Options Together ____

A Biblical Guide to Engaging American Poverty



Group Guide



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Forward

Over recent years, there has been an upsurge of involvement among followers of Christ on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and those treated unjustly. Perhaps this is being guided by Proverbs 31:8-9, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Yet, the fallen nature of our world produces injustices that perpetuate poverty in every generation.

So, what can we, followers of Jesus, do? We, who all bear His image, can first realize that we all experience poverty in differing degrees, both spiritually and physically. The disciple James says God chose the "poor of this world" to be "rich in faith." As this study helps us understand His heart for the poor, it will also teach us much about how to be rich in faith!

People caught in the web of poverty often experience desperation and pain. In these places, many learn to trust God deeply. While those in material poverty are poor in the things of this world, their priceless dependency on God produces a richness of faith that ever more deeply reflects Jesus Christ's image. That's a lasting treasure no amount of "worldly wealth" could ever afford.

So, what is our lesson? It is valuable to study God's heart for the poor because we get to learn lessons that will build a richness to our faith in Him and qualities that will transform us to become more and more like Christ! Additionally, the study of what God says about His heart for the poor equips us to view and engage our neighbors as fellow "heirs of the Kingdom" and frees us from seeing them as "second class citizens."

Options Together[™] aims to motivate our heart, and engage our head and hands, toward loving all people stamped with His image. As a result, we will be more effective witnesses to the gospel. Ultimately, it is our hope and prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to fill our hearts to love others as He has loved us!

Milton Massie

Executive Director/Steward
Cru Inner City



Introduction

Thank you for diving into the *Options Together*[™] Bible Study! Since Jesus announced His ministry in Luke 4, He and His followers have made both proclaiming good news to the poor and setting the oppressed free integral in the call to make disciples of all nations. In recent years, it has become increasingly important to have both a deep biblical understanding around these issues, and a practical approach that leads to flourishing for all involved. The *Options Together*[™] Bible Study is here to help!

This study has been created to engage both the head and the heart by diving into the Biblical truths that run from Genesis to Revelation. In addition, we see examples of those who have enjoyed the riches of engaging with, and learning from, people who are on the margins of society.

Poverty in America, and all around the world, is not just a lack of money. Poverty can be defined by a lack of options: a lack of good options that lead to flourishing. These good options include access to relationships that work, to the opportunity to live out the *Imago Dei* (Image of God) and many others. The greatest option of all is the opportunity to know Jesus and to walk with Him and His people, the Church. We believe that as we create options together, in partnership with those who are on the margins of society, we bring glory to God and are blessed ourselves.

This study is not meant to be a comprehensive guide. In fact, in many cases, questions answered here will lead to more considerations and questions. The resource page at optionstogether.org is meant to offer you and your group additional means to go even deeper in these complex issues.

So, whether you are in a small group, a large group or using *Options Together™* for personal growth, our prayer is that God would use this tool to draw you close to Him and that He would guide and direct you as you engage in the world around you. Get ready for what could be the greatest adventure of your life!



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Who Are the Poor?

"God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

SAINT AUGUSTINE

God has special concern for those trapped in poverty. Jesus himself demonstrated God's heart for the marginalized by the way He lived on earth. As a child, Jesus was a political refugee fleeing the tyranny of Herod. In His ministry, Jesus spent much of his time with the disabled, the sick, prostitutes, thieves and tax collectors; not with the wealthy or the religious elite. During his public ministry, He did not have a "place to lay his head" (Matt 8:20) and He did not have money enough to pay the temple tax (Matt 17:27).

Poverty is complex. At its root, poverty can be defined as a lack of options—a lack of good options that lead to flourishing in life. This study is meant to help us discover solutions as we learn to create options in the context of growing, Christ-centered relationships. You will hear from God's Word, watch others share their experience and have the opportunity to engage with those in your city who lack options.



Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people.

