautiful map! I will remind you when it is time to move on to the next section of your map.

- Is the task clear? What are your questions?

Let the groups ask questions. After each 5 minutes encourage them to move on the next question.

Circulate to the groups while they are working to make sure they understand the instructions and have both the church and a problem area on each of their maps.

After they have completed all four steps, have each small group present their community maps. After they have presented ask:

- What did you learn that was interesting or surprising about your community when you drew your map?

  » Listen to one or two responses.
Application Activity: Discussion About What Churches are Doing to Help the Poor

Participants should stay in their small groups, but address the large group with the following questions:

Churches are known and respected in their communities.

- **Why do people respect the churches?**
  - Possible answers: They care about and for people, they represent and promote God’s truths, they remain in the community over time.

  Our churches are already doing many things to help people in need. First, let us think about ways we already know churches help people who are poor and in need. No ministry is too small to mention - churches doing small things with few resources are just as important as churches doing big projects.

- **What are churches in your community already doing to help the poor?**

  Let’s list as many different things that we can.

  *List all of their suggestions from all the groups on a flipchart as they mention them. Make sure it is things they are already doing, not things they think would be good to do*

Application Activity: Matching Resources With Needs

Give each small group more flipchart paper.

We know there are many different resources that already exist in our local congregation. This includes more than just money.

*Post the question on the flip chart:*

- On your new sheet of paper, make a list of all the resources in your church and congregation.
  - For example, you can list some of the skills of different congregation members.
  - Think creatively about the different strengths of your church.
  - Focus on what your church already has.

- For each strength or resource, list one way that it could be practically used to help solve a problem in your community.
  - Look at your list of resources, and then look at the community map to remind you of the local problems. List one practical way a resource could help solve a problem.
    - Remember the transformation tree! Be sure to think of how the resource would also involve changing beliefs and actions to reach a good result.
» Be practical and realistic when you think of possible ways to use the strengths. This is not a competition to see who has the most! The goal is to think of many good ideas that can realistically be put into practice.

_Give each group 10 minutes to work on their lists. At the end of this time, have each group share one example of resources and how they could help solve a local problem._

**MAIN IDEA:** Many people within the church have strengths that can help solve problems in the community.

**Application Activity: Discussion About All Our Skills Come From God**

Look at the list of skills you just made that people in your church have to share.

- **Now think of someone in your community who may not attend a church but who knows how to do something very well. What is it that they do well?**
  » _Listen to their responses and list them on another flip chart page._

Now look at all these skills you have within the church and the community on these two lists.

- **How did those people get the knowledge and learn to do that skill so well?**
  » _Possible answers: Their parents taught them, they went to an educational program, they learned from their mistakes, they learned by watching others._

*Ask someone to read Isaiah 28:24-29.*

◊ “When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cumin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheels of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it. All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom."

- **What does God say about how the farmer gets his farming knowledge and skill?**
  » _Possible answer: His knowledge and skill comes from God Almighty._

- **What does this tell us about God’s love and concern for us?**
  » _Possible answers: He wants us to have knowledge and skills that help us and make our lives better._
Look at the two lists of knowledge and skills on the flip charts.

Use this list to fill in the blanks of the following 6 questions or more. For example: Where does the builder get his or her knowledge and skill?

- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - Let’s say it altogether: God Almighty.
- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - All together: God Almighty.
- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - All together: God Almighty.
- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - All together: God Almighty.
- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - All together: God Almighty.
- Where does the ___________ get his or her knowledge and skill?
  - All together: God Almighty.

Everyone receives his or her knowledge and skills from God Himself. Those who do not have faith in Jesus may not acknowledge him or give thanks to him, but the Bible says their knowledge and skills are still a gift from him. God deserves our thanks and praise for the good gifts He gives.

Every skill and strength that can be helpful to others is a gift from God Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom. He wants us to use our God-given skills to do His kingdom work in our communities.

When we say the Lord’s Prayer in the church we pray, “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6)

The church is God’s instrument to do his will on earth, as it is in heaven. We have a magnificent work to do!

**MAIN IDEA:** God gives people the knowledge to diminish the terrible results of sin in this world. God should have the glory and praise for the good gifts that He gives us.

**Application Activity: Discussion About Resources Outside the Community**

TIME 5 MIN

Some problems in our communities cannot be solved by the church alone.
What are some resources outside your community that could help the poor.

» List their suggestions on a flip chart page.

Think of government resources, non-governmental resources (NGOs), and other groups that could assist your church to help the poor.

