



# Breaking Poverty Bonds

## Module 12

**BREAKING**   
**POVERTY**  
 **BONDS**

**SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

# Breaking Poverty Bonds

## Module 12

### ACAT-SDP CURRICULUM

### CIRCUIT TEACHING INTERNATIONAL

The Bible study materials produced by Circuit Teaching International (CTI) were originally written for pastors and ministers of churches who had little or no opportunity of formal Bible College training. The interest shown by many other Christians in the Bible Study materials resulted in the expansion of this programme to meet the spiritual needs of people not only in South Africa but also in other countries world-wide.

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First Edition : 2007  
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#### **Acknowledgements:**

Bible quotations are taken from the New International Version Copyright ©  
First South African edition 1978 published by the Bible Society of South Africa,  
Cape Town

This module contains a collection of papers on  
perspectives of poverty and poverty alleviation. These include:

CTI : Christian Teaching International  
Guide our Steps Bible Studies from Tear Fund, England Emmanuel Press, White  
River, South Africa

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# **BREAKING POVERTY BONDS**

## **Course Outcomes**

1. To bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. To make disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. To assist people towards Christian maturity.
4. To produce people and groups who demonstrate Godly perspectives in and through their:
  - 4.1. Acts of compassion
  - 4.2. Moral behaviour
  - 4.3. Work ethic
  - 4.4. Social concern
  - 4.5. Care of the environment

## **Module Outcomes**

After completing this module you will:

- Gain a holistic perspective of poverty.
- Identify the main cause of poverty.
- Understand how evil practices, covenants and superstitions bring people into bondage.
- Learn how ancestral worship leads to bondage and poverty.
- Learn that freedom from bondage comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Know how to address some of the issues on the causes of poverty.
- Follow the example of Jesus Christ and His ministry to the needy.

# BREAKING POVERTY BONDS

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# LESSON 1

## UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

**Outcomes:** After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- Understand and describe what poverty is;
- Identify the key features of poverty;
- Accept the challenge of taking responsibility in reducing levels of poverty.

### 1. Introduction

One of the main reasons for involvement in development work is to address poverty. This is our common enemy. However:

- How much do we know about poverty?
- How much do we understand about the causes of poverty?
- What is it that makes people poor?

During this lesson we will look at important questions we must ask if we wish to address the issue of poverty effectively.



### ACTIVITY : GROUP WORK

Divide into groups and answer the following question:

- What is poverty? i.e. When you see the word poverty, what are the problems that come to mind? Record these.



## 2. What do we understand poverty to be?

Poverty can be explained as follows:

**TEARFUND** - *The poor are those who lack the material essentials to sustain a life of dignity and responsibility in their community. This poverty is not only the result of economic factors, but also of social, structural and spiritual causes. Without economic or social capital, the poor are trapped in a cruel circle of deprivation. They are powerless to determine their own destiny and meet their own needs.*

**E.U.** - *The poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the member states in which they live.*

**U.N.** - *A condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income, but also on access to social services.*

### **Relative poverty can be explained as:**

*Lack of income and productive sources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life.*

**World Bank** - *To be poor is to be hungry, to lack shelter and clothing, to be sick and not cared for, to be illiterate and not schooled. But for poor people, living in poverty is more than this. Poor people are particularly vulnerable to adverse events outside their control. They are often treated badly in the institutions of state and society and excluded from voice and power in these institutions.*

### **3. Key features of poverty**

These definitions reveal key features of the current international understanding of poverty including:

- Poverty is the lack of income and productive sources to sustain livelihoods, which results in hunger, malnutrition, ill health, lack of education, homelessness and unsafe environments.
- Poverty is the lack of basic human needs and the lack of materials essential to sustain a life of dignity and responsibility.
- It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision-making and discrimination in civil, social and cultural life.
- Poverty is linked to exclusion and lack of access to participation in government.
- People can be dragged further into poverty by events beyond their control.
- This poverty is not only the result of economic factors, but also of social, structural and spiritual causes.

The recognition that poverty is not simply an economic state has led to the development of a growing range of Human Development Indicators and most recently Human Poverty Indicators. This is an improvement on the rather crude indicator of GNP per capita as a means of measuring the poverty or level of development of a nation.

### **4. The scale of poverty**

Of the world's 6 billion people, 2,8 billion - almost half - live on less than \$2 (R14.00) a day, and 1.2 billion - a fifth - live on less than \$1 (R7.00) a day, which is considered 'absolute poverty', according to the UN World Summit for Social Development definition. In rich countries less than 1 child in 100 does not reach its fifth birthday, while in the poorest countries, as many as a fifth of children do not. In rich countries fewer than 5% of children under five are malnourished, in poor countries as many as 50% are. This situation persists despite the fact that global wealth has never been greater. Clearly the distribution of these global gains is highly unequal. The average income in the richest 20 countries is 37 times the average in the poorest 20 - a gap that has doubled in the past 40 years.

