

Empower the Poor

A note to the leader

Obviously, your group is made up of perfectly calm, reasonable people who have never once raised their voice about a public issue. For everyone else's groups, here's a reminder: this series covers contentious social issues, so engage with love, humility, and respect.

Connect

If you could change one rule of Monopoly to make it more fun for everyone, what would it be?

Review

Take a couple of minutes to review some of the main ideas from the sermon:

1. **How Israel Fought Poverty.** God designed Israel's economic system to keep people from becoming permanently trapped in poverty by protecting access to capital, connection, and capacity. Through gleaning, interest-free loans, debt forgiveness, redemption, debt-servitude protections, and Jubilee, Israel built a series of safeguards that gave people a way back when circumstances pushed them down.
2. **Principles for Fighting Poverty.** Israel's system was built around three principles: it all belongs to God, we're in this together, and you were made to contribute. Together, these principles remind us that what we have is entrusted to us by God, that our neighbors' struggles are our responsibility, and that fighting poverty should restore people's ability to contribute rather than simply meet their immediate needs.
3. **How We Fight Poverty.** We can't simply copy Israel's laws into our modern economy, but we can apply their principles as citizens, builders, the church, and neighbors. Whether through wise public policy, creative business practices, meaningful church relationships, or personal generosity, we can work to restore people's capital, connection, and capacity so that fewer people remain stuck in poverty.

Read Deuteronomy 15:1-15

Make Observations: After reading Deuteronomy 15:1-15 out loud, give your group a few minutes to make observations on their own. Then go around the group and share the things you observed and discuss them. Take your time with this section.

Discuss

1. The sermon described three things that keep people out of poverty: capital, connections, and capacity. Give a few examples of each of these in people's lives. Which of these three would have the biggest impact on your life if you lost it today? Why?
2. Imagine a single mom's car dies. She puts the repair on a payday loan, misses shifts at work, and loses her job. At what point could someone have stepped in to change the story? What might that have looked like?
3. God built several safety nets into Israel's economy to prevent someone from falling into poverty: leaving grain at the edges of fields for the poor, interest-free loans, debt cancellation, family members buying back lost land, and returning all land to its original families every 50 years. Which of these surprises or intrigues you the most, and why?
4. Jubilee meant Asher's grandkids didn't pay for three bad harvests fifty years earlier, and Obed's grandkids didn't start life ahead because of them. Where do you see advantage or disadvantage passed down today? What would a modern version of that reset look like?
5. Community Groups can put people with very different incomes in the same living room. What are some challenges to that kind of relationship? What could a group do to keep money differences from subtly shaping who talks, who hosts, or who feels comfortable?

Apply

Break up into smaller groups of three and respond to this question: Pastor Clayton challenged us to add one person to your "cover me" circle — someone you give permission to ask for your help if something happened to them. Who is one person you could add to your circle this week?

Pray

As a group, have each person pray out loud for someone on the Prayer Wall (ccclife.org/prayer-wall). Often, many people are posting requests related to a loss of capital, connection, or capacity.