

# LEAN IN

SOMEWHERE TO START

## Lean In

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

## Part 3 - "The Heart of the Issue"

November 13th, 2016

**Bottom Line:** *We work TOGETHER to do what we can't do ALONE.*

**Study Verses:** *James 2:14-17, Matthew 5:3, Isaiah 58:7-12 and 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10*

**Define The Win:** *Participants would understand that change requires a community effort where each individual is valued. Group members would gain a different perspective on poverty and understand that poverty comes in numerous forms other than material and financial. They would recognize that true help involves meeting physical needs, sharing the Gospel and empowering, engaging and equipping those who are hurting.*

### Key Points

- *God guides our steps. God grows our hearts. God provides strength and satisfaction.*
- *His faithfulness is the source of our faithfulness.*
- *Jesus said, "TAG, you are it."*
- *We value others by understanding what's important to them.*

## ENCOUNTER

- What is the primary task of the church? How does your answer to this question influence your willingness to “lean in” to the issues facing our world and the way you go about caring for others?

*"The goal is to see people restored to being what God created them to be; people who understand that they are created in the image of God with the gifts, abilities, and capacity to make decisions and to effect change in the world around them; and people who steward their lives, communities, resources, and relationships in order to bring glory to God." -Steve Corbett from **When Helping Hurts***

- According to the quote from Steve Corbett, how should the care and help we provide for those that are in need differ from that of the world? As a church, how should we define impact and what we consider a “win” in terms of our efforts to help?
- What is poverty? What words or pictures come to mind when you think of poverty? Other than material needs, what are some other forms of poverty?
- How can our helping actually hurt not only the person in need, but the giver as well? In what ways can we create co-dependency relationships and allow a God complex to spring forth?

## FORMATION

- Read James 2:14-17. What has the potential to cause our words of Christ’s love to become bankrupt and hollow to those in need?
- Read Matthew 5:3. What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”? Why are the poor in spirit promised the Kingdom of Heaven? How does understand and acknowledging our own poverty fuel humility and shape our approach to others?
- Read Isaiah 58:7-12. What promises are contained within this passage for those who display compassion to others and help those who are hurting? How does God use our obedience to shape our character?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10. When people in need look at your church, in what ways do they see us reflecting the heart of Christ? What else could our church be doing to address issues of poverty?

## EXPRESSION

- As you continue to “lean in” and discern where God is calling you to act, what tensions, hesitations or pushback are you feeling?
- Where do your eyes need to be open in terms of issues of poverty happening in your city, region and world?
- How can we as a small group come together and leverage our combined resources to make an impact in places where we see need? What would it look like to empower those in need?

*LEADER INIGHT: When we see the difficult issues of the world, the solutions to the problems seem obvious. People who are hungry need food. Families without a home need a roof over their head. Racism could be solved by becoming color blind. If only the “have’s” would be more compassionate to the “have nots,” then all that is wrong with the world would be instantly fixed. Yet, sometimes the obvious solution to a problem can cause more harm than good. Sometimes in our attempt to create a quick fix we perpetuate the problem and make it worse. We give something that addresses the symptoms but ignores the deeper issue.*

*We throw our money, time or resources at a problem without getting our hands dirty and being curious and compassionate. We fail to lean in and understand how things got to be the way they are. All our efforts, as well intended as they might be, keep the cycle of poverty spinning. What we have to understand is that poverty goes much deeper than material inequality. Poverty is a “serious lack of means for a proper existence.” There are individuals who have their physical needs met in abundance, yet aren’t truly living. They are stuck in poverty. Just because one has food, water and shelter doesn’t mean they aren’t bankrupt. There is poverty of identity where people have a broken relationship with purpose. There is poverty of stewardship where individuals have a broken with stuff. And, then there is poverty of community where relationships are broken.*

*The truth is apart from Christ we all find ourselves in poverty. We are a broken people who are only put back together by the life-changing power of the Gospel. Understanding our own poverty causes humility to spring forth in our actions and words. It reframes our perspective on the people behind the issues. We recognize they are no different than us and that they are valuable in God’s eyes. It is this hope and message we carry with us as ambassadors for Christ. We don’t want to just solve problems or deal with issues, but help everyone we come in contact with encounter a message that empowers them and speaks to the core of their identity.*

*Does this mean all we do is talk and share the Gospel? By no means. Our words become bankrupt and hollow when we fail to meet the physical needs of those who are hurting. Yet, instead of just stopping at the physical need we also speak into the spiritual needs that remain below the surface. We recognize that God orchestrates everyone’s story and as a result we should “lean in” and listen to the*

*tale God is telling with that individual's life. While addressing the issues we work to empower people by involving them in the solution.*