

## DEVOTIONAL #1 – YOU CAN'T HELP THE CITY

### READ

Psalm 139:23-24

As you head into the city, here are some important things to keep in mind:

You can't help the city if...

- You're more concerned with what you're wearing than you are about the people you're there to serve.
- You look around the whole time hoping to see a drug deal or a gang fight.
- You think you're better than the people who live there.
- You don't rely on God's power to help the city.
- You judge the people who are there for the situations in which they live.
- You complain about your living situation or the food you eat while you're there.
- You don't spend time with the people who live there.
- You think of this trip as a vacation for you to relax and act like a tourist.
- You only want to go so you can hang out with your friends and get away from home.

### PRAY

Pray to God and confess any concerns you have with going on this missions trip. Ask for his wisdom and guidance.

## DEVOTIONAL #2: PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

### READ

Psalm 10:14

Read the poem below:

<b>Hell's Streets</b>	
<p>Out walking after midnight— sad, lonely people shuffling along the filthy streets, strewn with garbage. Eskimo Joe— with tears in his eyes— caught unawares— looking for a bush to sleep under. Janice with her bag of French fries hurrying off to the station steps to sleep fitfully. Jim— wandering with his canvas bag slung around him, face contorted with tears flowing freely. The heavy black woman shouting on the corner, and I, we stopped and talked awhile.</p> <p>She was filled with anger, resentment, pain— we are white— we are rich— she, alienated, desperate. She too, cannot fight the tears. Ah, four weeping adults in the morning hours among the garbage.</p>	<p>The little lady, hardly fourteen, being dragged along, staggering, in red hot pants by a black pimp— abused, drugged, a child— who should be clutching a doll, not a pimp.</p> <p>Johnny and his pals drinking wine on the church steps, looking for jobs and places to stay.</p> <p>Broken lonely people on Hell's Streets. God?</p> <p>[By Edwina Gateley, taken from I Hear a Seed Growing, Source Books, 1990]</p>

Answer these questions:

- What do you notice about the people in this poem?
- What did you notice about what the people were doing?
- What did you notice about their surroundings?
- Which of the people stood out to you the most? Why?
- What kind of picture of the streets does this poem draw for you?
- Why do you think the author ends the poem with the word “God” followed by a question mark?

### PRAY

Pray for the people you will meet and interact with during the trip. Pray for the children you will be working with and their families.

## DEVOTIONAL #3: HELL'S SECRETS

### READ

Psalm 10:14

Read the poem below and think about what it would be like to be one of the people mentioned in the poem:

<b>Hell's Streets</b>	
<p>Out walking after midnight— sad, lonely people shuffling along the filthy streets, strewn with garbage. Eskimo Joe— with tears in his eyes— caught unawares— looking for a bush to sleep under. Janice with her bag of French fries hurrying off to the station steps to sleep fitfully. Jim— wandering with his canvas bag slung around him, face contorted with tears flowing freely. The heavy black woman shouting on the corner, and I, we stopped and talked awhile.</p> <p>She was filled with anger, resentment, pain— we are white— we are rich— she, alienated, desperate. She too, cannot fight the tears. Ah, four weeping adults in the morning hours among the garbage.</p>	<p>The little lady, hardly fourteen, being dragged along, staggering, in red hot pants by a black pimp— abused, drugged, a child— who should be clutching a doll, not a pimp.</p> <p>Johnny and his pals drinking wine on the church steps, looking for jobs and places to stay.</p> <p>Broken lonely people on Hell's Streets. God?</p> <p>[By Edwina Gateley, taken from I Hear a Seed Growing, Source Books, 1990]</p>

- What do you notice about the people in this poem?
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- What kind of picture of the streets does this poem draw for you?
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### PRAY

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## DEVOTIONAL #4: THE STORY OF TEDDY BEAR

Read the story below of a woman named “Teddy Bear” living on the streets in Chicago during the 1980s.

