

WE ARE ____

GROUP GUIDES

1. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: GOD
2. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: OURSELVES
3. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: EACH OTHER
4. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: CREATION



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Poverty is often talked about like a physical thing. We may think of it as simply being a lack of money or material wealth. But the truth is, that's only a symptom of a much deeper issue. While material resources help, money is not the ultimate solution. This Bible study will explore how poverty can be traced back to a breakdown in relationships with God, ourselves, each other, and creation.

In Genesis we have a glimpse of what these relationships looked like before they were broken. Humanity walked with God in the garden and enjoyed community without shame. They looked after the garden and the animals that inhabited it, lacking nothing. Everything and everyone lived in harmony together as God designed. Unfortunately this sounds almost alien to the current world we live in. Through Adam and Eve's disobedience cracks began growing in our relationships and all of creation has suffered for it. In each session we'll see how these relationships can be restored.

Within these different Bible study sections, you can use the sessions with a large group, or with a smaller, more informal group in a social setting. Where applicable, please feel free to use your own examples that are relevant to your group's context. In some places we've given two options depending on the group size and age of the participants, so you can adapt it to work for your group. Look out for these symbols:



Best suited to smaller gatherings, including friends enjoying a meal together or a smaller group of students.



Best suited to a larger group such as a youth group, Christian Union, or schools work.

WE ARE ____

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: GOD

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FROM GOD, POVERTY HAS GROWN.



What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word poverty? Most people tend to think about things like hunger and homelessness. But you can have food to eat, a roof over your head and still be lacking. Have you noticed how even the 'richest' people can be the most miserable? Celebrity news is full of stories of people searching for something more, while still being left feeling broken and empty.

We believe the underlying problem isn't money, it's being separated from God. And it's this separation that is at the core of poverty. Society, particularly in economically rich countries like the UK, has continued to drift further away from God. Because many of our basic day-to-day needs are met, people feel like they don't have to rely on God. This often results in a culture that at best sees God as a distant figure in the sky, and at worst doesn't even believe God exists.

When our relationship with God is broken, that brokenness begins to enter into other areas of our lives. Throughout this Bible study we'll see how it began and the impact it's having today.



In the beginning, when God made the earth and everything in it, including us, He called it good. All of creation lived in harmony with each other. So what happened that led to the breakdown of these relationships?

In the passage we're about to read, Adam and Eve have both eaten the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

- **Read Genesis 3:8-19**

QUESTIONS

- **Why did Adam and Eve hide? Have you ever done something similar when you've done something wrong? Why?**
- **What were the consequences of Adam and Eve eating the fruit?**
- **What impact do you think this has on us today?**

Not only did the serpent strike when God wasn't around, it also waited for Adam and Eve to be separated from each other. The further we drift away from God, the more opportunity there is for our other relationships to break. This results in a vicious cycle where our brokenness makes us feel too ashamed to come back to God, which then leads to more broken relationships (ourselves, each other and creation).

Both Adam and Eve avoided taking responsibility for their actions. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. When we begin to feel separated from God, we fail to take moral responsibility for our actions individually and communally. Do you see this happening today? Individually we've all made excuses for living unethical lifestyles – buying fast fashion, using single-use plastic, and contributing to food waste all because it's convenient and we don't have to think about the people our actions affect. On a larger scale, we see how money and power is often chased after without care for others – leading to war, discrimination against different races and gender inequality.

However we can't separate God and justice. To love God is to love justice. And to walk with God as Adam and Eve did before the fall, is to live a just lifestyle.



ACTIVITY: RECONNECT

Like Adam and Eve, as humans we tend to hide from God but He wants nothing more than to be in relationship with us.

The Old Testament tells us that, where God's people worshipped, there was a curtain that separated God's presence from the rest of the temple. But after Jesus' death, the curtain was torn in two (Matthew 27:51). This was God's way of showing us that we can enjoy a relationship with Him once again. And once we do, we can then help to restore relationships with ourselves, others and creation too. God's desire for us, as we see in 2 Corinthians 5:18:

'All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.' (NIV)

Because of Jesus' sacrifice we have been brought back into relationship with God. And, because each of us is different, God can relate to us in different ways. How do you connect to God and build a relationship with Him?



On a piece of paper write down the different activities you do to feel connected to God. It doesn't just have to be Church-based activities – think outside the box. Once everyone is finished, get into pairs and share what activities you have chosen.



Get into groups of four or five. On an A2 piece of paper draw a tree with many branches – wide enough that you can write in each. On the branches write different activities that each member of the group does to connect to God. It doesn't just have to be Church-based activities – think outside the box. Once you've finished, present your tree to the other groups and talk through what you wrote on each branch.

VIDEO: WHAT IS POVERTY?

From reading the story of Adam and Eve, we see that all creation has experienced separation from God. But what does that look like today? And how can it be fixed?



[Watch the video now...](#)

<https://youtu.be/U5qig9HIJ7k>



ACTIVITY: USING YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

By committing to working together we can break down the walls that separate us and see a more just world.

If we first reconnect with God, our relationship flows out into everything we do. The message translation of Romans 12:1-2 says:

'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.'

Our relationship with God is reflected in how we go about our everyday lives – whether it's the way we treat others, how we use our money or how we use our platforms. A world that is connected to God is a just world.



On a piece of paper write down different ways you can use your everyday life to create a more just world. Once everyone is finished, get into pairs and share what you have written.



