

GREAT STUFF IN THE BOOK

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S E S S I O N 1



Seeing hurting people

The girl eating lunch across the table from you says she needs to see you alone after lunch. When the two of you get together she tells you that she's pregnant. She has decided to have an abortion, but she's all torn up inside about it and begins to cry.

How would you feel? Write down your thoughts and emotions as you might experience them in that situation.

People all around you have deep, significant needs and God wants to give you the desire to meet those needs.

One summer I worked for my dad on a Christmas tree farm. My job was to mow between the trees and trim the trees so that they would grow correctly. In the heat of the summer I spent most of my time sweaty, dirty, and exhausted. An older man name named Mr. Jones worked with me. He was the kind of person who could work steadily 12 hours a day and not get tired. My style was to work in frantic spurts and I spent most of my time exhausted. That summer I often asked myself, "Why am I

doing this?” I wanted to quit. But I kept going because Mr. Jones encouraged me and worked with me. Secondly, I loved and respected the man for whom I worked (my dad). I wanted to do a good job for him.

God desires that our love and respect for Him would motivate us to sweat, get dirty, and get exhausted to meet the needs of people.

Jesus speaks directly about this in Matthew 9:35-38. Study this passage of Scripture to see how Jesus views the needs of people.

How do you view the needs of the people around you?

These verses tell us that Jesus had *compassion*.

- > Compassion means feeling for people. We share in their hurts, their pain, their sorrow.
- > Compassion means we care for people so deeply that we cry for them.
- > Compassion means having a broken heart for people in need.

Jesus had broken-hearted compassion for people. And He wants to express His compassion to others through us. In order for that to happen we must see people through the eyes of His broken heart. What did He see? (Matthew 9:35-38).

THE SIZE OF THE NEED



Read Matthew 9:36. What clue tells you how Jesus viewed the size of the need?

Moving Toward Maturity Series

A large number of people meant a large number of needs. Let's describe the way that looks in today's world.

Do you realize that every 2.8 seconds a new baby is born? There are 10,300 people born every hour; 247,000 people born every day; 90 million people born every year.

- > From Creation until 1850 there were 1 billion people in the world.
- > From 1850 until 1930 there were 2 billion people.
- > From 1930 until 1960 there were 3 billion people.
- > From 1960 until 1975 there were 4 billion people.
- > From 1975 until 1980 there were 5 billion people.
- > From 1980 until 2000 there were well over 6 billion people.
- > 50 percent of all the people who ever lived are alive today.

(Statistics from Josh McDowell, "Our Challenge" – a message given at the Youth Evangelism Leadership Conference.) Of the more than 6 billion people in the world, 3 billion have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. One hundred fifty thousand are dying daily without Christ. Have you ever thought about how big the world's needs are?

For example, did you know that 1 in 4 South African women ages 20 to 29 is infected with AIDS? Seventy-nine percent of those who died of AIDS last year were African? Half a million African children were infected with AIDS just last year? And that's only one continent!

How does what you've read so far in this chapter expand your view of the world's problems? Describe your thoughts and feelings.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEED



Read Matthew 9:36 again, looking at how Jesus described the needs of the people. Find the three words/phrases He uses. Use a Bible dictionary to find out what these words mean.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

As a result of your study, how do you think Jesus wants you to see people's needs?

Our whole society is full of people like Jesus described: “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” In one hour...

- > 114 young people will run away from home.
- > 28 will give birth to illegitimate children.
- > 44 under age 19 will abort babies.
- > 1,370 will take some form of drugs.
- > 376 will get drunk.
- > 570 will experience the trauma of a broken home.
- > 456 will be beaten, molested, or abused.
- > 58 will attempt suicide – I will succeed.

(From “Give Me a Reason to Live” TV special, Youth for Christ.)

Whom do you know that is “harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd”? Pick out three people that you see during your lunch period that fit this description. What kinds of problems are they dealing with?

Describe the needs that show up in their attitudes and behavior.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Problems</i>	<i>Needs</i>
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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Look in Romans 1:25 and discover what Paul says is the root of people's sufferings.



Read Romans 1:18-32 and make a list of symptoms of the problems that come from worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator.

Paul makes three points in these verses that graphically describe today's student culture.



Education without Truth

(Romans 1:18-23)

Open expression of the Christian faith has been restricted in schools. If we mention the truth of Jesus Christ on our campuses, it brings tremendous hostility. How do you see that expressing itself on your campus?

Though we don't know all the results of "education without truth," we do know some. The National Institute of Education estimates that monthly:

- > 5,200 junior high and senior high teachers are attacked by their students.
- > 282,000 students are assaulted.
- > There are 112,000 robberies.

(From the National Institute of Education as reported in *Youthletter*, Evangelical Ministries, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.)

School violence and murders have escalated to epidemic proportions. Students and schools are experiencing many deep problems for which Jesus is the only answer.