PSALM 113:5-8

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

JAMES 2:5

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

PSALM 9:9

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah



was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "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." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

LUKE 4:16-21

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

PROVERBS 14:31

1. Ho	w does	God	describe	the bro	kenness	of	poverty	٧?
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- 2. What might the weight of poverty feel like based on these verses?
- 3. How does God relate to those in poverty? How is that different from society's relationship to them?
- 4. How well has the modern Church related to those who live with few options?



5. How is it that those who are materially poor can be rich in faith?





VIDEO
"Who Are the Poor?"

- 1. What are your initial impressions after watching the film?
- 2. What lack of options did you see? How did it make you feel?
- 3. How do you identify with the pain shown in the video?



4.	What difference	does t	rusting	Jesus	make	to	those	in	need?
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- 5. What questions or concerns come to mind when you consider engaging with those living in poverty?
- 6. What advice did Charles Gilbert, the man under the bridge, offer about relating to those experiencing homelessness?
- 7. Andy Crouch said that he tries not to use the phrase, "the poor," and instead asked us to view others as people who are coming out of a story of poverty and to see how God is working in their story. Why would that distinction be important?



READ Psalm 69:30–33, Psalm 35:10, Isaiah 26:5–6 and Deuteronomy 15:11

PRAY Ask God to show you His heart for those in poverty and to give you the same heart.

JOURNAL Take time to write down your observations from these scriptures.

DO Before the next module, talk with someone outside this group about what you are learning.



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MODULE 2

Who Is My Neighbor?

"The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But...the Good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., I'VE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAINTOP

Teacher and former pastor John Piper says, "I believe it would not be too much to say that all of creation, all of redemption, all of history hang on these two great purposes—that humans love God with all our heart, and that from the overflow of that love we love each other."

First century Christians fed the hungry, believers in the Middle Ages cared for victims of the Black Plague—Christians have been pouring out their lives for their neighbor for thousands of years. Loving our neighbor is a distinction of who we are as believers. Today, there are unique challenges for believers as they live out this call. This study will look at the Biblical call to love our neighbor and the practical realities of this call.



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?" 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." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

LUKE 10:25-37

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

LEVITICUS 19:18

For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.

PSALM 72:12-14

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-7

- 1. What was the heart condition of each person in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- 2. How does the Samaritan's response reflect what Jesus did on the cross?



3. Why did the Samaritan act when the religious leaders did not?





VIDEO"Who Is My Neighbor?"

- 1. What are your initial impressions after watching the film?
- 2. Describe how Miss Pearl lives out God's love for her neighbors.
- 3. How do both the Good Samaritan and Miss Pearl reflect the gospel?



4. How does relying on God	's provision and protectio	n free us to love our	neighbor?
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5. What qualities in Miss Pearl's approach to her neighbors were helpful in ministering to them?

- 6. How could demonstrating God's love by meeting practical needs open doors to the gospel?
- 7. In the video, Glen Kleinknecht talked about systems that lead to flourishing. What are some examples of the systems that lead to flourishing?



READ 1 Timothy 6:17–19, Luke 18:18–30, Proverbs 11:25 and Luke 14:12–14

PRAY Ask God to give you opportunities to love your neighbor.

JOURNAL Take time to write down your observations from the these Scriptures and any opportunities you have had to love your neighbor.

DO Meet a neighbor, coworker or student you do not yet know. If you know all these people, take the initiative to talk with one you don't know well and learn something new about them.



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MODULE 3 Imago Dei

"It sounds extremely odd to our ears, but God's intention all along was that the world be full of idols—full of images. More exactly, the world was meant to be full of representatives of its Maker. And the only adequate representatives of the Creator are the image bearers, not lifeless images, since only persons can adequately reflect the image of a relational, personal Creator."

ANDY CROUCH, PLAYING GOD: REDEEMING THE GIFT OF POWER

In all of creation, men and women are the only ones created in the *Imago Dei*, Latin for the image of God. From the porcupine to platypus, none reflect God as we do.

The Bible says that we bear the image of God. We are not God or a part of God, but we are more than just another kind of animal or a random collection of atoms brought together by chance. We are image bearers of the almighty, all-powerful Creator of the universe who poured Himself out on a cross to buy us back from sin and death.