In groups of four or five, use A2 paper to draw a mind map and place God at the centre. Think of different ways we can go about our everyday lives to create a more just world. Once you've finished, present your mind map to the other groups.

GET CREATIVE: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Using what you've learnt in this session, choose a creative way to reflect and respond to the importance of your relationship with God.

Choose from one of the following:

- Write a spoken word piece or a monologue
- Draw a picture
- Design a poster
- Write out a prayer

ON PLACEMENT: RESTORING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

As we've seen throughout this session, living in poverty doesn't necessarily just mean a lack of material things. Because of the broken relationships we have, we all experience some degree of poverty. That's not to say it's all the same, but it is a reminder that we also have to face brokenness.

While on your volunteering placement and away from your home comforts, you may find that you feel more exposed and vulnerable. This can sometimes be difficult to process while you're trying to serve the communities you're working with. But if you keep God involved at the centre of your experience, you will find that your relationship strengthens. Somebody you meet during your experience could be used to challenge or lead you into a deeper understanding of your relationship with God.

It's important to remember that we are not the answer to poverty – God is. While seeing firsthand how Tearfund partners work to end poverty in their own contexts, you will see both the physical and spiritual needs of people being addressed. So, ask God to prepare your heart to both give and receive spiritually as you prepare for your volunteering placement.

CALL TO ACTION: STAY CONNECTED

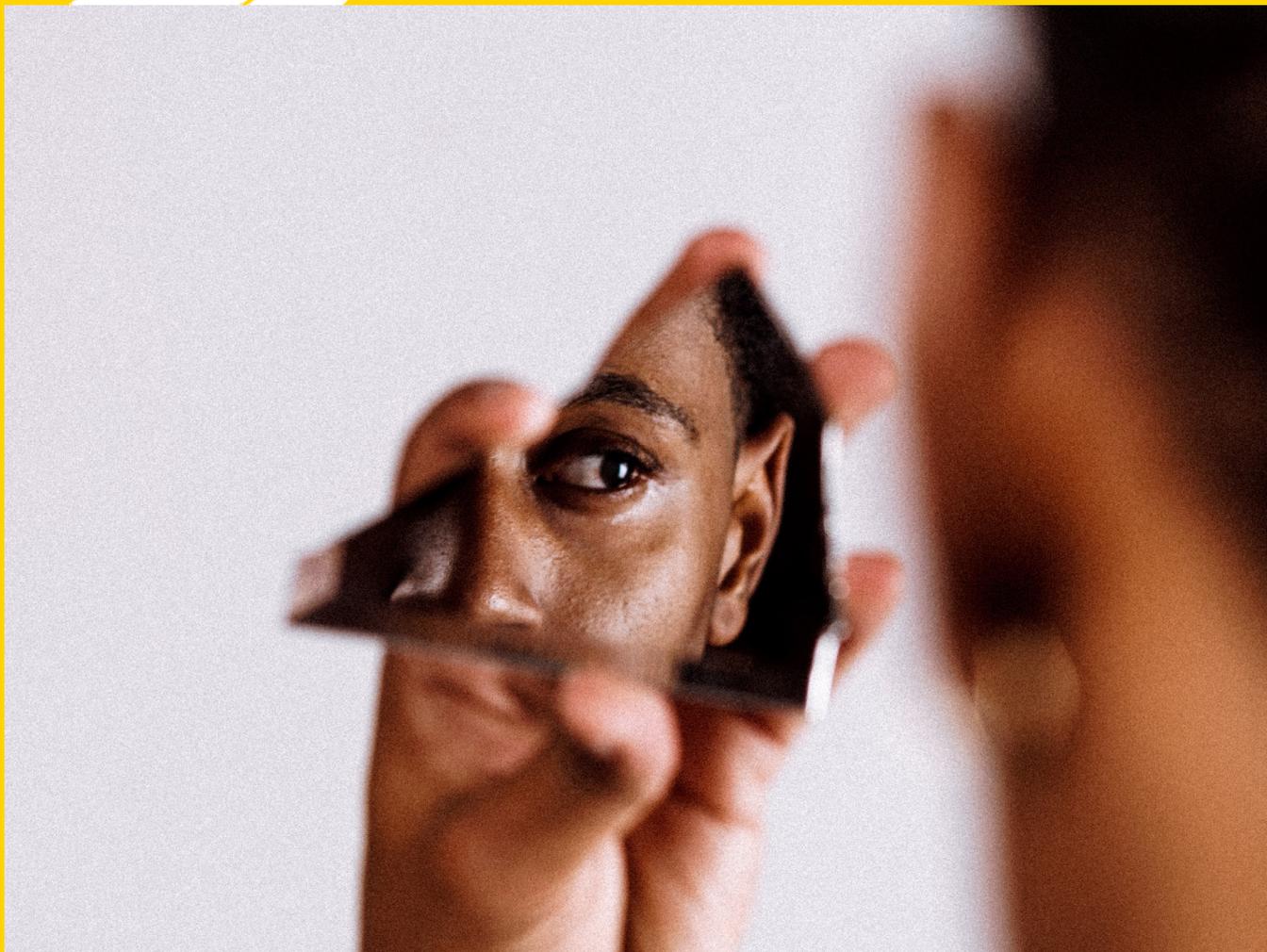
For the next week commit to staying connected to God. Each day:

- Spend at least 10 minutes focused on connecting with God. This could be an idea taken from the 'Reconnect' activity.