Be realistic. Which of these resources actually exist in your district and around the community you have mapped? For example, does the Ministry of Health have a clinic or hospital nearby? Does a NGO have a microcredit program in the area? Does the government have an agricultural education program nearby?

We read in James 1:17 that “Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above.”

Many of these people may not even know Jesus Christ or admit that their wisdom comes from God. But God is gracious in the gifts he gives to all of us even though we don’t deserve it.

» Look at your community maps. What are the major problems you see? Is there a problem that you as a church cannot solve alone but you could begin to solve it working with one of these outside resources?

» Listen to two or three responses.

When Christians choose to take action to solve difficult problems in their communities by working with institutions such as the government, NGOs or other groups, they are caring for the poor as Jesus Christ commanded.

Ask someone to read Ephesians 1:22.

◊ “And God placed all things under his (Jesus) feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

The church is God’s presence in the world.

God has chosen the church to be his hands in the world, to provide comfort, healing and help to those who are in pain, who are sick, who are in need. He asks us to love him and love our neighbors.

Application Activity: Discussion About Jesus, Our Example

TIME 10 MIN

Since we are God’s representatives in our communities, we must look at all the reasons Jesus came to earth and what it was he came to do as our example.


◊ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

• To what groups of people did Jesus “proclaim good news”?
» Possible answers: The poor, prisoners, sick (blind), the oppressed.

In addition to proclaiming that this was God’s Son and restoring relationships between God and man, Jesus had many other ministries.

• **What other things/works did Jesus do on earth besides preaching and teaching?**

  » **List the things they mention on a flip chart sheet.**
  » Possible answers: Jesus healed the sick both men and women.
    - He fed the hungry.
    - He cast out demons.
    - He stilled the storm.
    - He associated with outcasts - sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors.
    - He raised the dead - he defeated death.

• **As you think about the work of Jesus, in what ways did he heal relationships between God and man?**

  » Possible answers: He died for our sins and rose again in power as head over everything for the church.

• **In what ways did he heal relationships between people?**

  » Possible answers: He spent time with people considered to be sinners; he had compassion on the poor and the needy; he was loved and respected by the people.

• **In what ways did he heal relationships between people and creation?**

  » Possible answers: He healed the sick, fed the hungry, made the blind to see, and overcame death.

Look at the problems you identified on your community map.

• **Are any of the problems you identified, like a problem that Jesus solved during his life on earth?**

  » **Listen and affirm their responses**

**MAIN IDEA:** While He lived here on earth, Jesus shared the good news of who He was and He took care of the sick, the hungry, and the needy. We are to follow His example.

**Biblical Application: Faith & Works**

TIME 5 MIN

Ask someone to read James 2:14-17.
“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

- **What does “faith without works is dead” mean to you?**
  - *Listen to participants’ ideas.*
  - *Possible answer: It is impossible to separate beliefs from actions.*

Think back to the transformation tree. The beliefs are very important - they are the roots. But our beliefs determine our values that produce our actions. It is not possible to separate our beliefs from our actions.

- **When do we show that we truly believe in and love God?**
  - *Possible answer: When our actions in every area of our lives honor God.*

*Ask someone to read Matthew 5:13, 14.*

- “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

- **What do you think Jesus means when he says that we are to be salt and light to the world?**
  - *Possible answer: We are to reach out beyond the church to the people in our community.*

The local church must have a positive influence on the community. People in the local church must be prepared to go out to where the people are, listen to them, find out what they need and together with them design programs to meet their needs.

**MAIN IDEA:** It is not possible to separate beliefs from actions. God calls the church, those who believe in Him, to reach out to the people around them and care for their needs.

**The Church and the Role of the Pastor**

The way churches serve the poor and bring development that transforms is through its people. People in the church have different roles.

- **What can pastors do to encourage their churches to do development that transforms?**
  - *Listen to ideas. Be sure to bring out the following points:*
    - Raise congregation awareness of the needs of poor people.
- Encourage church members to become active in caring for the poor.
- Help to decide if and how the church should partner with other churches and organizations.
- Provide general guidance and leadership to the ministries.
- Lead by example - caring for the poor and needy himself or herself.
- Encourage volunteers and lay leaders not to grow weary but to persist in doing good.
- Delegate important responsibilities to others.

This last role - delegating and sharing responsibilities with others in the church - is very important. Pastors are very busy. They also have other work (such as preaching, teaching, working with other pastors). Pastors cannot do everything by themselves. Church members also need to do the work of the church.

