

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Ministry to the Poor: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction to Ministry to the Poor.
- II. The Church's Responsibility for the Poor.

CLASS #2:

- II. The Church's Responsibility for the Poor (cont'd),

CLASS #3:

- II. The Church's Responsibility for the Poor (cont'd).
- III. How to Minister to the Poor.

CLASS #4:

- III. How to Minister to the Poor (cont'd).

CLASS #5:

- III. How to Minister to the Poor (cont'd).
- IV. Course Conclusion.

Exam.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

Ministry to the Poor : Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Who are the needy (pp. 101-104)?
- 2) Show how Jesus' own ministry focused on the poor (pp. 111, 112).
- 3) Refer to three different points to describe the attitudes to have while ministering to the poor (pp. 117-120).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) In two or three sentences explain the concept that responsibility follows privilege, and show how it relates to ministry to the poor (p. 108).
- 2) Explain how the Old Testament concept of justice is related to ministry to the poor (p. 110, 111).
- 3) State one of the warnings that God gives to those who refuse to respond to the needy. Include a Scripture (p. 113).
- 4) List the three most important words that describe the attitude of those who minister to the poor (pp. 117, 118).
- 5) List the three stages of the general model that can be used in ministry to the poor. Give a one sentence description of each stage (pp. 120-124).
- 6) List five ways in which a minister can use his Bible as a tool when ministering to the poor (pp. 124, 125).

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

I. Introduction to Ministry to the Poor.

Notes —

A. The Church and the Poor.

1. In the United States and in many other countries, the government helps the poor. Is it Biblical for the government to help the poor?
 - a. In the Bible, it is not clearly stated whether the government should help the poor.
 - b. In the Bible, it is clearly stated that the Church should help the poor.
2. The Church is really the only group of people that **can help** the poor with their truest needs.
 - a. The government is able to sustain the poor.
 - b. Only the Church can effectively help the poor, because only the Church can offer the Gospel.
 - c. The poor need the Gospel.
 - 1) The Gospel provides hope to an otherwise hopeless group of people.
 - 2) The Gospel provides purpose in life to a group of people who often have no purpose.
 - 3) The Gospel provides a changed life to a people who desperately need a change.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

B. The Contents of this Course.

1. This course is divided into two parts.
 - a. We will first focus on theology.
 - 1) What does the Bible say about the poor?
 - 2) What does the Bible say about the responsibility of the Church to the poor?
 - b. Then, we will focus on the practical.
 - 1) How can we help the poor?
 - 2) How can we effectively minister to the poor?
2. The goal of the course is to offer a basic understanding of **why** the Church must help the poor and **how** the Church can help the poor.

II. The Church's Responsibility For the Poor.

A. Introduction.

1. There is a Biblical mandate to help the poor.
 - a. In the Bible there are more than 400 passages that include more than 1000 verses that mention the poor.
 - b. In many of these cases the emphasis is on the commandment of God to His people to help the needy.
 - c. For the most part, the commandment of God to help the needy is without conditions.
2. The one condition for helping the poor.
 - a. The only condition given in the Bible is that the person is truly needy.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Discussion Point

Use 1 Jn 3:17 to promote discussion.

- b. What is the Biblical definition of the “needy?” Who are the needy?
- c. Our theology must start here. If we want to consider what is our responsibility to the poor and the needy, then we must first understand who the poor are.

B. Who Are the Needy?

- 1. In the Old Testament there are many different words that signify the “poor.”
 - a. In general, we can organize these words into three categories.
 - 1) The poor--the indigent.
 - a) People who do not have the basic physical needs of life.
 - b) Most of the time, the Old Testament understanding is that these people are victims of the actions of others.
 - 2) The poor--the oppressed. These are people who have been victims of the injustice of society.
 - 3) The poor--the humble. These are the spiritually poor people who have complete confidence in God.
 - b. In each of these three categories, the point of each specific verse is that a need exists that God will fill.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

2. Here are additional words that describe the needy:
 - a. Humble.
 - b. Weak.
 - c. Oppressed.
 - d. Without power.
 - e. Without help.
3. The following words, from Mt 25:31-46, also describe the needy:
 - a. Hungry.
 - b. Thirsty.
 - c. Stranger.
 - d. Naked.
 - e. Sick.
 - f. Prisoner.
4. God will always respond to real needs (see Ex 2:24; Ps 51:17). There is always a Biblical response to a Biblical need.