WE ARE ____

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: OURSELVES

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES IS REFLECTED IN OUR ACTIONS TOWARDS OTHERS.



In this session we'll be looking at the relationship we have with ourselves. Fundamentally, if the way we see ourselves is broken, it will have an impact on how we see and treat others. People all around the world, whether economically rich or poor, struggle with their identity. Once we know what it means to be made in God's image, it will reflect in our lifestyles and relationships.

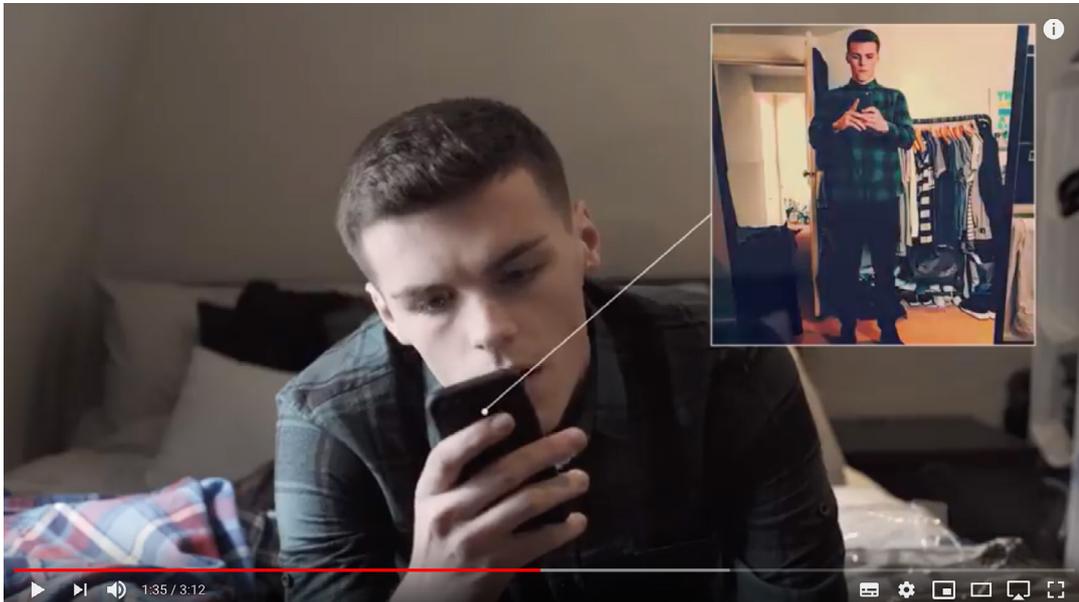
As we saw in the previous session, poverty isn't necessarily a lack of money. But when we obsess about material wealth, it impacts how we see ourselves in two ways – we either develop prideful 'God-complexes' from seeing ourselves as our own source in achieving all that we have, or we develop an inferiority complex from seeing ourselves as having and being less than others. Both of these identities are far from the image of God we were made in.

Think about it. How many times have you been on social media and started comparing yourself to others? Whether it's our careers, relationships, holidays, clothes or even food, we start to feel inferior if we're not keeping up with everyone else. Social media becomes a highlight reel of our best moments, and real life becomes a struggle to maintain the illusion. We start to seek validation through consumption, but the truth is, we are more than consumers.

For those living in economic poverty, the same comparisons can lead people into self-identifying as inferior to those with money. And this is often reinforced through daily interactions – think about how many people ignore a homeless person while they go about their 'busy' schedule. It's one thing to not have your basic needs met, but to be treated as invisible because of that is incredibly difficult. The result is that many people living in economic poverty become alienated from society and mentally trapped in poverty as well as physically.

VIDEO: ARE YOU LIVING AN INSTA LIE? SOCIAL MEDIA VS REALITY

When we get so obsessed with ourselves, we start to lose sight of those around us.



Watch the video now...

<https://youtu.be/0EFHbruKEmw>



Esther was a young Jewish woman who was chosen to be the next wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus. Although who she was as a person got her the position of Queen of Persia, in the process she had to compromise her identity by hiding her heritage in order to keep her new position. Like in the previous video, we can see how focusing on herself started to disconnect her from other people.

- **Read Esther 2:7-10**

While Esther was living her best life as queen, the rest of the Jewish people were being persecuted. In the next passage her uncle sends a message to ask for her help.

- **Read Esther 4:9-17**

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO US?

Esther was disconnected from who she was and where she came from and that limited her perspective. She was so focused on her own position that she didn't stop to think about others until their situation was brought to her attention.

As young people of colour we can relate to Esther. She wasn't just pretending to be someone she wasn't for the sake of it, Esther was doing something similar to what we call code-switching – she was toning herself down. She would most likely be her true authentic self in front of her uncle, and then somebody else whenever she was with the king and other nobles in the palace. The problem with this is that Esther started to genuinely forget who she was. We can see this when Mordecai had to remind her in Chapter 4 that she was also Jewish and would not be spared.

When Esther fully embraced herself, she was able to be who God had called her to be and ultimately be used by Him for His glory.

Sometimes we too can be like Esther. We can be so focused on ourselves, what we want for our lives and even the responsibilities we have in our families that we don't see the importance of bigger issues that are happening in our world. However, when we truly understand who we are, we realise that what God has called us to is bigger than ourselves.



