

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 1

SPEAK UP!
SINGLE WOMEN & CHILDREN
PROVERBS 31:8
02/12/2017



MAIN POINT

We have a moral responsibility to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some basic needs that people in your community have that you do not have?

What, if any, responsibility do you have as a follower of Jesus to reach out and help people who have less than you do?

If you are an American in the 21st century, you are among the wealthiest people who have ever lived. While most of the world lives on less than one American dollar per day, we have much more than we could imagine. So what are we to do with our wealth? Is there a way that it can be used or leveraged to advance God's kingdom? This is what we will consider today.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 31:8-9.

Look back at Proverbs 31:1. What is the context of this passage?

What added meaning does the context give to the statements we read in verses 8-9?

The Book of Proverbs has several statements of authorship scattered throughout its chapters (1:1, 10:1, 25:1, 30:1, and 31:1). The words in chapter 31 claim to be the words of King Lemuel, "that his mother taught him." What this means for verses 8-9 is that these commands were given by a king, whom one can assume was well off. In other words, a rich man is saying that he (a person with more) should be committed to giving to those with no voice who are dispossessed (a person without much). The clear teaching of Scripture is that there is a burden and those who have been blessed with much are to be a blessing to those with less.

What does it mean to be wealthy? What are some means of wealth that we may take for granted in the States?

When this proverb urges you to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, to whom is the author referring? What would be an example of someone who could not speak for themselves? Does this mean that they literally cannot speak? Explain.

You may be reading this study and thinking to yourself, “Well, I’m not wealthy—this doesn’t apply to me,” but you would be wrong. Wealth is not found only in dollars and cents but in access to things like healthcare, clean water, food, clothes, or preventative medicines. While you may be reading this as a person who struggles to find these things, you have more access than most of the world. People in the majority of the world lack basic items we take for granted like shoes and adequate clothing, which leaves them vulnerable to disease and parasites. While these people have a voice, it is hard for them to be heard by people able to help them. Our knowledge makes us responsible.

Those who are destitute or dispossessed need someone else in a position of power to speak for them. What are some ways that you can speak out against injustice? Why should we not minimize the influence our voice carries?

The sole concern of this passage is that, through the words of the king’s mother, the needy be provided for. This is an incredible thought. Even though there were likely many concerns that were deserving of attention, these were important enough to write down and have preserved for us today. You have a voice that you can use for influence by rallying support, petitioning people in positions of power, and speaking directly to the oppressed and downtrodden.

How might providing for physical needs make a window for the church to address spiritual needs?

Have you ever been in a position where meeting a physical need allowed you to share the gospel with someone? What was that experience like?

The gospel affects every area of our lives, including our service to others. While physical needs are tangible and important, they often go alongside of desperate spiritual needs. It may be that God uses your faithfulness in meeting physical needs to be the mechanism He uses to introduce the gospel to someone who is otherwise unwilling to listen.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In what ways would you say that you have influence and affluence? In what ways are you extending your influence and affluence to help others?

How could this group pool our resources to make a tangible difference for World Vision?

Though it may not seem like much, how are such efforts of generosity advancing the Great Commission?

PRAY

Praise God for the way He has blessed you, and for the influence He has granted you. Ask that He would give you a heart for others who have less.

COMMENTARY

PROVERBS 31:8-9

The plea to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves” is as eloquent a statement of the royal duty of doing justice as one can find anywhere. It is noteworthy that this is her sole political concern; she does not say anything about building up the treasury, creating monuments to his reign, or establishing a dominant military power. For her the king’s throne is truly founded on righteousness.