### The Story of Teddy Bear

#### **Younger Childhood: up to 12 years old.**

As I remember, I wasn't happy. Or not loved. I was like a prisoner at home. My mother did not love me. She never told me that she even cared. When I was very young, maybe 9 or 10, I remember she never let me go out to play. She left me alone in a room while she was away. I never could leave the room until she let me out to eat or go to school. Never would she talk to me or kiss me, no response of love. It kept on until I was 13. So I said if she don't care, I don't either, so I ran away from home. I didn't want to live at home. I would sleep at friends or on the train track. She couldn't keep me at home, or control me. So I went to the Home where she put me.

#### **Boarding School: 13-17 years old.**

Then I told my caseworker. I don't want to go back home. I said there's no home, or family for me. So then from that day I was awarded to the State (ed. a ward of the State). I went to boarding school. There I was shy. Never opened to anyone, but was always aware of what happened when I was home. I had everything I wanted except love. I found no love. There were house mothers and other girls there. I got along with them very well. I got close to a few of them until one day I ran away. Seeking to find something else. What? I don't know. I was always in trouble. I was impossible. They couldn't control me. I wanted out, so I said, “I'm going away.”

I went to California, hitchhiking. I was fifteen and a half. I got caught and the police shipped me back to the boarding school. I took an overdose of pills. They took me to a hospital for psychiatric help. For twenty-one days.

On my seventeenth birthday, I told them I wanted out. Leave me alone. I can do anything I want. I'm grown. So they put me on my own. I was living in one room at the Y.W.C.A. I was still taking pills. Them pills were no good any more, so I went on to the hard stuff. I got addicted. I was 18 then. The little money I got from the State went to my habit.

#### **Drugs and Prostitution: 19-25 years old.**

This was the hardest time of my life. I had such a habit, there wasn't anything for me to do but get out on the street and turn tricks, to support my habit. This went on for a year every night...I was turning tricks with different men. The money went to dope, every last cent. When I was twenty, I met a man (a pimp). I fell in love with him when I thought he felt the same. I really didn't love him. Deep inside I didn't. He gave me dope all the time. So I started working for him. I did everything for him. I sold dope for him. I sold my body for him. Did anything he told me to. This went on for three and a half years, till I said I have to get away. I went to New York. I was in a big city all alone. I was still on dope, I started to get withdrawals. I had a bad heroin habit. I remember my first date in that new city. I was scared. Because I heard so much bad things in New York. When I made my first sixty dollars, I found the dope man (naturally!). After three weeks I wanted to go back to Chicago.

When I got back I was 22 years old. I got on a drug methadone program for one year. Meantime I was still prostituting. I got pregnant, the baby was premature and had a habit. He lived for only six hours. Months later I got pregnant again. The baby had a habit also and premature. I took him home after one month. I couldn't take care of him. I was supporting my habit and turning tricks. I got him taken away. Mother found me and took

him home. She adopted him when he was two months old. I didn't care. But it hurt. I couldn't take care of him. Life was very hard for me. Why couldn't I just die? My life was ruined. Every day was a nightmare. I was depressed. Hurt. Angry. Confused. Alone. And unloved. Then I was 25. I started drinking in bars. Drinking made me feel better and happy or so I thought, till I started drinking on the streets. Nor did I take care of myself, had no showers, didn't eat well and slept outside on the street.

### **Alcoholism and Shelter/Hospital: 25-28 years old**

The drugs were gone. But the drinking was there. I drank every day till I passed out, I slept in hallways, cars and parks. Winter time, I slept in the shelter at night. Couldn't wait for summer. In the mornings I was sick. I needed that drink. I got the money from panhandling. Sometimes I would turn a cheap trick for 10-15 dollars. I had no home. I was homeless. Sometimes, I would go to Detox to rest for a day or two. Two years went by. Nothing but drinking and drinking. Not eating. Couldn't eat. I went to the hospital. I had hepatitis and gall stones. So I had my gall bladder taken out. I got released after a month. I stayed off the drink for two days. I started again. I know I was wrong. I didn't care. After six months I was back in the hospital again. Hepatitis and now I had cirrhosis. Another operation. I had a shunt put in me. I almost died. The doctor thought I wasn't gonna make it. After three months I got released. I had only two years to live. I said I don't care. I was sick and still drinking.