Discuss the questions over the page.



Get into groups of 4-5 and discuss the questions over the page.

DISCUSS

1. Discuss times in your life where you've had to tone yourself down in order to avoid discrimination or being stereotyped by others. How did that make you feel?
2. Has there been a time when you've lost sight of who you are, because you were trying to adapt to different groups of people who may look, sound or act differently from you?
3. What are some of the bigger world issues that you don't engage with because you're too focused on your own situation/you don't think it's your issue to deal with?
4. Can you think of specific times where you could have used your position to help someone else?

ACTIVITY: HEAR MY STORY



Everyone stand up and form a circle. Once in the circle, turn to the person on your right and, in one minute, tell that person a story about yourself. While you're telling your story, see if you can hear the story of the person to your left. Once the minute is over, take turns describing the story you were told by someone else.



Get into groups of 5 and ask each person to stand up and form a circle within their group. Once in the circle, turn to the person on your right and, in one minute, tell that person a story about yourself. While you're telling your story, see if you can hear the story of the person to your left. Once the minute is over, take turns describing the story you were told by someone else.

QUESTIONS

1. How did it feel to have someone ignoring you, while you tried to tell them your story?
2. Were you able to listen easily to the person trying to tell you their story?
3. How did it feel to have someone else tell your story? Especially if they didn't hear your story well?
4. How does this relate to what you've learnt so far about broken relationships?

REFLECTION

It's difficult to hear the stories of those around us when we're so concentrated on our own. As people living in the UK, we often do this a lot. We may complain about things like: having to wait longer than usual for a bus, not having money to buy another set of trainers or having a bad WiFi connection. However, there are people living in poverty with much bigger issues.

That's not to say we shouldn't care about our lives here, but we should also have a wider perspective to know that life could be a lot more difficult. Instead of being consumed with your own story, think about how you can find more stories of people living in poverty. Read and watch the news or use social media to find out what's happening to others in the wider world around you.

GET CREATIVE: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES

Using what you've learnt in this session, choose a creative way to reflect and respond to the importance of our relationship with ourselves.

Choose from one of the following:

- Write a spoken word piece or a monologue
- Draw a picture
- Design a poster
- Write out a prayer

ON PLACEMENT: RESTORING RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES

While serving in communities overseas, it may be tempting to bring the whole world along with you in the form of social media. Instead of scrambling to find WiFi at every possible moment, use it as an opportunity to disconnect from the comparison game and reconnect with who God made you to be. Volunteering may push you out of your comfort zone and have you doing things you'd normally avoid. But when you stop focusing on what will make you look the best, you may be surprised at how God is able to use you.

It's also important to question your motivation for wanting to go on the placement in the first place. Are you going to genuinely learn and be helpful where you can? Or are you going to make yourself look and feel like a good person? It's crucial to remember that people living in poverty are not just an opportunity to feel good about yourself.

Being in a different culture can often highlight what aspects of our identity are simply tied to where we're from, rather than who God created us to be. What we consider important about ourselves, may not really translate to another culture. When you strip away some of the pressures that exist to be a certain way, you may be surprised by just how many similarities you have with the people you meet on your placement. God created each of us uniquely, and when we embrace who He says we are, we can better relate to others.

If you go with an attitude of being a 'saviour' and seeing others as in need of your help, you may also be reinforcing ideas of a 'them' and 'us' mentality. In reality, ending poverty is about empowering people to be the solution in their own communities, not just recipients of overseas help. Going with the right attitude means remembering that physical wealth doesn't determine how someone should be seen or treated. In truth, you will likely learn much more from some of the amazing community members you'll meet, than they will from you.

CALL TO ACTION: STAY TRUE

Romans 12:4-6 (MSG) 'Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.'

For the next week commit to restoring the relationship with yourself:

- **Give up social media for the week, come back to your group the following week and discuss what it was like for you.**
- **Pick a Bible verse to speak over yourself every morning that reminds you of who you are in Christ.**
- **If a situation arises where you would usually tone yourself down, don't. Come back next week and discuss how you felt in the situation and what happened.**
- **Pick a poverty issue that you will intentionally engage with this week.**

WE ARE ____

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: EACH OTHER

WE ARE ALL GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS AND OUR ACTIONS ARE CONNECTED.



When the relationships between people break down, our differences create barriers that hinder justice and equality. We ignore, or are unaware of how our actions have an impact on other people so much that we end up believing poverty is a 'them' problem instead of an 'us' problem. When in reality, poverty can only exist if we turn a blind eye to it.

Poverty doesn't just appear out of nowhere, but it's often talked about as if it just naturally exists in some places more than others. How many times have you heard our home countries stereotyped as poor in the media? Not only is that a harmful, simplistic view of the diversity across those countries, but it also creates a narrative that they were always poor. The truth is these countries are rich in resources, but have been made poorer by other people's actions throughout history. Many of these actions can be traced back to colonialism.

Colonialism is when a country's political control is taken by another and is exploited for its resources. Countries like the UK, France, Spain, the US and more all have a history of colonising countries around the world. Though many of these countries have gained independence, there are many ways they are still being unfairly exploited. For example, much of the food we eat and many of the clothes we wear come from countries where people are not paid or treated fairly. So, when we spend money without thinking about where our products come from, we can contribute to supporting those negative systems.