In Romans 12:4 we read: “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function” so we all have different gifts to be used for God's glory to be seen by the world.

The Church and the Role of the Congregation

There are many other leaders in the church besides the pastor. There are lay leaders - women’s leaders, Sunday school teachers, deacons, choir leaders and also all the members of the church.

• What are ways other leaders and people in the congregation can get involved?
  » Listen to ideas. Bring out the following main points:
    - Lay leaders help lead the day to day work of a ministry to the poor. They help plan the details and organize people.
    - Church members can volunteer and carry out the ministries.
    - The whole congregation can encourage volunteers to keep going and help them when they are weary.
    - Everyone can pray for the work.

Development organizations can be very helpful to the church. World Relief, as a Christian organization, aims to empower the church to serve vulnerable people.

World Relief wants to help equip the church to do development that transforms people and their community. World Relief believes that the church is God's chosen instrument for changing the world.

God called his church to care for the poor and needy in our world. The church cannot choose whether or not to do it because obedience to Jesus Christ demands it. Churches are especially called and equipped by God to work for development that transforms.
MAIN IDEA: It is very important to get the entire congregation involved with development that transforms us, not only pastors.

Today, we talked about the church’s special role in development that transforms people and communities.

- Why should churches be involved in caring for the poor and needy in their communities?
  » Possible answer: They are God’s instruments to do his will in this world.

- Why is it important for more people than the pastor to become involved in a church’s development ministries?
  » Possible answer: Because God calls everyone in the church to use his or her gifts for God’s glory.

- In what ways are the people of a congregation one of the greatest strengths of a church?
  » Possible answer: God has given each person in the church knowledge, skills and gifts to be used to do his will.

Take a few moments to think about the strengths people have in your church. Think about how together with those people your church could do something to help people who are vulnerable and/or suffering in your community. Decide to talk with someone in your church about your idea.

Read Isaiah 58:10, 11.

◊ “If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be liked a well watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

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Notes to Facilitator

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage participants to reflect on all they have learned and done in the past 9 lessons. We want them to reflect on each lesson and how what they have learned has personally affected them. This lesson also challenges participants to make personal commitments to put into practice God’s great commandment to love Him and to love their neighbor. And, it challenges them to take action to help others in their churches and communities.

*Time does not include the closing testimonies and prayer.

Learning Objectives

• Review some of the key points learned over the entire curriculum.
• Determine what personal commitments and actions they will take as individuals, as church members, and members of their communities to help others.
• Express these commitments and actions to one another.
• Visualize together in a skit the probable results of a church taking action to help Sarah and John.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND PREPARATION: Put up the different flip charts and visual aids used in earlier lessons to help in reflection, such as the facilitator’s pictures of the healthy and unhealthy trees; the transformation tree and other helpful flip charts, such as key verses, the trees created by participants, and community maps.

HELPFUL HINT

To help guide participants towards considering the commitments they make to take action in their churches and communities, give examples that fit your particular context.
Refer to “Looking Back and Looking Ahead” and write out each of the review questions on separate pieces of paper for each lesson, to distribute to each small group.

Write out these questions on a piece of flip chart paper.

• What are the dreams, the fruit, you hope for in your life?
• Think about how to reach these dreams. Are there values and beliefs that you need to change for this to happen? Is there a relationship that needs to be healed?
• What actions will you take to reach your dreams?

Write out these questions on a piece of flip chart paper.

• How would you like your relationships to change with your family? Your community? Your church?
• What do you want to be transformed in the lives of your neighbors - in your communities and your churches?
• What will you do differently to love others as part of loving God? How will you help your churches and communities take action?

Welcome to our final session together! It has been wonderful to get to know you. We have discovered and learned many new things together. You have practiced and applied these ideas in our sessions and in your Reflection for Action assignments. Let’s review some of the main points we have covered.

Divide the group into 9 small groups with at least 2 people in each group. Each group will be assigned review questions related to one lesson.

If there are not enough people to make 9 small groups, then assign two questions to make sure all 9 lessons are covered. Hand out each set of lesson questions to the assigned group for them to discuss together and answer.

Allow the groups to discuss their questions for 5 minutes. Then call the whole group to attention and work through the questions. Begin with the first lesson and then move on to the second. Continue energetically and quickly in this way until all the questions have been covered.

Once each group has answered their question, ask the whole group, “Do we need to add anything else before moving on?”

