

REJECT
APATHY + **ONE** SABBATH
...

RAISE YOUR VOICE

STUDY GUIDE



BY BRIAN ORME

WHO IS ONE? >

ONE is a grassroots campaign and advocacy organization backed by more than 2 million people who are committed to the fight against extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. ONE believes the fight against poverty is not about charity, but about justice and equality.

RESOURCES

You'll need a computer with Internet connection for visiting recommended websites and watching the following suggested videos.

- > Celebrate, Accelerate <http://bit.ly/cJB2TZ>
- > Holy Water Healing in Ethiopia <http://bit.ly/9KqiFO>

RECOMMENDED READING

Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty by Roger Thurow and Scott Kilman

Hole in Our Gospel by Richard Stearns

The Good News About Injustice by Gary Haugen

INTRO >

Faith has always been a driving force behind social transformation. In that tradition comes ONE Sabbath, a way for small groups and congregations to take action and end the suffering caused by global poverty.

In this interactive ONE Sabbath study guide, you will come face to face with the world's greatest needs. You will also be challenged to enter into the story of those who are suffering by taking action—specific action—and becoming a voice of hope for those whose voice is largely unheard.

The study is broken down into five sections: Voice, Awareness, Responsibility, Hope and Action. Each section builds on the other to help you engage with both the heart of God for the oppressed and the urgent needs of those afflicted with extreme poverty and preventable diseases in the world today. You will be called to engage the facts, search your heart and use your voice. You can either cover all five sections in one 90-minute session, or discuss one section a week over a period of five weeks.

We act because the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not just about words but actions, both large and small, to incarnate the love of Christ to people around the world—people who God calls our neighbors.



INTRO >

You have a voice. This voice is a gift. Because of your citizenship, you have the ability to influence the world we live in by helping amplify the voices of those who are unheard. We can act together to save lives from extreme poverty and preventable disease. This is a message of action, a message of hope and a message of intolerance to suffering and indifference.

USE YOUR VOICE

There are millions of people whose voices are largely unheard because of who—or even where—they are in the world. Find a person in your group to partner with and share the two-minute version of your “life story” with them. Listen carefully to your partner’s story. When you are both finished, take turns sharing each other’s story with the whole group. You will become the voice for your partner—their advocate.

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Throughout the Bible, God calls us to speak up, not just for any reason, but on behalf of the very things that are dear to the heart of God. As individuals who come into a relationship with the living God, we don’t have the option of staying quiet in the face of injustice. Rather, we are called to use every outlet we have to move into action, and many times the first step is through making the story of the oppressed heard.

In Proverbs 31, we find the sayings of King Lemuel, as taught to him by his mother. Here’s a portion of the wisdom passage (verses 8,9):

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy”(NIV).

- 1 Has your Christian experience included amplifying the voice of the oppressed, or is this something new that you’re discovering? How is it impacting your life?
- 2 What does it mean to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves”?

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* says the word for “destitute” (used only here in the Old Testament) means people passing away or literally “on their last legs.”

3 Have you come into contact with someone who is destitute? Share it with the group. How did it make you feel, and what were the circumstances involved?

4 What are the things that keep someone “on their last legs” from having a voice? Why is it so important that someone speak on their behalf?

When we add our voices to help those who are unheard, we are not only bringing attention to their story—we are also “defending” their lives and their rights.

5 What are some of the common excuses that keep us from speaking up and using our voices for issues like poverty in Uganda or clean drinking water for villages in Sudan?

6 What are some of the specific ways you can use your voice to defend the rights of the oppressed?

Self-proclaimed “soccer moms” Elaine VanCleave and Pat Pelham considered changing the world a far-off dream—until they truly used their voices. The women got involved with Bread for the World after attending a talk by David Beckmann, the president of the organization, in Birmingham, Ala. The next night, they hosted a dinner at their church to raise awareness about extreme poverty and invited Alabama state officials. Congressman Bachus attended the event, and after Beckmann spoke to him about co-sponsoring legislation for ending childhood hunger, Bachus joined the cause. In 1998, Bachus was the steward of debt relief legislation, and VanCleave and Pelham flew to D.C. Due in part to their efforts, world leaders agreed to cancel 100 percent of the debt owed to their countries by the poorest nations. As VanCleave said in D.C.: “I can’t do anything as one person, but working with you we can do something together.”

HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR VOICE?

Before moving to the next section, take a few moments and brainstorm some creative ways you can begin to use your voice on behalf of those living amidst extreme poverty. Don’t restrict yourself; write what comes to mind first.



AWARENESS >

Our awareness of urgent poverty issues coupled with the teachings in Scripture about helping the poor should fuel our mission to sustainable change.

Fact: Our world is in great need. Every year, 8.8 million children die from preventable diseases, 884 million people don't have access to clean water, and some 11,500 people die each day from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Those are the staggering statistics, but each one of these numbers represents a person, a child, a boy or a girl who has a great need that can only be met through another human being taking action on their behalf.

Opportunity: Luckily, the tools to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria are affordable, effective and already saving millions of lives. In the last few years, our awareness of these issues has driven many people of faith to action. The Church is helping make an impact on global poverty by partnering with many organizations providing clean water, education and supplies like mosquito nets to help prevent the spread of diseases like malaria. The Global Fund alone has delivered 88 million bed nets to protect families from malaria. This is just the beginning. There are so many areas where the Church can help. Here are just a few ...

- > Ensure that the nearly 1 billion hungry people in the world have sustainable access to food
- > Send to school the 75 million primary school-aged children not enrolled
- > Provide clean water for the 884 million people currently without access, and basic sanitation for the 2.5 billion people who lack proper sanitation facilities.
- > Prevent 9.2 million young children from dying of poverty-related illnesses and 550,000 mothers from dying in childbirth each year.
- > Save more than 12,500 lives a day by fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB.

Churches like Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio, are making a substantial difference in the lives of thousands of men, women and children in the Sudan through their passionate initiative they call the Sudan Project. Mike Slaughter, their lead pastor reports: "Clean water continues to be one of the greatest needs in promoting children's health and welfare in Darfur, Sudan. Four hundred million children worldwide have no access to safe water. Inadequate access to safe

water and sanitation services coupled with poor hygiene practices kills and sickens thousands of children every day. Each year in Sudan, about 60,000 children under the age of five die from diarrhea, a preventable disease caused in large part by unsafe water and poor sanitation. Ginghamburg Church is working in communities in South Darfur to improve water supplies and sanitation facilities in schools and to promote safe hygiene practices.”

Through this initiative, Ginghamburg has provided almost 75,000 people with safe water since 2007. They have also impacted the lives of 175,000 people through sustainable agriculture, more than 171 new schools and 200 trained teachers.

Ginghamburg is an example of a local church that created awareness about the needs in the Sudan. Through their awareness and passion they turned their Ohio church into a vehicle to create sustainable change for thousands of families in Africa.

- 1** Awareness is the gateway for action. What are some of the poverty issues you’ve become more aware of in the last year? Share them with the group.
- 2** Similarly, action is the gateway for awareness. When have you become more aware of poverty or preventable disease while helping serve with your church or small group? What did you learn?

“What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute—the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words—we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever-widening circle will reach around the world.” —Dorothy Day

- 3** The first step in changing the world is to understand the issues. Before we can speak up for the rights of those in need, we must seek to understand them. Is there a specific area of poverty or world health that you are interested in?

CONTINUE >



4 Which justice issues do you think you are most aware of? What are you least aware of? Rate them in order of your awareness. Discuss your list with the group.

___ Malaria ___ HIV/AIDS ___ Hunger ___ Clean Water ___ Education

LEARNING TO SEE

1 John 3:17 says, "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

5 This verse implies that when we have an awareness of those in need we also have an obligation to open up our hearts. Do you feel like your heart is regularly opened to the oppressed when you become aware of their story?