Author's Illustration:

The Biblical response to the Biblical need of a stranger is hospitality.

Insert Your Illustration:

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote discussion on Biblical needs:
Ex 22:21; Lev 19:34; Deut 31:12; and Rom 12:13.

5. The responsibility of the Church to the needy includes those who are inside and outside of the Church (see Mt 5:43-48; Rom 12:20).
 - a. Consider the definition of the term “neighbor.”
 - b. According to Jesus, my neighbor is any person who has a real need (Lk 10:29-37).
6. Who are the needy? Remember, the answer to this question is not always consistent with our sense of what is correct.

Discussion Point

Consider the following verses in determining who the Bible calls “the needy”:
Lk 15:29; Mt 20:10; Mt 5:45; Lk 6:35; and Rom 2:4.

7. Spiritually, the needy are the humble. They are those who understand and **admit/recognize** their needs. With this understanding we can begin to better understand who are the needy. To be truly needy, there are two conditions:
 - a. You must recognize your need (Mk 2:17).
 - b. You must look for and desire help (Mt 7:7).
8. Sometimes people who have needs are not truly (Biblically) needy, because they do not recognize their needs.
 - a. The Pharisees had the need to be saved (accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord over their lives) like any other person.
 - 1) However, Jesus was not willing to give them much of His time because they were not considered as being truly needy.
 - 2) They were not willing to recognize and admit their needs (see Mk 2:15-17 and Jn 9:39-41).

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

An alcoholic has obvious needs, but he is not truly needy until he is willing to recognize and admit that he is an alcoholic.

The responsibility to help the alcoholic begins when he is able to say "I am an alcoholic. I need help." Before this point, we are not able to help him.

The conditions for giving are not in the hands of the giver, but in the hands of the receiver.

The responsibility to give to the truly needy are without conditions (Lk 6:30; 1 Jn 3:17). We need to understand who are the truly needy.

Insert Your Illustration:

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- b. This perspective is consistent with the offer of the Gospel.
- 1) Jesus died for all people (Jn 3:16; 2 Pt 3:9). He did not put conditions on who he died for.
 - 2) Nevertheless, salvation is not unconditional.
 - a) The conditions exist on the side of the receiver, not on the side of the giver.
 - b) Each person must receive that which was freely and unconditionally given.
 - 3) Unfortunately, many people do not receive.
 - a) Is it because Jesus has not given? No!
 - b) It is because they:
 - (1) Refuse to recognize their need.
 - (2) Refuse to search for and ask for help.
- c. The same principles apply to the Church's responsibility to the poor. Many people are poor and in desperate need. Is it because the Church will not give?
- 1) Unfortunately, the answer too often is yes!
 - 2) The Church's challenge is to make the answer to this question no!
 - 3) The Church must give to the poor. They must give without conditions. They must give to fill spiritual needs and physical needs.
 - 4) The Church must define who are the truly needy.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

Evaluating Who to Help:

Use Mt 10:14 to discuss the idea of the truly needy.

Consider the following questions:

Do all people have the need to hear the word of God?

Should the disciples respond to all people?

Who should they not respond to?

Would these people be considered as being truly/Biblically needy?

What are the implications of the phrases **whoever does not receive you** and **whoever does not heed your words**?

How can we apply the principles of this verse to the ministry to the poor?

Should we continue to help a poor person if he does not want to be helped?

Should we continue to help a poor person if he does not want to help himself?

C. The Essence, Nature, and Heart of God.

1. To understand the Church's responsibility to the poor, we must first understand the heart of God.
2. God has favor on people with needs. He does not have favor on people without needs. Of course, we must remember our definition of the truly needy, because everybody has needs. It is better to say that God has favor on those who recognize their needs.
 - a. God has favor on the sick, not the healthy.
 - b. God has favor on the humble, not the proud.
 - c. God has favor on the poor, not the rich.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote discussion about God's favor: Mt 10:39-41; Mk 2:17; Lk 18:14; Lk 6:20, 24; Ps 113:5-9; Lk 16:19-31; and Lk 7:47.

3. It is the essence and the nature of God to identify with the needy and to help the needy.

Discussion Point

Use these verses to promote further discussion:
Prov 19:17 and Ps 12:5.

