

LET'S MAKE THEM HISTORY

STUDY GUIDE

Let's Make Poverty History

Brad Watson

January 25, 2009

introduction

Bono, the lead singer for the band U2, states that there are 2003 verses in the Bible that mention God's heart for the poor, second only to those verses that speak of personal redemption.

But what is poverty? According to the Bible, poverty is when a person cannot provide the basic needs of food, clothes, and shelter for himself and/or his family.

Why make poverty history? Because every 3 seconds in our world, someone's child dies as a result of extreme poverty. Over 1 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. Over 1 million Canadian children live in poverty including 50,000 people in the Windsor and Essex region. But even more compelling than all the statistics on poverty is Jesus' command for us to feed the poor, clothe the naked and provide shelter for the homeless.

Is anybody else feeling overwhelmed by the impossible task of making poverty, injustice, prejudice and ignorance history?

Begin by reading Matthew 14:13-21

1. Have you ever experienced poverty? When? What effect did it have on you?
2. In this passage, the disciples seem pretty hopeless about the impossible task because they are focused on what they don't have rather than on what they do have. Have you ever experienced this? What is Jesus' instruction to them?
3. The deciding factors between people getting fed and going without food in this story are:
 - a) Jesus' willingness to work with what the disciples had, not with what they didn't have and
 - b) The disciples' willingness to offer their limited resources, trusting that God could break, bless and meet the need. Someone said, that if God is passionate for it, He is also ultimately responsible. Our failure often times is not focusing on God.
4. What do you think the response of the disciples was as they picked up twelve baskets of leftovers? What is the significance of the 12 baskets?

moving forward

One of the questions God brings to mind is, "What am I presently doing that I would not be doing apart from the power of God in my life?" When it comes to poverty, when was the last time you've written to our government concerning the poor? Did you know they promised .7% of our economy to go to poverty reduction in the world and they have yet to fulfill their promise. That's *point* 7% - but we have to give it if God is going to bless and multiply it.

Before you get up from this time with God, whether alone or with your group, find a computer and visit www.makepovertyhistory.ca. Watch the short video "Let's Get to the Point" and then click on the link below it to send an e-letter to the Prime Minister voicing your concern. Brainstorm other ways that you can make poverty history.

changing your mind

However, there should be no poor among you. Deuteronomy 15:4