6 What are some of the ways you have opened your eyes to those suffering from extreme poverty or preventable disease? What reaction did that cause within yourself? With friends or others around you?

Split up into groups of 3-4 and go to <http://www.one.org/us/issues/> and choose one of the issues listed (HIV/AIDS TB, Malaria, Agriculture, Education, Maternal and Child Health, Water and Sanitation, etc.). Click on the link and read more about the issue as a group. Be prepared to give a short description to the larger group about the issue you read up on. You may even want to think of a creative way to get the point across and involve each member. Use this exercise to become more aware of poverty issues and the people these issues affect.

Interact: Watch the video "Celebrate, Accelerate."



RESPONSIBILITY >

We all have a role to play in the fight against global poverty and preventable disease. As followers of Jesus, this role holds a significant responsibility for all of us to use our voice, to educate ourselves and others, and to step into the story of the world's biggest poverty issues to make a difference. We are called to use every outlet we have to pursue justice—whether it's through our college, our workplace, our communities, our churches or our government. In fact, when we take our role as advocate seriously and work together, the impact can become monumental.

THE STORY OF PEPFAR

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is a great success story of people taking responsibility seriously and making a change through government.

PEPFAR was announced by President Bush in his 2003 State of the Union Address as a five-year, \$15 billion initiative to combat global HIV/AIDS. It was reauthorized in 2008 for up to \$39 billion to fight HIV/AIDS. It is the largest international health initiative in history dedicated to fighting a single disease.

PEPFAR's original goals were to reach 2 million people with life-saving antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), prevent 7 million new infections and provide care to 10 million people affected by the disease. With the successful reauthorization of PEPFAR, the initiative will deliver increased results, supporting ARV treatment for a total of 3 million people, preventing a total of 12 million new infections and providing care to more than 12 million people, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

This was an incredible initiative, and it happened through the collective movement of ordinary people who began to take responsibility for those afflicted by these diseases. This included thousands of ONE members using their voice through petitions and phone calls to the government to help push the President's plan through to completion. (To read more about PEPFAR, go to <http://www.one.org/c/us/pastcampaign/109/>.)

1 Have you ever engaged the government for change? Written a letter to a senator? Signed a petition? Share it with the group.

2 The role of government in creating lasting change for those people afflicted with preventable disease and extreme poverty is important. How does the success of PEPFAR make you feel about using your voice to create change through the government?

BECOME A CATALYST

Author and pastor Rick Warren says: “What are the biggest problems in the world? The global giants—the problems that afflict billions of people. As I travel, I keep seeing the same five problems: spiritual emptiness, leadership corruption, poverty, disease and illiteracy. I think God gets the most glory when the Church takes on the biggest problems.” Warren also says, “I deeply believe that if we as evangelicals remain silent and do not speak up in defense of the poor, we lose our credibility and our right to witness about God’s love for the world.”

3 The call of advocacy in Scripture is clear, and the Church should be on the forefront of the issues facing our brothers and sisters in places like Africa. What are some specific ways we can lead the Church into greater responsibility for the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa?

4 How will you become a voice for the oppressed in your faith community? What are some specific things you can do to call your church’s attention to extreme poverty and diseases like malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS?

SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Why not update your Facebook or Twitter account with a few words about what you’ve learned from the ONE Sabbath study guide? You may want to share the ONE.org site, a quote or a passage of Scripture that’s stuck with you so far. This could be a great way to share the urgent message with others in your community. Jot down a few ideas for how you can tweet about issues close to your heart.

CONTINUE >



DIGGING DEEPER:

Split into small groups of 2-3 to discuss these passages in the Bible on becoming an advocate for those in need.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

—Jesus, Luke 4:18,19

Before going to the cross and taking on our sin, Jesus initiates His ministry by reading off a scroll from the book of Isaiah. Jesus announces the beginning of His mission—revealing God’s love and mercy—as good news for the poor, the imprisoned, blind and the oppressed. As followers of Jesus, we are called to pour our lives into others, especially those in great need. In doing this, we are following the call of Christ and announcing the good news of the Gospel.