It's not only physical resources that have been impacted through colonialism, but also attitudes and perspectives. For example, the atrocities of slavery took place because particular people were seen as inferior, instead of being seen as created equal by God. And when whole groups of people are perceived as lesser, systems can be created to reinforce this perspective. This can be seen in issues surrounding colourism and even the treatment of refugees as 'other'.



ACTIVITY: THE FAIR SHARE

Does everyone in the world have a fair share?

In this activity we'll see how much of the world's wealth each continent has a share of. There are seven continents across the world, including Antarctica, but for the purpose of this activity, we will only be using six of them.



Nominate a person to represent each continent and give them an A4 piece of paper with their continent name and world population percentage written across the page – Asia (59%), Africa (16%), Europe (10%), North America (8%), South America (6%) and Oceania (1%).

Then using a pack of sweets or biscuits, distribute to each continent the following amount: Asia (2), Africa (1), Europe (4), North America (5), South America (2), Oceania (6). Explain that the amount each person receives represents the continent's GDP per capita – which means roughly how much wealth the average person there has.



Divide 20 people into groups to represent the populations of each continent – Asia (6), Africa (5), Europe (3), North America (3), South America (2) and Oceania (1).

Then using a pack of sweets or biscuits, distribute to each continent the following amount: Asia (2), Africa (1), Europe (4), North America (5), South America (2), Oceania (6). Explain that the amount each person receives represents the continent's GDP per capita – which means roughly how much wealth the average person there has. Tell them that they are allowed to eat what they have or share as they see fit. At the end of the activity reveal that there was always enough for everyone to have had one each.



When we think of broken relationships with others, we might think about our friends and family or people at work or school. But the Bible calls us to think about our relationships more widely.

In the passage we're about to read, a religious expert tries to catch Jesus out with a difficult question. Instead he answers him with a parable.

- **Read Luke 10:25-37**

QUESTIONS

- **Who would you have expected to help the man?**
- **What was significant about the fact that the man helping was a Samaritan?**
- **What can we take away from this parable?**
- **Who are our neighbours?**

It's no coincidence that, when telling the story, Jesus chose the two men who passed and left the injured man to be from the same place as him. You would think they would have compassion for the man as one of their own community. Especially considering one was a Priest and the other was a Levite, who were both considered to be morally good people. In the end, the Samaritan from a different region and culture ended up stopping to help. Jesus was emphasising that our neighbours aren't just those who live near us, look similar to us, are like us or appear to be good. Instead we are called to love everyone, locally and globally, regardless of where they are from, how they are different from us or whether society views them as a 'good person'.

The Samaritans were not on good terms with the Jewish people. For centuries the two groups had been in conflict. The Samaritans were considered worthless and to be avoided, so the groups lived and worshipped away from each other.

Knowing this, we can see how selfless and loving the Samaritan's actions were. He showed mercy to someone who was different from him when it wasn't socially acceptable. Not only that, but the Samaritan greatly inconvenienced himself to help the man.

VIDEO: THE TRUE COST

As the Good Samaritan showed, our neighbours are not just those immediately around us or people we know. We have a responsibility to our neighbours all around the world. The fast fashion industry is an example of what can happen when we neglect to think of our global neighbours. When we buy clothes without thinking about how the people who make them are treated, we are like the two men who walked past the injured man.



Watch the video now...

https://youtu.be/OaGp5_Sfbss

The fashion industry is just one example of how our lifestyle choices are linked to people around the world. The Global Get Up, written by Tara Devlin, illustrates this even further:

This morning I threw back bedding, made in India, then showered and wrapped myself in an Egyptian cotton towel. I dressed in jeans made in Bangladesh, a shirt from Malaysia and a cardigan stitched together in Sri Lanka. I put on trainers, made in the Philippines and headed downstairs for breakfast.

I had fruit juice from Peru, coffee from Nicaragua and a banana grown in Ecuador. As I left the kitchen, I grabbed some chocolate (cocoa beans from Ghana), threw on my jacket made in Hong Kong, picked up my bag from China and reached for the door.

By 8am, having been up for one hour, I'd come into contact with a dozen countries and hundreds of people.

Martin Luther King, speaking in 1967, said:

'Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world?'

Not only have I travelled far and wide through my early morning choices, I am bound together with the people behind those items. I truly am dependent on them. If it weren't for girls like Shima – who I met in Bangladesh a few years ago – I would have no jeans to wear. If farmers like Teresa didn't grow their beans I would have no coffee to drink.

You would think that the people who provide such basic staple goods for my everyday life would be important to me, that I would want to ensure they are respected for their hard work. But the brutal fact of the matter is that most of the time neither of those things is true. I don't think about them, and partly as a result of that, they are not treated well or paid fairly.

The Bible tells us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. To defend the rights of the poor and treat people justly. In this globalised world I don't have to go far to find those kinds of neighbours. They are in my home every day. I am depending on them to provide for my needs and they are depending on me to be the kind of person who will treat others with dignity and respect. We're in this together.

Continued...

INPUT: THE GLOBAL GET UP (CONTINUED)

But I'm not holding up my side of the bargain.

If we were truly in it together, I wouldn't buy cheap clothes on the high street that I know have been made in a sweatshop. I would only ever reach for the Fairtrade option on the supermarket shelves. I would sign that petition, fill in that campaign postcard, attend that protest. Every day I have choices in front of me, and for many of them I can make decisions that are best for me or best for the many. It all depends on whether or not I believe in together.

