

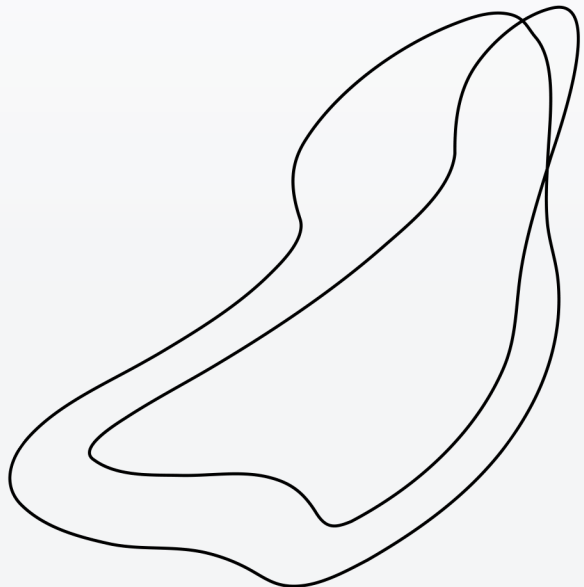
approaching poverty

A 7 DAY DEVOTIONAL



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Introduction

Poverty is a shared aspect of the human experience, touching each of us differently. Whether you've witnessed or experienced poverty or not, our aim for this devotional is to encourage a compassionate and Biblical perspective on poverty.

This 7-day devotional will walk you through an understanding of why poverty exists, why we should help, and how we should help.

Each day includes scripture references and a mixture of reflection questions and inspiring stories from West Africa.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

West African Vocational Schools (WAVS) is a Christian nonprofit that trains and equips people with life-changing job skills so they can thrive - in work, in relationships, and in spirit.

Since 2006, WAVS has prepared more than 1,800 young men and women for work in West Africa, one of the poorest regions of the world, while also sharing the love of Christ with them.

Why is there poverty?

In the Bible, the poor are the widow and the orphan, the beggar and the blind, the leper and the sojourner. They are the people who are excommunicated and outcast from society – and therefore typically left without the resources to care for themselves.

Millions of people in today's world are experiencing poverty daily. Whether it is people without a home or access to clean water or food, or a family with no consistent income – poverty is as rampant as it is diverse.

In the first part of this devotional we will look at the root of poverty – and God's plan for it.



Day 1

origin of poverty & God's plan for it

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

In the Garden of Eden, life was perfect. There was no death or sin, there was no pain. But the fall of man caused sin. With the entrance of sin came the consequences of it as well – death, pain and suffering. Because we live in a broken world, people experience poverty and the suffering that comes along with it.

When we recognize that poverty is a result of a broken world (and not always just because of someone's choices), we can more easily understand the reasons our brothers and sisters are experiencing poverty.

You may not be experiencing poverty yourself, but we all experience the consequences of sin and a broken world.

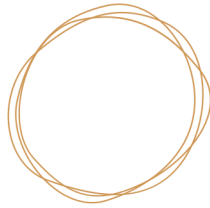
Though poverty was not a part of God's perfect design, he still knew it would happen and had a plan to address it. Throughout the Bible, we see rules given by God to the people of Israel to ensure they were protected and cared for.

Exodus 23: 10 – 11

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield,¹¹ but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

The Old Testament was written to a specific people group in a specific context at a specific point in time. However, it still helps us see God's character and heart towards his people – characteristics that are still true today.

Poverty may not have been a part of God's perfect design in the Garden, but we can see from Scripture that we should be involved in serving those who are experiencing it.



REFLECTION

1. What have been your experiences with poverty?
2. When you think of poverty, what comes to mind?
3. How is God calling you to adjust your view of poverty?
4. How is God affirming your view of poverty?