- 5 Why do you think Jesus chose this passage in Isaiah to read as He launched His ministry?
- 6 The word “gospel” literally translates into “good news.” How was Jesus’ announcement good news? Who was it good news for?
- 7 What is the significance between releasing the oppressed and the Gospel of Christ?
- 8 The poor, the oppressed and those on the margins were the ones chiefly blessed in God’s economy. What can you do as a small group or faith community to imitate this same passion?

In Isaiah 58, God is speaking to His people and He tells them what He requires of them before they will get an audience with God. Read Isaiah 58 together and answer these questions.

- 9 After reading this passage, how would you describe God’s thoughts about the poor, the oppressed and injustice?
- 10 Why do you think God connects “fasting” with breaking injustice and sharing food with the hungry? Why wasn’t the spiritual discipline of fasting in itself pleasing to God?

11 What are the promises God gives to those who obey His call to spend themselves on behalf of the hungry and oppressed?

12 What are three specific ways you can “spend” yourself for the oppressed?

James 1:27 says, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” This kind of love in action is always relevant and there’s no doubt that pure religion is much needed in places like Africa where children like 9-year-old Valentine from Kenya and 6-year-old Fetiya from Ethiopia are growing up without a mother or father.

13 Have you ever visited an orphanage? Share your experience. What did you learn? How did it shape your faith?

14 Why are widows and orphans singled out in this passage?

15 What might it look like for Christ followers to practice this kind of “pure and faultless religion”?

16 What are two measurable action-steps that would help you live this passage out in your life? How can you get involved?

Read Luke 10: 25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan. If you have time, assign different people in your group to a certain character in the parable (the man that was robbed, the Samaritan, the priest and the Levite). When you are finished reading the passage, ask each group to answer these questions:

17 What was their character’s motivation—why did they or didn’t they stop to help?

18 What prevented them from entering the suffering of the man that was robbed?

19 What made the Samaritan different? (You may want to discuss who the different characters might represent in our culture today and how this time-tested parable applies to people suffering in places like Africa.)



HOPE >

Coming face to face with issues of extreme poverty and disease can easily lead us to frustration, anger or even apathy, but we need to be careful not to become overwhelmed with these emotions. Instead, as Christians, we want to move toward hope, specifically our hope in Christ—the one who calls us to have great compassion and mercy for others.

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT INJUSTICE

In the book *The Good News About Injustice*, Gary Haugen, president of the International Justice Mission, writes: “Instead of energizing us for action, the overwhelming injustice in our world actually makes us feel numb. ... This is when we need to listen to the voice of Jesus, the Jesus who encouraged the paralytic to ‘take heart’ (Matthew 9:22). When their spirits are crippled by the sheer weight of the world’s injustice, Jesus tells his disciples to ‘take heart! I have overcome the world’ (John 16:33). He makes this declaration, however, not that we might sit cheerfully in our paralysis but that we might actually get up and walk.”

- 1 Have you experienced greater awakening when confronted with injustice? How did it make you feel?
- 2 As Haugen points out, the encouragement that Jesus gives us in the face of injustice is not to sit back and watch, but to get up and walk. What are some areas where you need to “take heart”? How will you allow Jesus’ encouragement that “you have overcome” spur you on to greater action in the face of the world’s greatest needs?

THE LIVING PROOF PROJECT

The truth is, despite all of the global challenges we face, our advocacy efforts and U.S. investments are working. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation initiated The Living Proof Project to show the power and effectiveness of U.S. investments in global health. Through Living Proof, we see that the more we intentionally invest in fighting poverty and disease, real lives are changed. Because of our collective action and partnership, real people in real communities are beginning to flourish. Despite poverty, kids grow up with dreams to be rock stars, lawyers, pastors, etc. This should give us great hope for the future as our involvement continues to multiply.