We believe in working together.

Not just the warm, fuzzy version, but the sacrificial kind. The real choices of unity are often inconvenient and costly. They require us to swim against the tide, stand out from the crowd and go a different way. Uniting will mean saying no when everyone else says yes, and yes to what most will shy away from. We will see the people behind the products and choose to put them first. We will see everyday life through a different lens.

We believe that together we can build a better world.

QUESTIONS

- **What stands out to you about this piece?**
- **In what ways are you connected to people around the world in your everyday life?**
- **How do you think the people you are connected to are treated?**



ACTIVITY: THE FAIR SHARE

Now that we've seen how our actions can impact our global neighbours, let's spend some time thinking about how we can stand united.



On a piece of A4 paper, draw a mind map of the different lifestyle choices we can make that ensure our global neighbours are treated better. Once everyone is finished, get into pairs and share what you have written.



In groups of four or five, use A2 paper to draw a mind map of the different lifestyle choices we can make that ensure our global neighbours are treated better. Once you've finished, present your mind map to the other groups.

Once everyone has had a chance to share, suggest some of the following actions if they haven't been said already:

Being more ethical with food through:

- Buying ethically labelled food like Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance etc.
- Researching supply chains and being aware of how workers are being treated
- Not contributing to food waste, and buying food that would otherwise be thrown away

Buying fewer clothes from fast fashion outlets. Alternatives can include:

- Reducing the amount of clothes you buy
- Buying from ethical fashion labels
- Buying clothes from charity shop.

Using our voices to spread awareness and campaign for change in the food and fashion industries by:

- Using our social media platforms
- Campaigning to make sure the food in our schools, universities and workplaces is ethically sourced
- Letting people know how ethical different fashion brands are. You can find this out by using apps like 'Good On You' or checking websites like www.ethicalconsumer.org

And, ultimately, find out more. www.weare.tearfund.org has plenty of information on both the issues that impact our global neighbours and what we can do to work towards ending extreme poverty.

GET CREATIVE: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER

Using what you've learnt in this session, choose a creative way to reflect and respond to the importance of our relationship with each other.

Choose from one of the following:

- Write a spoken word piece or a monologue
- Draw a picture
- Design a poster
- Write out a prayer

ON PLACEMENT: RESTORING RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER

We are called to stand alongside those living in poverty, not to become their 'saviours'. We must recognise that, as we've explored in the previous sessions, we are also impacted by the poverty of broken relationships. It is only through Jesus that we can truly restore the brokenness across the world. Our role is to love others, which should never be mistaken for acting like we're better than anyone. And that means we shouldn't use volunteering as an opportunity to make ourselves feel good.

Think about an interest you may have – it could be anything from sports to creative arts. Now imagine that someone who has never even taken part in your interest starts to lecture you about it. That would be frustrating, right? Well there have been so many times where people have volunteered in a community they've never been to before and claimed to have the solution to poverty in that area. The reality is the local people who live there will have a much better idea of what will and won't work.

It's incredibly important to listen to what the local needs are and work with communities to achieve them, instead of telling them what to do. This even extends to cultural practices – you are coming into their space, and so it's important to be respectful of that. When you visit your project, you may be surprised not to see the Tearfund logo everywhere. That's because Tearfund works with partners who have already demonstrated that they are working to end poverty in the community. Our job isn't to force our own ideas, but to back up the incredible work done by people living in the local context.

CALL TO ACTION: STAY TOGETHER

Though we want to see a better world for our global neighbours, it is important that we work together.