4. God seems to be directed toward the poor.

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote discussion about God's heart for the poor:
Lk 14:13; Prov 17:5; 15:25;
Ps 35:10; 68:5, 6; 69:30-33; 109:30, 31; 140:12; 146:1-10;
Mt 11:25-28; Lk 4:18-21; and 12:33.

5. We can understand the heart of God when we understand the heart of the law (see Mt 23:23).
 - a. Justice and mercy are two Biblical concepts that are often found in the context of giving to the needy.
 - b. Consider Gal 5:14 in relation to the heart of the law. Remember, your neighbor (Lk 10:25-37) is defined as any person who is truly needy.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

D. Responsibility Follows Privilege.

1. The more privileges you have, the more responsibilities you will have.
 - a. Privilege must equal responsibility (Lk 12:48).
 - b. The book of Ephesians has six chapters. The first three chapters include the privileges of believers. The final three chapters describe the responsibilities that are connected to those privileges.
 - c. Another example is the nation of Israel. Israel, like the Church, were a people with many privileges. Therefore, they had many responsibilities.
 - d. According to Amos, Israel had many responsibilities toward the poor because they had much prosperity.

Discussion Point

Use the following verse to promote discussion:
Amos 3:2, 15; 4:1; and 5:12.

2. In the most fundamental sense, each person has responsibility toward other people because each person has the privilege of being one of those people.
 - a. We have responsibility toward others simply because of the value of each person. Each person is a life created by God (Prov 14:31; Job 31:13-15).

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- b. Thus, we can view our responsibility toward the needy in terms of our responsibility toward the Creation of God.

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Insert Your Illustration:

E. Responsibility as the Correct Response to God.

1. The Church's responsibility to the poor is rooted in the Church's correct response to God. He is Jehovah Jireh, the Hebrew designation for "the God who provides for our needs."
 - a. Consider Deut 24:17,18.
 - 1) This is a commandment to help the needy.
 - 2) Why? Because God has already helped those whom He is commanding.
 - b. Consider also 1 Jn 4:19; Mt 10:8; and Eph 5:1, 2. Remember that: Your motivation and sense of obligation to give are not produced by the question **What must I do?** but by the question **What has God done for me?**
2. Many times, people do not give to the poor because they think that they have earned what they have. The poor have not earned anything. Why should they give anything to the poor? Be thankful that God does not have this attitude. If He had this attitude, then we would all be going to hell!

Discussion Point

Use 1 Cor 4:7 to promote further discussion about how we should view our own blessings.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

3. The only correct response that we can give to God, who has given everything to us is the response of sincere gratitude. This gratitude must be manifested in our giving to others (see Jn 13:15; 21:15-17).
4. God gave to the needy in the greatest event in the history of the world (Jn 3:16). We were a people without hope. God gave His Son to us.
5. If we try to say that we do not have to give to others who do not have hope, then we try to say that we are higher than God. God had to do it, but we do not. That is idolatry.

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote further discussion on giving to others:
Deut 24:17, 18; 2 Cor 8:1-9; 1 Jn 3:13-18; and 4:7-12.

Insert Your Illustration:

F. The Old Testament and the Concept of Justice.

1. Read Ps 72:12, 13; 103:6; Deut 10:18; Amos 4:1-3; and Is 42:3.
 - a. Many people think that poor people are poor because of the judgment of God upon them.
 - b. Nevertheless, it is very rare that the poor are referred to as sinners.
 - c. In the Old Testament, the poor are most often referred to as being the victims of the sins of others.
2. Therefore, the Hebrew word for **justice** (sedaka) is often used when the Bible mentions the poor.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- a. **Sedeka** refers to the positive actions of God to create, preserve, and restore.
- b. The concept of the justice of God is repeated often in the Old Testament.
- c. The people of God were commanded to show justice, because God showed justice.
- d. Because of His justice, God had a special interest in helping the needy. His people must have this same interest.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote further discussion on the Old Testament's view of justice: Ps 72:1-4, 12, 14; and Jer 22:13-17.

G. Jesus and the Witness of the New Testament.

1. Jesus said that His own ministry was valid because He preached the Gospel to the poor (Lk 4:18-21; Mt 11:1-6).
2. Jesus believed that the poor were more ready and able to receive the Gospel (Mt 11:25, 26).
3. Jesus directed the call of the Gospel toward the needy (Mt 11:28, 29).
4. Jesus seemed to show partiality to the poor (see Mt 19:21; Lk 12:33; and Lk 14:12-14).
5. Jesus' ministry was a ministry to the needy (Mk 2:17).
 - a. Jesus was with the needy (Lk 5:1-11).
 - b. He ate with them (Lk 5:27-32).
 - c. He comforted them (Lk 12:22-34).