HOLY WATER

Go to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's website and watch the special video titled "Holy Water." This simple story reveals what can happen when someone becomes an advocate for the poor and the sick: lives are saved.

3 What are your thoughts after watching this video? What surprised you about this story? How does this video give you hope?

4 It's easy to become overwhelmed with statistics, but on the video you were able to witness real lives that were saved. How would you feel if you were able to accomplish something like this in your life?

A PRAYER OF HOPE

"Because of the intense nature of injustice, we must become people of prayer. Frustration can be fuel for justice for a while, but at some point, we must find a place of trusting in the fact that God is ultimately a just God, that He feels the pain of the oppressed at a level we don't and that even those who are perpetrating evil are people whose hearts He longs to know and love."

—Randy Bohlender, The International House of Prayer

Assign different people in your group to read each of these passages out loud as a collective prayer of hope to God in the face of great injustice.

Psalm 130

Romans 15:13

1 Thessalonians 5:8

Hebrews 10:23

Psalm 42



ACTION >

Our awareness combined with our compassion should launch us into action. The mission is great, but God has called us, as His people, to be the instruments of mercy and love in a world that desperately needs to experience the embodiment of Jesus and the power of the Gospel in action.

“Ours is a God of justice, a God who hates injustice and wants it to stop; God desires to use his people as his instruments for seeking justice and rescuing the oppressed; and God does not give his people a ministry that he won’t empower.”

—Gary Haugen, *The Good News About Injustice*

Read James 2:14-16 together as a group and answer these questions.

- 1 In this passage, what does James describe as a worthless faith?
- 2 List three excuses that often keep us from helping those with physical needs?
- 3 What are some specific ways that you can combine faith and action? What kind of action would make your faith more alive?

Bono, a co-founder of ONE, musician and advocate for Africa, writes these words in the forward of Jeffrey D. Sach’s book, *The End of Poverty*:

“We can be the generation that no longer accepts that an accident of latitude determines whether a child lives or dies—but will we be that generation? Will we in the West realize our potential, or will we sleep in the comfort of our affluence with apathy and indifference murmuring softly in our ears? Fifteen thousand people dying needlessly every day from AIDS, TB, and malaria. Mothers, fathers, teachers, farmers, nurses, mechanics, children. This is Africa’s crisis. That it’s not on the nightly news, that we do not treat this as an emergency—that’s our crisis. ... History will be our judge, but what’s written is up to us. We can’t say our generation didn’t know how to do it. We can’t say our generation couldn’t afford it. And we can’t say our generation didn’t have reason to do it. It’s up to us.”



ACT NOW

Here's an additional list of concrete action-steps to help you take the next step in joining the fight against extreme poverty.

- 1 Join up with ONE. Taking action takes courage, but it also takes a first step in the right direction. If you haven't yet, why not make your first step joining the ONE Campaign? Just go to RejectApathy.com and click on the link to join ONE at the top right of the page.
- 2 Develop a follow-up plan with your group. Talk about when you will meet next and how you will keep each other accountable for what you've committed to do.
- 3 Write a letter to yourself. The letter could describe what you learned during the study and how it stirred your heart. Also, include your thoughts on what you hope to do now as a result. You may even want to ask your future-self some questions like, "So, how did that go?" "You still doing that?" "You still caring about this?" Postmark the letter to be opened in six months and make sure to put it in a prominent place so you'll remember its location.
- 4 Email your pastor or spiritual mentor. Share your heart about being involved with ONE Sabbath and what you are learning about advocacy and the heart of God. Ask your pastor to pray that you would be completely obedient to God in being a voice for the poor and oppressed. Also ask them to join with you in the movement to end extreme poverty, contributing their own gifts and leadership to take action.
- 5 Pray. Plan one hour of prayer each week that you can dedicate to a cause God has put on your heart. Use a lunch hour, time after work or a quiet morning, and dedicate it to prayer. See if others in your group can join you as well.
- 6 Plan a ONE Sabbath of worship for your community. For details visit <http://www.one.org/us/onesabbath>.