Being an image bearer means that we reflect God's glory and are his appointed representatives. Our purpose is to rule here on earth over God's creation and serve as Jesus did. How well we do that is directly related to how well we see the image of God in ourselves and others.

Throughout this study, we will look at what it means to be an image bearer and how that informs the way we engage with poverty and those caught in its web.



Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

GENESIS 1:26-28



Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

ROMANS 5:18-19

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

PSALM 9:9

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

JOHN 13:3-5

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

PROVERBS 31:8-9

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

PROVERBS 14:31

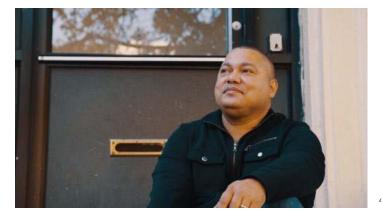
Discussion

1. Think about a photograph, what is the purpose of that image?



- 2. According to Genesis 1, how does mankind reflect the image of God?
- 3. What are some ways that we rule on earth?
- 4. How has sin impacted the image of God in us and our method of ruling over creation?
- 5. How does Jesus demonstrate what it means to rule?
- 6. How might poverty impact people's ability to rule over creation?





VIDEO
"Imago Dei"



1. What did you see that stood out from the video?
2. What prevents us from seeing people as image bearers of God?
3. How could a deeper understanding of the image of God in mankind change the war we see people who come out of situations like Jimmy's?
4. In what ways do we see Jimmy reflecting the image of God by ruling?
5. How is poverty particularly damaging to the image of God?
6. How could the work of justice, mercy and evangelism (motivated by an understanding of the image of God in others) better honor God by reflecting His image?



+ Practice

READ Genesis 1:26–28, Genesis 9:6, Colossians 1:15, James 3:9 and Revelation 5:1–10

PRAY Ask God to give you a vision to live, reign and rule in ways that reflect the image of God in you, for the benefit of others.

JOURNAL Take time to write down your observations from these scriptures and additional insights the Lord gives you about the image of God in every person.

DO Challenge yourself to recognize the image of God in those you encounter this week. Intentionally consider those you might normally avoid.



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The Scars of Racism

"Tragically, too often in the past evangelical Christians have turned a blind eye to racism or have been willing to stand aside while others take the lead in racial reconciliation, saying it was not our responsibility. (I admit I share in that blame.) As a result, many efforts toward reconciliation in America have lacked a Christian foundation and may not outlive the immediate circumstances that brought them into existence. Our consciences should be stirred to repentance by how far we have fallen short of what God asks us to be as his agents of reconciliation."

BILLY GRAHAM, "RACISM AND THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH"

Poverty is one of many scars left by our country's history of racial injustice. While racial and ethnic tensions are long-standing problems in every culture, here in the United States our history of enslaving people, Jim Crow era segregation and ongoing racism have had lasting effects on many people of color. These effects leave many without the options and opportunities that people of the dominant culture have benefited from for generations. The Bible has much to say on the issue, and Christ's death and resurrection offer a potent path for healing.

This study is meant to be a first step in understanding this complicated issue. We will be reminded that God created all nations and that one day every nation will be represented in heaven. We will examine God's call to Christians to step into the pain of our brothers and sisters from every tribe, tongue and nation and live out the unity we have in Christ.



From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

ACTS 17:26

All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.

PSALM 86:9



For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

ROMANS 10:12-13

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

JAMES 2:8-9

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."

ACTS 10:34-36

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

REVELATION 7:9

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

GALATIANS 6:2

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26

Discussion

1. Acts 17:26 states that God created all mankind through one man. How should we view people from different ethnic backgrounds?



2. What is God's heart for the people of the world?
3. How do we define favoritism?
4. How could favoritism keep us from loving others as ourselves?
5. Why do you think God preserves tribes and nations in heaven?
6. How well has the American Church suffered with and carried the burdens of those who are wounded by racial and ethnic hatred?