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

- d. He fed them (Lk 9:10-17).
 - e. He healed them (Lk 5:12-16).
 - f. He ministered to them (Lk 7:18-23).
6. Jesus taught His disciples to care for the needy.

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote discussion on the New Testament's teaching about the needy:
Jn 13:1-34 (focus on vs. 16, 34); Lk 9:12-17 (focus on vs. 13);
and Phil 2:3-8 (focus on vs. 4).

7. The New Testament Church put an emphasis on giving to the needy.
- a. Paul - Gal 2:10; 2 Cor 8:9-15; Acts 11:27-30; and 20:31-35.
 - b. Tabitha - Acts 9:36, 39.
 - c. Barnabas - Acts 4:36, 37; 11:27-30.
 - d. Titus - 2 Cor 8:3-6.
 - e. All the disciples - Acts 4:32-35.
8. Consider the definition of pure and undefiled religion in Jms 1:27.
9. Giving to the needy was the manifestation of true repentance (Lk 3:7-11).
10. The establishing of deacons as part of Church government was the result of the Church's response to the needy (Acts 6:1-6).
11. The Christian faith was formed according to the Church's responsibility to the needy.
- a. The functioning of their homes (Rom 12:13).
 - b. The operation of their businesses (Eph 4:28).

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- c. The training of disciples (Tit 3:8).
- d. The character of their worship (Jms 1:27).

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Insert Your Illustration:

H. A Warning to the People of God.

1. There is a warning to the people of God who refuse to accept their responsibility to the needy.
 - a. In Isaiah 1:11, God is very angry. He says that He has become disgusted.
 - 1) The cause of much of God's disgust is the lack of responsibility that the people have taken toward the needy (vs. 17).
 - 2) The consequences are terrible (vs. 15).
 - 3) Without the manifestation of God's heart toward the poor in our own lives, we are in danger of God not hearing our prayers.
 - b. There is a similar warning in Is 58:6,7,9.
 - c. The warnings in the New Testament are even more serious.

Discussion Point

Use the following verses to promote further discussion about God's warnings to those who refuse to help the needy: Lk 3:7-11; Mt 25:31-46; and Jms 2:14-17. (Remember that the context is the question of salvation).

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

2. Finally, allow 1 Jn 3:16-18 to be a great challenge to your personal life.

Insert Your Illustration:

I. Conclusion to the Church's Responsibility.

1. Perhaps the greatest tragedy caused by the neglect of the Church toward the needy is the loss of authority.
 - a. Real authority is the result of real service.
 - b. When the Church rejects its natural responsibility it also rejects its natural authority.
2. The Biblical evidence of the Church's responsibility to the needy is very obvious. Nevertheless, in many cases the Church does not consider this responsibility to be very important.

Insert Your Illustration:

3. We need to understand the danger. We need to repent.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Discussion Point

Meditate on Prov 21:13. End this part of the course with a time of prayer for the needy. Challenge the students to do something about their responsibility to the poor.

Notes —

III. How to minister to the poor.

A. Understanding the Poor.

1. If we want to minister to the poor, then we need to understand them and their perspectives.
 - a. According to statistics in the United States at the time of this writing:
 - 1) It is four times more probable that a poor person will commit suicide.
 - 2) It is more probable that a poor person will be an alcoholic.
 - 3) It is more probable that a poor person will be a victim of child abuse.
 - 4) It is more probable that a poor person will be a victim of a serious crime.
 - 5) It is more probable that a poor person will experience a broken marriage.
 - b. To understand the poor, we need to understand the seriousness of their sense of a lack of hope.
 - 1) In many cases, a poor person has never seen or felt hope. In general, they have lived a life without hope.
 - 2) The poor need to experience hope.
 - 3) Ministry to the poor must focus on the hope that is offered by the Gospel. Jesus can offer a hope to the poor that will free them from their chains.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

c. In many cases, the poor person has been forced to accept his situation.