Sex without Purity

(Romans 1:24-27)

Sexual permissiveness is rampant on the campus (and everywhere) today. On television, 88 percent of all sex scenes takes place outside of marriage. You can see what kind of impact this can make on you and your friends. If you are an average student, by graduation you will have watched 15,000 hours of television but only attended class 12,000 hours. You will have watched 350,000 commercials that largely use sex to sell their products. ("What TV Does to Kids," *Newsweek*.)

How does TV affect you and your friends?

How does "sex without purity" affect students on your campus?



Life without God

(Romans 1:28-31)

This shows up most dramatically in the family. Home problems cause tremendous stress among students. Think about how home problems are affecting the people around you. What problems do you see in those people?

General Mills did a study called “Raising Children in a Changing Society.” This study concludes that: “Parents are self-oriented, not ready to sacrifice for their children.” This selfishness leads to other problems...

- > Half the teenagers in America come from single-parent families.
- > The average family spends only 38 minutes in meaningful conversation each week.

These problems are causing students to cry out for help. And when they see no answer, many of them commit suicide.

Suicide is at epidemic proportions on the campus. Radio speaker and writer Paul Harvey writes of Rod David from Tucumcari, New Mexico – a young man who was admired and successful. The 6’ 3”, 205 lb. athlete was the leading point-getter at the AAA state track meet. Rod was the defensive football player of the year in New Mexico and a top college prospect, yet he turned a shotgun on himself and ended his promising life in his 18th year. Can you imagine why?

Rod David was one of thousands of young people who commit suicide each year. The suicide rate continues to rise. Students who commit

suicide feel helpless, much like the people Jesus described as being “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” This helpless feeling is rooted in the fact that our society offers no answers to their basic needs.

Students across America and the world, and even at your school, are more ready to hear the Solution now than ever before. The intensity of the problems causes them to look just as intensely for solutions. And that’s where you come in.

THE SOLUTION TO THE NEED



Read Matthew 9:37-38. What clues for the solution to human needs do you see?

Jesus speaks of three solutions to the needs we’ve discovered.



Jesus is the Ultimate Answer

In this passage Jesus speaks of being “the Lord” of the harvest. The emptiness of the people around us can only be filled by Jesus, the Lord.

Do you see Jesus as the ultimate answer for problems people around you are facing? Why or why not?



God Is Looking for Laborers

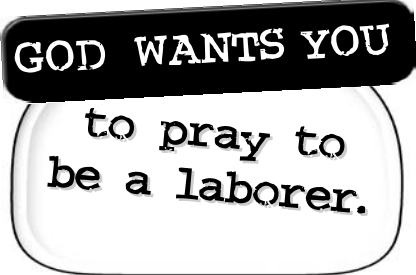
Jesus speaks of the need for laborers in the harvest. Why, in your opinion, are there so few laborers on the campus?

3

You Are Part of His Solution

Jesus speaks of “praying to the Lord of the harvest” to send out those laborers. Every believer is called to be a laborer. But not all become laborers.

When we pray to be laborers, God will show us people and the world from His perspective. Then we will have compassion – a broken heart – and a desire to let God use us to make a difference in our world.



During

the next 10 weeks you will learn to become a lunchtime laborer during your lunch period.



Lunchtime Laborer

Here’s how you can pray to become a lunchtime laborer who can meet the needs of people at your school at lunch or any time:

- 1. Recognize the power.* In the midst of all the problems, both in you and in the people around you, where does the power come from to make a difference? Jesus said, “Pray to the Lord of the harvest.” The Lord has the power and the authority to change things. Begin now to pray that He will change things through you.
- 2. Realize your personal worth.* You are not just a “body” that sits in church or walks around the halls at school. You’re not just a person with problems or one who can’t do anything about the problems in your world. You are a person with infinite personal worth. Why? Because you

are a child of God. That’s the greatest privilege and highest honor. When a person says, “I work for _____,” he is proud of the company he works for. Who do you work for? You work for Jesus the Lord. There is no privilege or honor higher than that.

3. *Request the burden.* Ask God to break your heart for people. Ask Him to give you compassion. Ask Him to make you able to cry over the needs of people.

4. *Relate with skill.* God doesn’t need an untrained soldier shooting a hole in his foot or a laborer who puts a gash in his leg with a hoe. He needs skilled laborers. Ask Him to give you the skills to become an excellent laborer.

5. *Risk the action.* When you see a need, meet it. When you see someone who is hurting, reach out. When you see that someone needs a friend, be one. When you see that someone is discouraged, talk to him. When you see that someone is lonely, love him.

Write down what you need to pray about this week concerning each of these five steps. Focus particularly on people you see during your lunch period. Write down the name of one person and one action to take to meet one of his needs this week.

Person _____

Need _____

Response _____

Complete this session by memorizing Matthew 9:36-38.



Assignment

1. Have a time alone with God every day this week, using the following Bible readings:

Day 1: I Thessalonians 1:1-6

Day 2: I Thessalonians 1:7-10

Day 3: I Thessalonians 2:1-9

Day 4: I Thessalonians 2:10-12

Day 5: I Thessalonians 2:13-16

Day 6: I Thessalonians 2:17-20

Day 7: I Thessalonians 3:1-5

2. Complete *Session 2*.

3. Get involved in the group ministry project.