VIDEO
"The Scars of Racism"

- 1. What are your initial reactions to the video?
- 2. Cynthia explained that her experience of sexual abuse aligns closely with her experience of racism. What similarities did Cynthia describe between wounds of racism and abuse?

- 3. How is an understanding of the Image of God helpful in motivating us to seek justice?
- 4. How does Soong-Chan Rah model "suffering with those who suffer" as he reflects on the Tamir Rice shooting?



5. Andy Crouch speaks to individual attitudes of racism and the systemic legacy of racism. Why is it important to understand both?



READ James 2:1-13

PRAY Ask God to reveal times in your life when you have shown favoritism. Take time to confess anything that the Lord has shown you. Pray for God to reveal systemic favoritism in our culture. Pray for opportunities to build relationships and listen well to those from different ethnic backgrounds.

JOURNAL Write down your observations from James 2, as well as observations about personal or systemic favoritism you have observed or experienced.

DO (Choose one or more) Rent a movie about slavery or the civil rights era. Watch the news and take note of any favoritism or injustice. Learn something new about Native, Asian, or Hispanic Americans or others who have been marginalized in American history. Look at the resource page of optionstogether.org for more information on ethnic minority marginalization.



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We Are All Poor

"You are loved with an everlasting love. And underneath are the everlasting arms."

ELISABETH ELLIOT

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

So far in this study, we've learned that poverty is not just a lack of money, but a lack of healthy options that lead to flourishing. As we dive into the Bible, we see that even when we have resources and access to good options, we do still have a problem. Our problem is universal. It's spiritual poverty that keeps us from living the full and abundant life God intends for us.

In this segment, we will come face-to-face with our own spiritual bankruptcy. We'll see how the "playing field" is level at the foot of the cross. As we recognize Jesus as the only solution to our spiritual poverty, we realize we have more in common with those experiencing material poverty than we might have imagined. That realization offers us fresh insight about the ways we might care for people without hopeful options.



As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

ROMANS 3:10-12

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 3:23-24



You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

PSALM 51:16-17

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

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.

JOHN 3:16

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved

ROMANS 10:9-10

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Discussion

1. Romans 3 states our spiritual poverty. How has our sin made us spiritually poor?

2. What kind of death is Romans 6 talking about?



- 3. Why does God prefer a broken and contrite heart over sacrifice?
- 4. According to John 3:16, what does God do about our spiritual poverty?
- 5. How can we be saved from our spiritual poverty according to Romans 10?





VIDEO
"We Are All Poor"

Discussion

1. What are your first impressions from the video? How did it make you feel?



2.	What were some of the insights about people who are materially poor and people
	who appear to be wealthy?

3. In the film, Kim struggles to see the beauty in herself that God sees. In Christ, how does God see us?

4. How does Brian live out 1 Timothy 6?

5. Take a minute to think about where you are at in your own spiritual journey. Reflect on Romans 10. Do you remember when you "believed in your heart and confessed with your mouth" that Jesus was Lord?



Ō 5 MINUTES

READ Matthew 25:31-46

PRAY Ask God to show you how you can use your time, talent and treasure to bless others.

JOURNAL Write down your thoughts about the connection between demonstrating our faith in Christ and how we treat others on the margins of society. How does what we read in Matthew 25:31-46 inform what God says in Romans 10:9-10?

DO If this study encouraged you to take the next step in your faith journey and follow Christ, take time to share with someone (perhaps your leader) about your decision. We saw how Brian used his God-given gift of art to bless others. Take time this week to list the ways God could use you to be a blessing to others who might be materially poor.



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MODULE 6

Creating Options Together

"The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community."

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, LIFE TOGETHER: THE CLASSIC EXPLORATION OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Trillions of dollars have been spent to end poverty in this country, with little effect. Poverty continues to ensnare generations of individuals and families. Yet, God's call to His people, to care for those caught in poverty's web, is unchanged. The solution is rooted in the very nature of God and in the way Jesus lived out His ministry.

The Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—who lives in perfect peace, purpose and relationship, demonstrate the fundamental power of living in community. Jesus was intimately acquainted with those among whom He ministered. His continual interaction with people in need is not meant to be simply inspirational, but rather, instructive in the way He calls us to live.