- 1) The person was probably born in poverty.
- 2) He has been conditioned to live that way.
- 3) There begins to develop what we might call a “poverty culture.” There is a certain “poverty mentality” that exists. A person can be poor according to society’s definition but not have a poverty mentality. At the same time, a person can have a poverty mentality without being classified as “poor” by society. Thus, the minister must concentrate on renewing the mind of the poor person who has a poverty mentality.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about lack of hope and “poverty mentality.”

- 4) This must be done on the most basic levels.
- 5) The poor person must be encouraged not to accept the chains of poverty.
- 6) The minister must help to define attainable goals. He must provide positive motivation and give direction and vision.

Insert Your Illustration:

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

2. Other understandings.

- a. Be careful not to make too many assumptions. What you may consider to be something obvious may be something that a poor person does not know.
 - 1) A poor person may not understand that it is not normal to be pregnant and not married.
 - 2) A poor person may not understand the concept of saving money.
- b. It is more probable that a poor person will show respect for God, and therefore, for the minister of God. Use this understanding as a natural door toward ministry.
- c. Incest is more common among the poor. Therefore, there may be a higher percentage of people with mental problems (mental retardation, Downes Syndrome, etc.).

Insert Your Illustration:

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B. Proper Attitude for Ministry to the Poor.

1. Perhaps the most important words to describe an effective attitude for ministering to the poor are:
 - a. Empathy.
 - b. Compassion.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

- c. Sincere Interest.
 - 1) The word “compassion” is from the Latin:
 - a) COM means with.
 - b) PASSION means to suffer.
 - 2) Therefore, the word “compassion” means **to suffer with the person**.
 - 3) The poor person needs to feel that you sincerely care about him. He needs to see that you understand him and his problems. He does not benefit much from the type of help that is distant. He needs someone to help him who is willing to step into his shoes and put himself in his place.
2. Be reminded of the statement: **“except for the grace of God, there go I”** (or I am as all other people).
 - a. Remind yourself that you could have been born into a family of poverty.
 - b. This will help you to keep an empathetic attitude.
3. Until you are able to show and prove to the person that you are sincerely interested in helping him, do not try to confront or challenge him.
 - a. First, build a strong relationship with the poor person.
 - b. Then, you can confront and challenge him in an appropriate way.
4. Remember that a poor person usually has respect for a minister. Feel confident to speak with authority.
 - a. However, do not speak with an attitude of superiority. A poor person will perceive this type of negative attitude, and he will resent it and reject you.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- b. On the other hand, the poor will respond to a person that shows an attitude of sincere respect for other people.
 - 1) The reason for this is simple. Most people approach the poor with an attitude of superiority. Poor people are not used to receiving much respect from others.
 - 2) Thus, when someone shows respect, the poor person is surprised and appreciative.
- c. In conclusion, simply remember that a poor person is a human being just like you. Show him the respect that you would show to any other human being.

Insert Your Illustration:

- 5. An attitude of commitment is critical in the ministry to the poor. The minister must be sure to keep his promises.
 - a. The poor person probably needs to learn how to have this attitude in his own life. He needs to see a committed life. He needs to have a model of commitment.
 - b. Perhaps more importantly, the minister needs to show commitment because the poor person needs to understand that his words are sincere.
 - 1) Usually, a poor person will have received many empty promises of help in the past.
 - 2) Thus, it is difficult for a poor person to have confidence in other people. They have many reasons to be skeptical.
 - 3) With an attitude of commitment and sincerity, the minister must build trust and destroy that sense of skepticism.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

6. An attitude of flexibility is important in the work among the poor.
 - a. Many things will not be familiar to you. You will have to be flexible and make some changes.
 - b. Consider the words of Paul in 1 Cor 9:19-23.

Insert Your Illustration:

C. A Model of Ministry to the Poor.

1. Three stages of ministry.
 - a. The identification stage.
 - 1) For various reasons, this first stage of ministry to the poor is often the most important.
 - a) The poor person may be apathetic.
 - b) He might not trust you.
 - c) He may be skeptical of your motives to help him.
 - 2) Before we can be effective in our ministry to the poor, we must build a good relationship and a strong sense of trust.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- 3) Compassion and empathy are very important in this stage of ministry. The minister must show in some way that he can identify with the poor person.
- a) For example, it may be true that the minister has never been unemployed for a period of two years. He may not be able to say that he can identify with that problem.
 - b) However, he can identify with the emotions of frustration and boredom.