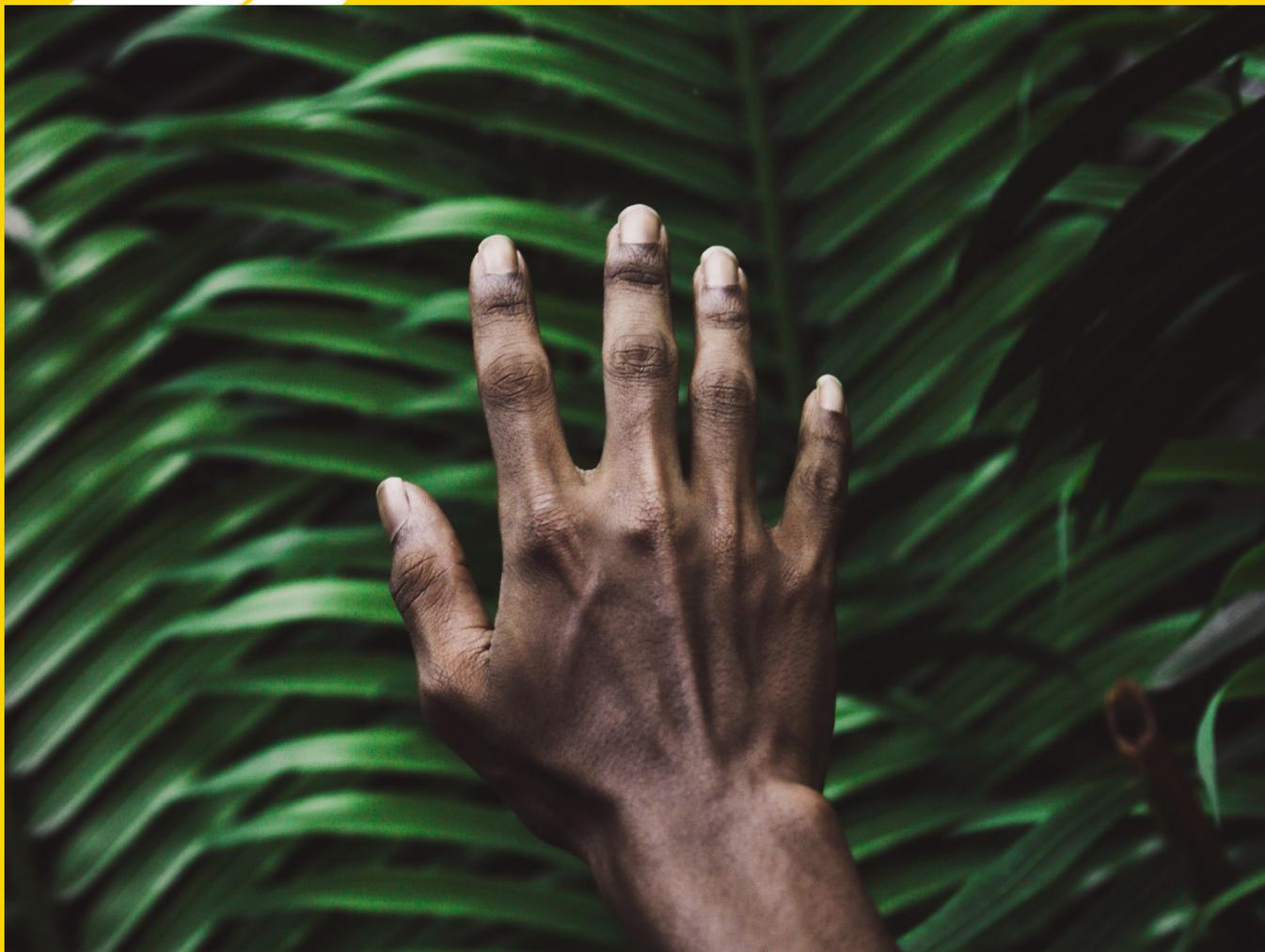
This week, take at least one action from your mind map that you can do to stand alongside your global neighbours.

Also make some time this week to listen to episode six of Together Podcast with Guvna B (<https://weare.tearfund.org/ep-6-to-zambia-and-back-with-guvna-b/>). He talks about visiting a Tearfund partner in Zambia, challenging poverty stereotypes and his thoughts on the Stacey Dooley's voluntourism controversy. You can also find it by searching 'We Are Tearfund' in your podcast app of choice.

WE ARE ____

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS: CREATION

IF WE DON'T TAKE CARE OF CREATION, IT WON'T TAKE CARE OF US.



In this session we'll be looking at the broken relationship between ourselves and creation. Who do you think creation belongs to? If we say 'us', then we can do whatever we want with it. But if we believe it belongs to God, then it's impossible to love God and not look after his creation. When the world was created, God designed it so that we, as humans, would have a two-way relationship with the world. If we look after creation well, it provides us with food, clean water and other natural resources. But when we fail to take care of creation, it can't take care of us either. Problems like climate change and natural disasters are happening at increased rates because of the damage we're doing to the environment.

Economically rich countries, including the UK, cause the majority of the damage to the climate through high carbon emissions. This is caused by burning fossil fuels for our energy and transportation, the over-farming of animals in the meat industry, deforestation and manufacturing. And yet people living in economically poorer countries are hit the hardest. We may enjoy having a hotter summer, but farmers living in poverty are unable to grow crops because of droughts. And worse still, natural disasters like floods and earthquakes are happening more because of our actions. These lead to livelihoods lost, homes destroyed and, ultimately, people dying.

And it's not only carbon emissions that are causing problems. Even our rubbish can have a massive impact on people living in poverty. Think about it – when you throw something away, where does it go? If it's not biodegradable, the truth is there is no real 'away'. Much of our non-degradable rubbish gets shipped off to other countries. Single-use plastics manufactured all over the world, end up creating unhygienic living conditions for people already living in poverty, where water sources become unclean and diseases spread more easily.

Ultimately, caring about the environment means caring about people. All creation was designed to work together in harmony. But when we neglect our role in looking after the environment, it has a negative impact on the rest of creation too.



ACTIVITY: CREATION CARE QUIZ



Give each person pen and paper to answer the following questions. Once finished, go through the answers and discuss together.



Split into teams of 4-5 people. Give each team a pen and paper to answer the following questions. Once finished, go through the answers and discuss together. The team with the most correct answers wins.

QUESTIONS

How many pieces of plastic does the average person in the UK throw away each year?

- 700
- 4,000
- 6,000

Answer: The average person throws out over 4,000 pieces of plastic a year. That's so much plastic isn't it? If we piled up all the plastic from everyone in the UK, it would create a plastic mountain as high as Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales.

So, how many times do you think all that plastic would fill Wembley Stadium?

- 3 times
- 8 times
- 23 times

Answer: It's enough plastic to fill Wembley Stadium 23 times.

What percentage of extreme weather events were influenced by humans in the last 20 years?

- 41%
- 68%
- 76%

Answer: Human activity has led to 68% of all extreme weather events in the last 20 years. The number of these events has more than doubled since 2000. This includes floods, heavy rainfall, droughts, wildfires and heatwaves.



