

He saw it was

GOOD

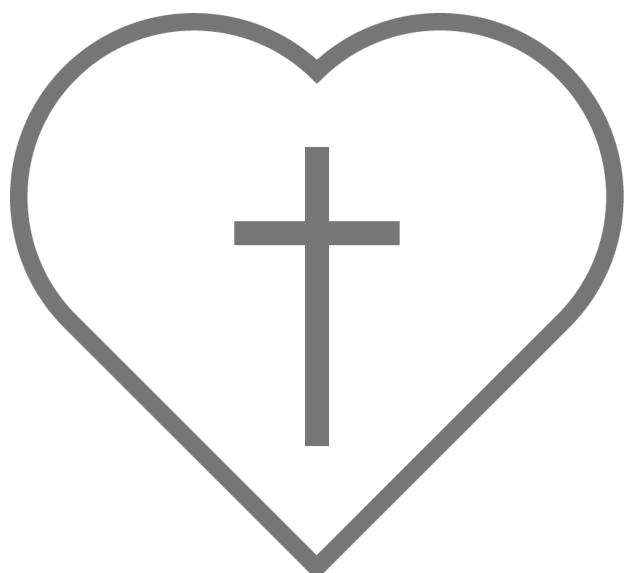
AN MAF BIBLE STUDY

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK



SESSION 2

Loving God's Way



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of 'People' and how MAF's Disaster Response team provides support for people in a tangible way. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Luke 12:32-34 (ESV)

We will be returning to this verse later in the study.

The SDGs and People

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'People' – our first 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.

Devotion

Written by Heather Malloch



A connection is a relationship between two things, people or groups. It's a union. Today, thanks to technological advances and modern media, we are more connected than ever before. Despite this, social isolation, loneliness and suicide have sadly peaked over recent times.

Few of us need to be told that we are less socially engaged than in previous times. Paradoxically, although people are connecting more, they relate to each other less. Cultivating authentic relationships and connections comes from accepting, valuing and respecting each other.

Brené Brown, an American lecturer, author and research professor, writes, 'We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection.'

The writer and poet Elizabeth Bibesco, daughter of British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, wrote, 'Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.'

Showing kindness, listening to others when they are in need and helping them *with* that need, all aid in building healthy and intimate connections.

Authentic relationships lay at the heart of Jesus' ministry, with the New Testament providing many examples. Zacchaeus the tax collector (**Luke 19:1-10**) and the woman at the well (**John 4:7-30**) are just two instances of Jesus' non-judgemental love for us.

Sometimes, people's needs were physical, like the time Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead (**Luke 7:11-15**). At other times, they were spiritual. **Matthew 9:35-36** says, 'When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' (ESV).

All, however, show how Jesus formed connections with people from different walks of life – showing empathy, kindness and a deep love for them. Jesus loves sinners and never turns anyone away!

The Bible has much to say about our responsibility to connect and love others. It's so important that only God's first commandment, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' (**Matthew 22:37**), overshadows the value God places on those He loves, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (**Matthew 22:39**).

Through us, the Lord takes care of those who have little. We *have* to look after the poor and needy. **Deuteronomy 15:11** tells us, 'For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land"' (ESV).

When it comes to those who are undervalued and marginalised in our society, God's Word instructs us to speak up for those that can't. 'Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy' (**Proverbs 31:8-9**, ESV).

The Bible is clear about what we are required to do. 'You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore them. You shall help him to lift them up again' (**Deuteronomy 22:4**, ESV).

Corrie ten Boom once wrote, 'The amount of God's love is unlimited, but we only receive as much as we use.' Because it's unlimited, God's love can *never* run out. His love is always there for us, and there is immeasurably more than we will ever need. Because the various media channels enable us to witness human suffering on a daily basis, feelings of being overwhelmed and having compassion fatigue can creep in. This often results in an impasse, as we cease to take any action whatsoever.

At times like these, pray to the One whose love and compassion *never* run dry. He will restore and refill us anew and allow us to invest our time in others so we can continue to love, care and cherish them. Mother Teresa famously said, 'Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.'

One very tangible way that MAF reaches out to those who are poor, vulnerable, destitute or in need is through our Disaster Response Team. You'll see and hear more about this later in this study.

Review

What is **Luke 12:33** talking about when it refers to 'a treasure in heaven that will never fail'?

Luke 12:34 tells us, 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' What difference could godly treasures make in the world today?

Compassion fatigue is common. How do you think the words of Corrie ten Boom, 'If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God, you'll be at rest,' can help you overcome this?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheonagh, which sums up the work of the MAF Disaster Response team.