Keep the following answers in front of you so as to make sure that all the important ideas are covered.
Lesson 1: Understanding Development

• What do we mean when we talk about development?
  » Possible answers: Development means to grow and change over time.

• Tell us about the picture we used to represent development of the whole person?
  » Possible answers: The hand with its 5 fingers to remind us of the 5 different areas that a person needs to develop. Our physical bodies, our minds, our social relationships, our emotions and our ability to make choices. The palm of the hand represents our spiritual being which relates to God and affects and unites these various parts of ourselves.

Lesson 2: Understanding Poverty

• In what ways can a person be poor or in need?
  » Possible answers: Poverty is more than a lack of money. Poverty results in unmet needs in our physical, mental, emotional, and social development and undermines our ability to make good choices. People need help, love and care in all five areas.

• What is the origin of poverty in the world?
  » Possible answers: The result of Adam and Eve’s sin was that sin broke relationships between God, between people and with the world around them. After that, life became difficult and poverty was common.

• What is God’s plan to rescue people and His world from the effects of disobedience and sin?
  » Possible answers: God loves us even in our sin and rebellion. God sent his son Jesus to die for our sins. God wants us to confess our sins to him and he will forgive us our sins. If we believe in his son he will make us his own children. As his children, we are honored to be part of his church to do his will in the world.

Lesson 3: God’s Compassion for the Poor

• What are some of the good gifts that God has given us to help us have a better life?
  » Possible answers: Medicine, hospitals, schools, police, sunshine, rain, knowledge of how best to live.

• What does God say about people who oppress the poor?
  » Possible answers: They show contempt to him, they insult God who made the poor.

Lesson 4: The Transformation Tree

• What is transformation?
  » Possible answers: When positive changes in what we believe and value align with God’s truths and we see positive growth in all areas of our lives - the physical, emotional, mental, social and how we go about making choices,

• How does the transformation tree represent transformation within us?
  » Possible answers: Our beliefs (the roots) control our values (the trunk) which then, influence our actions (the branches) and determines what the results (fruits) will be seen in our lives.
Lesson 5: Development that Transforms

• How do our beliefs and values determine the “fruit” in our lives, both good and bad? Give an example.
  » Possible answers: If we believe something to be true, even if it is a lie, the choices we make and our actions will reflect those beliefs. For example: If we believe that women are not equal to men, then we may decide not to educate girl children.

• In John 15:5-8, what does God say we must do to have much fruit in our lives?
  » Possible answers: We need to be connected to Jesus to bear fruit, apart from him we can do nothing.

Lesson 6: Harmful Beliefs and Poverty

• How can our beliefs contribute to poverty and suffering?
  » Possible answers: Some beliefs are not true, they are lies from Satan, the deceiver, these lies determine what we value and lead to actions that contribute to poverty and suffering.

• How do we overcome Satan’s harmful lies that many people believe?
  » Possible answers: We must faithfully teach and trust God’s truth from His word, we must replace harmful lies with God’s truth and pray for God’s power to overcome these lies.

Lesson 7: Replacing Harmful Beliefs with God’s Truth

• Why is it important to examine all of our beliefs and actions?
  » Possible answers: To make sure they are based on God’s truths, if not, we will be negatively affected; we cannot bear good fruit if we are not rooted in God’s truths and following Jesus.

• What is the role of churches in correcting harmful beliefs?
  » Possible answers: Teaching more of God’s truth; helping people recognize some of the lies they believe and praying for God’s power to overcome these lies.

Lesson 8: The Role of Relationships in Transformation

• How does Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan teach us how we should respond to people in need?
  » Possible answers: To have mercy and to care for them. Help them, even if they are our enemies.

• How can healing relationships between people contribute to reducing poverty and improving the lives of the poor?
  » Possible answers: Fewer wars, less violence in families, less shunning and discrimination, more respect and love for others, more likely for people to develop in all areas of their lives when relationships are strong.

Lesson 9: The Church’s Role in Addressing Poverty

• Why should churches be involved in caring for the poor and needy in their communities?
Possible answers: God has called and directed the church to do his will in this world and that includes caring for the poor and needy just as Jesus himself did. Because all people are created in God’s image, when we help them we are honoring and serving God.

• **Why is it important for more people than the pastor to become involved in a church’s development ministries?**

Possible answers: God has given each person in the church knowledge, skills and gifts to be used to do his will. All are called to serve and use their gifts. The people of the congregation are one of the greatest strengths of the church.