ACTIVITY: CREATION CARE QUIZ (CONTINUED)...

What is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions?

Transport

Home and business emissions (heating, cooking, waste management etc)

Power generation (electricity)

Answer: Power generation is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. In Europe, energy industries contribute 26.9% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Transport accounts for 24.3% and home and businesses make up 14.9% of all emissions.

In 2018, the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reported that a global temperature rise could lead to irreversible consequences for the climate. How many degrees did they say we must stay under to avoid this?

1.5°C

3°C

6°C

Answer: The IPCC have warned that a global temperature rise of just 1.5°C could lead to irreversible environmental impacts. Although it seems like a small number, it can nevertheless have a huge impact. We're currently on course for a 3°C temperature rise, so staying below 1.5°C will require fast changes to how we live both individually and collectively.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth. Although He could have done all of this in one day, God did it in six days. God took His time to create the Earth, which is evident in Genesis where we see that the day God created light, was not the same day He created the sea for example. When you have an important project to do, whether it's personal, professional or for school, you take your time. This denotes care. Artists spend months on paintings, writers spend years writing one book and God was no different when it came to creating the Earth. He took His time and cared about His creation.

- **Read Genesis 2:1-15**

Although the Earth was complete, there was nobody to look after it, so God created Adam. Adam's first job, before being told to be fruitful, multiply, fill and subdue when Eve came into the picture, was, in fact, to look after the Garden of Eden. This tells us that God cares about us, but He also cares about His creations and that part of having dominion over the Earth is to also care for it.



Discuss the questions below and brainstorm.



Get into groups of 4-5 and discuss the questions below and brainstorm.

QUESTIONS

- **Discuss what you read in Genesis. What have you learned about creation from the passage?**
- **Why do you think our attitude to the environment is no longer what God intended?**
- **After watching the rubbish video (see page 34) and reading the verses, what are the different things we can do to better look after the world around us?**

VIDEO: THE RUBBISH REVOLUTION

We have a responsibility to think about all the rubbish we produce and collect that could be harming our planet and the people around us. Our individual actions can amount to massive change.



[Watch the video now...](#)

<https://youtu.be/SmmWK-VPPgE>

GET CREATIVE: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION

Using what you've learnt in this session, choose a creative way to reflect and respond to the importance of our relationship with creation.

Choose from one of the following:

- Write a spoken word piece or a monologue
- Draw a picture
- Design a poster
- Write out a prayer

ON PLACEMENT: RESTORING RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION

There's also no escaping the fact that you are flying over to another country. This, of course, increases carbon emissions. But why not have a look at how you can make use of carbon offsetting (<https://weare.tearfund.org/what-is-carbon-offsetting>). This essentially means calculating how much carbon you'll produce from travelling and then donating to projects that cancel out that CO2 by investing in projects tackling climate change.

But you should also consider how you can best take care of the environment during your placement. Bring a reusable water bottle, use as little single-use plastic as possible and look out for opportunities to recycle. But, as discussed in earlier sessions, it's important not to be culturally insensitive. If a local person offers you something (eg a drink in a plastic bottle), it may not always be appropriate to refuse it.

Being on placement will be a great opportunity to eat locally sourced food and live in a simpler and more environmentally friendly way. You may return home with some tips for how you can live more simply in the UK too.

CALL TO ACTION: STAY TOGETHER

It is important that we work together in doing the first job God ever gave humanity – taking care of our planet.

We are called to put as much care and love into looking after the world God created for us as we do for other things in our lives, whether that's family, school work, professional development etc. Our lack of care not only affects us personally, but also impacts people from the countries we are from. It destroys livelihoods, homes and ultimately can result in illness and death.

This week, take at least one action from your brainstorm/discussion that you can do to change your lifestyle that will impact the environment for the better.

CONCLUSION

Well done for completing this Bible Study – you're well on your way to being able to apply all that you've learned during your placement overseas. It's important to remember that this isn't a mission trip, but an opportunity to connect with cultures potentially similar to your own, to serve a community and to learn.

Make sure you have a look back at the things you've studied in the past four sessions – the insight you've gained, the activities you took part in and the relationships you're beginning to rebuild. Don't just think about how you'll apply this study to your placement, but also how you'll apply what you've learnt when you come back.

Throughout this Bible study you will have seen how the relationships we have with God, ourselves, each other, and creation are all connected. As we saw in Genesis, creation was designed to work together. Therefore when we change our actions in one relationship, it can influence another. For example, the over-farming of animals for meat production leads to more greenhouse gasses like methane. This contributes to climate change, which affects people living in poverty the most. So by eating less meat, we can show care to both creation and to other people.

We don't just pursue a life of justice to make ourselves feel good or to look better than others, but in response to the restoration of our relationship with God. Seeking to end poverty isn't just something we should do when it's convenient, but it is part of a whole life response to the Gospel. As we explored in the first session, Romans 12:1-2 lays out what it means to worship God with our whole lives:

'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.'

So let's be a generation that, as part of our worship to God, works towards ending extreme poverty. If you want more inspiration and tips for how we can do that together, visit www.weare.tearfund.org.

God Bless
Seth Pinnock



YOUTUBE

Subscribe to We Are Tearfund and get fortnightly videos featuring fun ideas to help those living in poverty - like the new Swedish craze: "Plogging"!

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