

God's world

How will they have hope?

God is at work bringing forth His coming kingdom in the poorest communities on earth. Do we really believe this? Our attitudes toward the poor and their circumstances greatly affect the deeper issues of poverty. Rather than succumbing to the crippling despair, we can have hope knowing God loves all people and cares about their needs. God's living hope for the poor will result in true transformation once they start following Christ.



Luke 4:18–19 (NIV)

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Study it

Read the account of Elisha and the widow (2 Kings 4:1–7). Why was the widow in despair? What was Elisha's response? How did Elisha bring hope to the widow? Did he address only her immediate needs or change her situation permanently?

Experience it

- ▶ For one day, experience life as most of the world lives. Turn off all the electronics in your home. Take a bucket bath. At meals, eat only rice and beans. Drink only water. Walk or take the bus instead of driving. What was most difficult? How did this experience make you feel?
- ▶ Take a family drive or walk through one of the poorest areas in your community. Pray specifically for the things you see (e.g. a homeless man, a dilapidated house). Begin asking God to show your family ways to get involved that will start to transform lives and bring living hope to people in this neighborhood.

Discuss it

- 1 What is the most valuable way to "help" those in need? What is the most strategic way?
- 2 Why is it important for people in poverty to have hope? Who is the true source of hope?
- 3 What does this proverb teach us? "Give a man a fish, he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." Is it better to give food and provisions to the poor or to help them learn the skills they need to get out of poverty?

Map it

Research and identify countries in the world that have the highest poverty levels. Locate these countries on the map and pray that God would bring transformation to those in poverty.