Insert Your Illustration:

- b. The encouragement and challenge stage.
- 1) In this stage of ministry to the poor, the minister begins to respond to the root problems of many poor people.
 - a) The problem of a lack of hope.
 - b) The problem of a lack of encouragement.
 - c) The problem of a lack of motivation.
 - 2) In many cases, a poor person has been influenced by his past experiences to think in a negative way.
 - a) It is difficult for him to motivate himself to change. His past failures hang over his head like a heavy rain cloud.
 - b) He needs to be encouraged. He needs to receive a vision for change.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

- 3) This encouragement includes much more than merely saying words like **you can do it**.
 - a) It includes instruction and information.
 - b) It includes challenge and vision.
 - c) It may even include stern correction. Especially with correction, the minister must sensitively use the Bible as his authority.
- 4) Yes! It is important in this stage of ministry to show a sincere desire to help in whatever way you can. However, it is more important to challenge the person with the words of Jesus in Jn 5:6 (**Do you wish to get well? or Do you want to be helped?**).
 - a) Do not do everything for the person. Challenge him to do something to help himself.
 - b) In this way he will answer the question. If he really wants to be helped, (remember, you can not help someone until he wants to be helped) he will be willing to help himself.

Insert Your Illustration:

c. The Service Stage.

- 1) This is the final stage. The minister serves the poor person in such a way that the poor person will be able to serve God and others in his community.
 - a) This means that the minister's service must focus on equipping the poor person.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- b) Together with the poor person, the minister must develop a plan that will be used to complete specific goals.
 - c) In the beginning, the goals should be easy to accomplish. You need to build momentum. Poor people generally do not have confidence in what they can accomplish.
 - d) Step by step, they can build a sense of confidence. Remember, part of the reason for poverty is the lack of ability to complete plans (because of the fault of the poor person himself and the fault of other people and the injustice of society). This habit must be broken. It must be done slowly and with patience.
 - e) The poor person needs a sense of security. Thus, emphasize the importance of completing the initial goals. He may desperately need a sense of success and accomplishment. Often, if the minister can get the poor person to accomplish these initial, easier goals, then the poor person will be much better prepared to accomplish later, more difficult goals.
- 2) The minister must share in the poor person's fight to obtain decent housing, food, clothes, medicine, and employment.
- a) Employment is most important.
 - b) If we can help the poor get a job, then they can learn to provide for themselves.
- 3) The minister must teach and encourage the poor person to live according to Biblical principles. If there is not a spiritual change in the person, then much of your work may be lost.
- a) For example, you may find a job for the person. However, if his habits of laziness, irresponsibility, and lack of discipline are not changed, then he will probably lose the job after a short period of time.
 - b) The only Person who can make these changes in a person is Jesus Christ. Thus, in the ministry to the poor, Bible study and prayer must be emphasized.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

- 4) As soon as possible, the minister should encourage the poor person to help others.

Insert Your Illustration:

D. The Process and Tools Involved in Ministry to the Poor.

1. The process of confrontation is very important in the ministry to the poor. A poor person may need to be confronted with some hard questions. It is a difficult part of the ministry. However, if done with sensitivity, it is very necessary and Biblical (see 2 Sam 12:7-14).
 - a. Often, when a poor person is confronted he will respond with the excuse: **“you just do not understand my situation.”**
 - 1) Therefore, before confronting the person the minister should prove that he does understand the situation.
 - 2) He must show and say that he understands and that he has considered the whole situation.
 - b. Often, the poor person needs to accept and admit his own part of the responsibility related to the situation. The minister may need to confront in a strong and firm way. Nevertheless, this should be done with love and understanding.
2. The minister’s most important tool is his Bible. The poor need the **encouragement of the scriptures** that they **might have hope** (Rom 15:4).
 - a. Use your Bible to confront.
 - b. Use your Bible to teach.