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**Personal Reflection**

With this in mind, let us take a few minutes for personal reflection. In our very first session together, we talked about the future hopes and dreams we had for our lives and for our families. Think back to those hopes and dreams.

*Post the next three questions on the flipchart. Read them to the group and say:*

We are going to sit quietly for a few moments and consider these questions for ourselves.

- **What are the dreams, the fruit that you hope for in your life?**
- **Think about how to reach these dreams. Are there values and beliefs that you need to change for this to happen? Is there a relationship that needs to be healed?**
- **What actions will you take to reach your dreams?**

*Sit down with them and allow at least 3 minutes of silence for them to consider the questions.*

Sit quietly for a few minutes as you consider these questions.

Now, get in the groups you had for the last exercise. Share your thoughts and feelings about these questions. Share what you plan to do for your personal commitment to transformation and to realize your future dreams.

*Let groups discuss for 5-10 minutes.*

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**Application Activity: Reflecting on Personal Relationships**

A major lesson of this curriculum is that as we change in our personal lives, our relationships will also be transformed.

*Post this set of questions on the flipchart.*

- **How would you like your relationships to change within your family? Your community? Your church?**
- **What changes would you like to see in your communities and in our churches?**
• What will you do differently to love others as part of loving God?
• How will you help your churches and communities take action?

HELPFUL HINT
You may want to adjust these last two questions to your local context and participants. If you are working with volunteers, ask them how they will approach their activities differently. If they are pastors, ask, what will they do differently to mobilize their congregations or support transformational ministries? If they are church members considering getting started, ask, what will they do?

First, quietly consider these questions in your own mind.

Give people a few minutes to think.

Now, turn to your small group of 2 or 3 people and share your thoughts with one another.

Give the small groups about 10 minutes to discuss this. Then, gather everyone’s attention to the main group.

Please share any commitments to action that you will take and what you will do in your church and community.

Let people share as they feel comfortable. Allow 10-15 minutes for this.

Application Activity: Finishing the Story

It is wonderful to hear your personal testimonies. Stories and testimonies share wisdom and encouragement.

We have been following the story of Sarah’s family. In Lesson 8, we heard how Sarah and John’s neighbors, Elizabeth and Jacob were reaching out to them. Elizabeth invited Sarah to a health group at her church. Jacob invited John to attend trainings that would help improve his productivity and livelihood.

Now, it is up to you to decide how their story ends! Form groups of 8-10 people each. Each group is going to create a skit. Imagine what will happen next in Sarah and John’s lives. How do you think they will be helped by Elizabeth and Jacob? How will they be helped by the local church? How do you think Sarah and John will change as a result of this help? Your group should make up a short drama that gives possible endings to this story. Then we will perform for one another.

Allow about 15 minutes to plan and practice their dramas. Then let each perform their skit for the whole group.

• As you see these different dramas showing how Sarah and John’s lives are changing as a result of God’s love and help from their neighbors and church, how does that make you feel?
  » Listen to responses.
We saw there are different ways that Elizabeth, Jacob and the local church might help Sarah and John. In the same way, there are many different things our own churches can do.

- **Imagine someone in your own community like Sarah and John. Based on the strengths and resources we have identified in our church congregations and communities, how could we take action to help them?**

  » **Listen to responses.**

There are many different good things we can do! There are many different ways to help. Let us begin taking steps to love our neighbors and help them.

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**Biblical Reflection**

God has given us himself through Jesus Christ, and he has given us his Spirit. He tells us to abide in Him, since he is the vine and we are the branches. Together we are the body of Christ. He has given us each other, through the church. Together, we are called to love God with our whole lives. Together, we are called to love our neighbors.

Let’s listen to Luke 10:25-27 one more time.

**Read Luke 10:25-27:**

◊ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

◊ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

◊ He answered, “’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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

◊ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

- **What does this verse mean to you?**
  
  » **Listen to responses.**

- **How does it define development that transforms?**
  
  » Possible answer: Loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

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**Closing, Celebration, and Prayer**

It has been a very special time to go through this learning process with you. I have learned from you. Do not waste the valuable lessons you have learned here. Take what you have learned and put it into action. Let us love God, and love our neighbors, with our whole lives.

**As time allows, close the training with a time of sharing what God has taught them and a time of prayer for one another.**
“Christ Jesus . . . by him all things were created. . . All things were created by him and for him.” Col. 1:16

Jesus, (God’s Son) our creator, created each of us with the ability to learn and change. Because he created us, he knows very well how adults learn best. During his days with us on earth, he was the greatest teacher who ever lived. And, the way he taught showed us his wise and loving character.