Reflection

When you think about poverty and injustice in the world today, what emotions do they conjure up within you?

Think about how you reacted when you saw someone that you considered poor, desperate or in need. Maybe it was on television or in your own town. What did you think and what did you do? What prejudices do you think you hold, and about whom? Now, shut your eyes and imagine you are in the same situation. What could you do differently this time?

'We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection' (Brené Brown). What part of your relationships do you hide from others? And what aspects do you hold back from God? What do you think would happen if you lowered your guard a little? Take your fears and insecurities and hand them over to your heavenly Father.

Repentance

Depending on how your leader is running your course, you can either ponder these questions during the study, or use them in a personal time of reflection on your own after the study is over.

- “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?’ (**1 John 3:17**, ESV). Take time to repent of the times when you have ‘turned a blind eye’ to poverty. Ask the Holy Spirit to let you see people the way Jesus sees them.

Prayer

- Take a few minutes to remember those who have been caught up in natural disasters and conflict around the world. Pray for their physical, psychological and spiritual restoration. Pray for help and support to come through aid organisations like MAF, praying that MAF and its many humanitarian partners will help provide healing and be a light in the people's darkness.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to be more real, more authentic in your relationships with others and with your heavenly Father. Write down any thoughts you have so you can reflect on them in the days and weeks to come. Pray for opportunities to demonstrate this.
- Consider the world as it is today and how we can connect with each other. What can we do as Christians to reach out to those who need physical, emotional or spiritual healing? How can we best show them the love of Jesus?

Jot down any other areas you would like to pray for — for example, prayers for the state of the world, the work of MAF or the Sustainable Development Agenda.

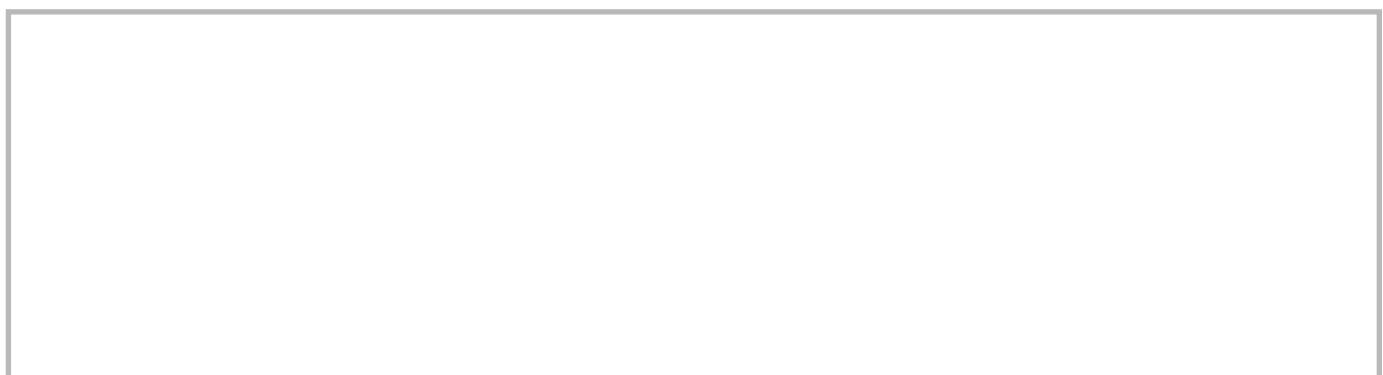


After today's study, please consider becoming part of a *For the Sake of the World* prayer group. To find out more, or to set up your own group, please visit <http://forthesakeoftheworld.com>

Response

To close this second study, you will hear again from presenters Sheonagh and Matt. They will challenge you to think about what practical actions you could commit to as a take-away from this session.

What one action can you pledge to do in the next week to help change the lives of those who needs are greatest? Write this down and keep it with you to remind you of your pledge. Tell one of your friends or someone in your church so they can help keep you accountable.



Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

If you would like to continue your journey in this session of the Bible Study and find out more, please visit www.maf-uk.org/findoutmore and we'll introduce you to some more stories from where MAF serves around the world.

MAF Discovery Air Pass

Why not continue on your journey with MAF and get your free MAF boarding pass and join us on a journey of discovery to visit places rarely featured in travel brochures, and to meet people living far from the tourist trail. Sign up for our Discovery Air Pass journey and see the world from a unique perspective.

'Fly' with MAF from country to country and find out what it's like to live, work and serve in some of the most isolated places on earth. Every couple of months, you will receive inspiration by post or email: updates from our pilots, real-life stories, fascinating facts and opportunities to support our work. Check in at www.maf-uk.org/discover-now