Becoming an options creator starts by building relationships with those who live in systems and situations that make it difficult to flourish. God is calling us to approach the complexity of poverty first as a learner and then, rather than attempting to "fix" the problem, to be in relationship and partnership with those on the margins. We'll explore the blessings for those who choose to orient their lives in this way. The following Bible study will help us understand the impact that arises from becoming options creators.



Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? "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? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your



rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and 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 like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

ISAIAH 58:6-12

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

1 JOHN 4:19-21

Discussion

- 1. What was wrong with the first kind fasting?
- 2. In these passages what does true fasting look like?

3. What word or phrase really stands out to you from these passages? How did that make you feel? How does that relate to your life right now?



4. How does being loved by God invite us to "set the oppressed free"?



Ō 15 MINUTES



VIDEO"Creating Options Together"

Ō 15 MINUTES

- 1. What are your first impressions from the video? How did it make you feel?
- 2. What is appealing to you about the small group in Denver?
- 3. What is similar or different in your personal experience from that of the small group shown in the video?



4.	How could you benefit or how have you benefited from relationships w	vith	people
	from different racial and economic backgrounds?		

- 5. How can your identity in Christ overcome social awkwardness?
- 6. How could a relational partnership with those who are marginalized be helpful in meeting needs?
- 7. How could our cities and churches be transformed by relationships like this?



READ Read Module 7: What's Next?

PRAY Take time to pray and ask God for direction. What might He be inviting you to do as a result of this study?

JOURNAL As you pray, read and listen to the Lord around Module 7, write down your feelings, impressions, questions, concerns and action points.

DO We will discuss what God is leading you to do during the next session.



Coptions Together Group Guide

What Next?

"God has always wanted the vulnerable in society to be cared for. He never intended for them to languish in poverty, abuse, slavery, homelessness, or other types of devastation. When we care for individuals who are trapped in these ways, when we show them love and help them move toward freedom and wholeness, we participate in bringing a little part of God's Kingdom back into alignment with His greater plan. We do justice and God smiles."

JOHN M. PERKINS, DREAM WITH ME: RACE, LOVE, AND THE STRUGGLE WE MUST WIN

You have completed the *Options Together*[™] Bible Study! As you have prayed, studied and watched, you have likely grown in your understanding of people who experience poverty. You've also learned about ways God may be calling you to engage with those on the margins. So, what's next?

In this module, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have learned. Then, we will take time to pray and ask God to help you process your thoughts, feelings and calling to next steps.



Looking at his disciples, He [Jesus] said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

LUKE 6:20

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 JOHN 3:16-18



1.	During this study, what ideas were new to you?
2.	What story from the videos did you find to be impactful? Why?
3.	What Scripture verse or verses have been meaningful to you? Why?
4.	In what ways do you feel better prepared to engage with issues of poverty? In what ways do you still want/need to learn and grow?
5.	What have you seen in this study that has caused you to grieve?
6.	Which of these emotions are you feeling as we think about putting what we have learned from this study into action: excitement, fear, guilt, worry, anticipation, hope, love, sadness, confidence? How could these emotions help or hurt us in being obedient to what God is calling us to do?





Adoration Praise God for who He is and what He is doing

Confession Corporate or personal confession around issues raised during the study

Thanksgiving Thank God for what He has shown you during the study

Supplication Ask God to direct you in what He has placed on your heart to do



O 20 MINUTES

- How can you continue to be in prayer about what you have learned?
- Who else would benefit from this study and how can you help them connect to it?
- How can you act on what you have learned?
- How might your financial giving reflect what you have learned?
- What skills and abilities could you bring to the table to address this issue?
- Who can you invite to join you in the next phase of your journey?
- Is there anyone in particular that God might be calling you to pray for, show care to or share with?
- What opportunities to serve are available in existing ministries in your city?
- Is there the possibility of a church partnership that could be established in your city?
- Others?



Resources

Go to the resource page of optionstogether.org for a full and updated list of additional resources.



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MODULE 2

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