One in five of the world's population live without adequate nutrition, shelter, clean water, health care or education; two thirds of these people are female. Lack of income or means to earn a living, poor health and lack of education are factors contributing to poverty, but so too are the powerlessness and lack of dignity that poor people experience.

## **5. Our responsibility in reducing levels of poverty**

The rich consume so much that evidence is mounting that in the long term rich livelihoods will not be sustainable. We in rich countries have a significant responsibility for contributing to poverty through our greed and we need to recognise our responsibility to work towards reversing the huge imbalance between rich and poor. Unless the rich and powerful take responsibility and reduce their levels of consumption and protectionism, then little progress will be made in reducing the levels of poverty.



# LESSON 2

## CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS OF POVERTY

**Outcomes:** After completing this lesson you will be able to:

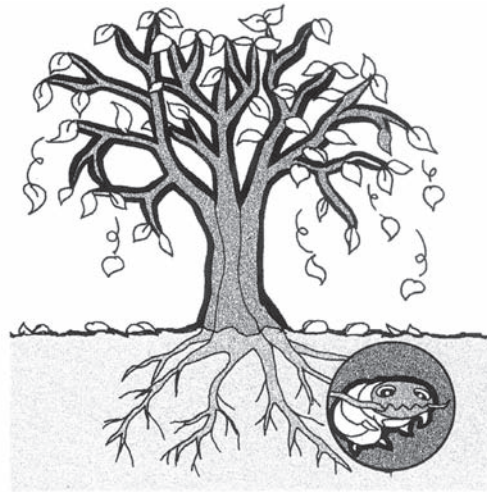
- Identify the symptoms of poverty;
- Identify the causes of poverty.

### 1. Introduction

It will be helpful at this point to distinguish between the causes and symptoms of poverty.

#### **Difference between causes and symptoms**

Refer to the picture given below.



The **symptom** is the outward appearance of the plant, (leaves shrivelled and no crop), the **cause** being the disease or cutworm, affecting the life of the plant.

We read in Matthew 13:1-23 about the parable of the sower. The production of the crops depended in this parable, on the condition of the soil.

What makes a plant grow, be fruitful or die depends on factors of a causal nature, e.g. soil condition. Causes relate to internal damage.

The same applies to poverty - causes are hidden, internal, unseen, etc.

## 2. Identifying Symptoms of Poverty

### 2.1 Why identify symptoms?

With disease we have to know what we are dealing with before deciding on a remedy or any specific course of action. This prevents the treatment from being inappropriate and ineffective.

The same applies to a business where the drop in profit has to be accurately identified in order to find the causes and apply the right and effective solutions.

Why should we approach poverty any differently? Causes have to be identified before effective counter actions can be applied.

It is often very difficult to distinguish between symptoms and causes, because they feed each other and the line between the two can become blurred.

Also, symptoms normally outnumber causes. For one disease condition, there may be numerous symptoms.

The experience of sieving sand is a good example to demonstrate the process of separating out symptoms from causes. The larger your sieve, the more goes through and the less, (larger grains) remain behind.

What then makes people poor?



#### **ACTIVITY : GROUP DISCUSSION**

- i) Suggest some symptoms of poverty.
- ii) Identify causes over which people have little or no control.
- iii) Show a colander - if you don't fill the holes we will never be able to collect water to use and store.

## **2.2 Some of the symptoms or problems of poverty:**

- Little or no money.
- No jobs.
- Children not adequately cared for.
- Children not going to school.
- Poor health of children.
- Child abuse.
- Gender abuse.
- Hunger/malnutrition/malnourishment.
- Poor hygiene.
- Sickness and disease.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Violence.
- Revenge attacks.
- Theft and corruption.
- Laziness.
- Substance abuse.
- Poor housing conditions.
- Poor sanitation.
- De-motivation.
- Low morale.
- Little or no self-esteem.
- Single parent families.
- Poor use of land and natural resources.
- Poor use of limited income, e.g. excessive funeral costs.

## **2.3 Some of the possible causes of poverty:**

- Lack of education/skills/knowledge.
- Limited access to land and land ownership.
- Poor work ethic.
- Little or no purpose.
- Jealousy, intimidation, greed.
- Poverty mindset.
- Poor or abusive leadership.
- Unhelpful or harmful value system which is based on customs /culture /traditions, and leads to behaviour which causes poverty.
- Ancestral worship /consulting mediums / domination by superstition re death, sickness, land use, etc.