As we lead adult groups in the study of God’s truth, we can learn from Him. We can learn how to help people understand what is real and true and to change the way they live. As important as it is for us to learn from Jesus how to teach, it is even more important to learn from Jesus how to be the kind of person he was within. As Jesus’ disciples, we need to ask him every day to help us become more like Him in the way we think and in the way we teach others.

How did Jesus help people learn?

1. Jesus cared deeply about people. He loved them. He wanted them to know the truth.
   ◊ “And when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things.” Mark 6:34
   ◊ “(Jesus speaking) Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” Luke 13:34

   » People need to know that the teacher cares about them, that he or she is concerned that they learn well and practice truth. All of the remaining marks of an effective teacher display this love.

2. Jesus respected people and listened to them. He didn’t make them feel small or stupid. They felt safe enough to move toward him, to talk to him and to ask him questions. How easily people came to talk with Jesus and how safe they felt when they were with him!
   ◊ “Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.” Mark 10:1
   ◊ “When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to weep his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them a poured perfume on them. . . Jesus said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Luke 7:37,38, 50.


   » Learners need to feel safe with you as a teacher. They need to know that you will never judge or humiliate them.
3. Jesus used stories and illustrations built upon the everyday experience of his hearers.

◊ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matt. 5: 13-16

◊ “When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to tell you.’ ‘Tell me, teacher,’ he said. ‘Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?’” Luke 7:39-41

» Alternative passage: Matt. 13:45-46

» People learn well when a truth is set in a story or an illustration that is familiar to them.

4. Jesus asked questions to pose problems or help people think more carefully about something.

◊ “. . . He asked them, ‘Who do people say I am?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ He asked. ‘Who do you say I am? Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ.’” Mark 8:27-29

◊ “. . . The collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, ‘Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?’ ‘Yes he does,’ he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. ‘What do you think Simon?’ He asked. ‘From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—From their own sons or from others?’ ‘From others,’ Peter answered. ‘Then the sons are exempt,’ Jesus said to him.” Matt. 17:24-26


» Questions help learners discover truths for themselves, and think about how to solve the problems that the teacher poses.

5. Jesus entered into conversations with people. As he talked with them, He discovered what they thought and where they needed to change in their thinking. Then he gently continued the conversation sharing the truth that they needed to hear.

◊ Jesus conversation with Nicodemus: “How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” John 3:4-5

◊ “So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. . .Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. . .When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, ‘Will you give me a drink?’ . . .The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’ . . . Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have
given you living water.' ‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?’ . . . Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’” John 4:4-14

» Talking together about a truth gives both the teacher and the learner the opportunity to explore what they really think. It gives the teacher the chance to identify and correct any misinformation and finally, it helps the learner remember the truth better.

6. Jesus responded to people’s questions or sought to discover what they felt deeply about or struggled to understand.

◊ “One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’’” Mark 12:28-31

◊ “As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’ . . .’” John 9:1-3


» Adults learn best when the truth to be learned deals with pressing questions they have.

7. Jesus responded to immediate problems in people’s lives that affected them deeply.

◊ “As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’ . . . Jesus stopped and called them. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ He asked. ‘Lord,’ they answered, ‘we want our sight.’ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.” Matt. 20:29, 31-34

◊ “A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.” Mark 1:40-42

» Adults learn best when the teacher addresses their immediate problems.

8. Jesus praised and encouraged people when they were thinking clearly and attempting to do the right thing.

◊ “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” Luke 10: 23-24

◊ “One of the teachers of the law came . . . When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’” Mark 12:28, 34
Teachers need to encourage learners in even their smallest efforts to understand and change.

9. Jesus was gentle with people when he needed to correct their present thinking or when He wanted to help them think in completely new ways.

◊ “Then the little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.” Matt. 19: 13-15

◊ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder . . . but I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. . . You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt. 5:21-22; 27-28

10. Jesus insisted that people change their behavior not just their thinking.

◊ “. . . Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matt. 7:24-27

◊ “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. . . So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. . . When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done.” Luke 9:1-2, 6, 10

Adults usually want to use what they learn immediately. In order for them to begin practice a truth in their life we must help them do two things:

- Think about how that truth can be practiced in their everyday lives.
- A chance to actually practice the truth with the support of the facilitator and the group.
- Time to talk about what happened after they have tried to practice the truth.