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

- c. Use your Bible to provide points of meditation.
 - d. Use your Bible to comfort.
 - e. Use your Bible to encourage.
 - f. Use your Bible to reform the poor person's system of ethics.
 - g. Use your Bible to reform the poor person's habits.
3. The use of assignments/projects is another important tool of the minister.
- a. Self-managed assignments can be used to show the minister if the poor person is willing to help himself.
 - b. Assignments/projects can be used to promote a sense of hope. It can begin to create an expectation for change. A poor person desperately needs to see that change is an alternative and a possibility.
 - 1) However, we must first understand the perspective of a poor person.
 - a) A poor person can be comfortable in his poverty.
 - b) He can begin to become comfortable with a life of little responsibility and work. He can begin to refuse to take responsibility for his own situation.
 - c) The root cause of this is fear.
 - d) The poor person can become a slave of fear. He may never even try to help himself. The poor person may have a tremendous fear of failure. Thus, he may have a fear of making decisions. This lack of ability to make decisions will lead to a lack of discipline. The lack of discipline will lead to a lack of commitment. They will avoid commitment and therefore reject their responsibility to help themselves.

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the following concepts to promote discussion:

- The fear of failure leads to...
- The fear of making decisions which leads to...
- The lack of discipline which leads to...
- The lack of commitment which leads to...
- The rejection of taking responsibility.

- 2) Listed below are several examples of assignments/projects that can be given to a poor person.

Assignment/ Project #1 to Help the Poor: An assignment to help identify the Causes of Fear.

Study the following verses to see the causes of fear:

1 Jn 4:18, 19	Ez 11:8	Gal 2:12
Prov 28:1	Gen 32:11	Ps 23:4
Prov 1:33	Ps 46:2, 3	Ps 56:4
Heb 13:5, 6	Gen 21:16, 17	Mt 26:69-74
Jn 7:13	Gen 26:6, 7	Mk 4:35-41
Jn 20:19	Mt 10:28	Num 13:25-14:5.
Heb 2:15		

Questions

What are the causes of fear according to these verses? Write them down on a piece of paper.

What are the causes of your fear? Try to keep a diary for one week and write down the answers to the following questions when you experience fear.

When do you have fear?
What happens?
Who are you with?
What are you thinking?
What do you do?

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Assignment/ Project #2 to Help the Poor: An Assignment to Help Identify the Results of Fear.

Study the following verses to see the results of fear:

Lk 21:26	Mt 25:14-30
Prov 29:25	Gen 26:6, 7
1 Jn 4:18, 19	Gal 2:12
Prov 10:24	Mk 4:35-41
Prov 28:1	Num 14:1-4

Questions

What are the results of fear according to these verses? Write them out on paper.

What are the results of your fear?

Assignment/ Project #3 to Help the Poor: An Assignment to Help Overcome Fear.

Study the following verses to see how to overcome fear:

1 Jn 4:18, 19	2 Tim 1:7
Ps 112:1, 7, 8	Prov 3:21-24
Heb 13:5, 6	Gen 32:7-12

Questions

What are the solutions to fear according to these verses? Write them down on a piece of paper.

What are some Biblical strategies that you can use to overcome your fear? Try to keep a diary for one week and write down the answers to the following questions when you experience fear.

How did I try to deal with the fear?

Did I respond in a Biblical way?

If not, how did I fail?

How can I do better next time?

Notes —

MINISTRY TO THE POOR

Notes —

**Assignment/ Project #4 to Help the Poor:
An assignment to promote discipline and self control.**

Study the following verses about discipline:

1 Tim 4:7	2 Thes 3:6-15	Prov 25:16
2 Tim 1:7	1 Pt 1:13	Rom 13:14
2 Tim 2:1-7	Phil 4:8	1 Thes 5:6-8
2 Tim 2:15	Jms 3:4-8	1 Pt 1:3-8
1 Cor 9:24-27	Eph 5:16	Heb 5:14
1 Thes 4:11, 12	Gal 5:22, 23	Prov 4:20-27
1 Thes 5:14	Prov 23:1-3	Lk 9:23, 24

Questions:

What does the Bible say about the lack of discipline?

What are the results?

How is discipline important?

What are some of the areas of our lives that need discipline?

How can we have discipline?

What are the benefits of discipline?

Write your answers to the previous questions on a piece of paper.

Memorize at least 3 of the verses.

Make a specific plan to practice discipline in a specific area of your life.

IV. Course Conclusions.

A. Something to Remember about the Poor.

1. All of the problems that a poor person has are not a result of his poverty.
2. Nevertheless, poverty does cause many problems.

B. The Effective Ministry to the Poor.

1. The effective minister to the poor will understand the mercy of the cross.
2. He will understand and practice the mercy of God and the concept of justice that is found in the Old Testament.
3. Thus, he will be able to offer compassion and love. This is what the poor desperately need.