## **ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS**

- How would you feel if you were Teddy Bear as a young child?
- How would you feel if you couldn't take care of your baby or yourself because of your addictions?
- How do you think Teddy Bear's mother might have felt when she adopted Teddy Bear's son?
- Why do you think Teddy Bear didn't care that she was dying?
- How has Teddy Bear's story made you think differently about people living on the street?
- How will Teddy Bear's story affect the way you see people during your time in the city?

## **PRAY**

Pray for the people who are living on the street tonight. Pray for the people who are fighting addiction, the people with mental disabilities, and the people who are sad, lonely, and scared. And let's pray that God will help us to see these people through his eyes, that we would look at them and feel their pain and love them even more because of it.

## DEVOTIONAL #5: GOING HUNGRY

### READ

Isaiah 58:6

Your challenge this week is give up one meal (fast)

Consider the following statistics\* on hunger in the U.S.:

- Thirty-three million people, including 13 million children, live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents one in ten households in the United States.
- 3.1 percent of U.S. households experience hunger: they frequently skip meals or eat too little, sometimes going without food for a whole day. Nearly 8.5 million people, including 2.9 million children, live in these homes.
- 7.3 percent of U.S. households are at risk of hunger: they have lower quality diets or must resort to seeking emergency food because they cannot always afford the food they need. 24.7 million people, including 9.9 million children, live in these homes.

\*ERS Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. (FANRR) 21, United States Department of Agriculture, March 2002

### PRAY

Pray for the people that go daily without a meal. Thank God for how he has provided enough food for you throughout your life.

## DEVOTIONAL #6: THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

### READ

Matthew 25:31-46

Answer the following questions based on the passage above:

- Who is the “King” in this story?
- When the King says, “Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me— you did it to me.” who comes to mind— who are the overlooked or ignored in our society? In your town? In your school?
- How do you normally treat the overlooked or ignored people you encounter?
- What if those people are representing Jesus?
- How can you feed, give a drink, room, clothes, or visit one of these people in the next week?

### PRAY

Pray for the people in your life that are often overlooked and ignored. Pray for God to soften your heart toward these people.

## DEVOTIONAL #7: THE BIBLE AND THE POOR

### READ

Spend a few minutes reading the following verses in your Bible. After you've read all of them, take some time to think about what you've read, then journal your thoughts to the questions below.

Leviticus 25:35-36

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

Proverbs 14:31

Proverbs 21:13

Proverbs 22:2

Matthew 19:21

Luke 14:13

### RESPOND

Now think about what you've just read. Write your responses to the following questions:

- What did you learn about God through these verses?
- Why do you think God allows poverty?
- How does God want you to treat the poor?

### PRAY

## DEVOTIONAL #8: DOING THE SERVANT THING

### READ:

Philippians 2: 5 -8

Answer the following questions and write down your answers:

What's the biggest act of servanthood you've ever done? What did it accomplish?

What small act of servanthood do you do on a regular basis? What good does it do?

When has giving of yourself— your time, energy, love, or money— brought you more hassles than happiness?

### PRAY:

Pray for the various projects we will be doing on this missions trip: Children's ministry, Nursing Home ministry, homeless outreach, worship/devotional time.

## DEVOTIONAL #9: RACISM

### READ

John 13:33-35

Now read and ponder the following quotes from teenagers about racism.

#### **Racism in America**

*How far have we come? How far do we have to go? It's been 40 years since the passing of the Civil Rights Act, which protects against discrimination on the basis of race in everything from hiring to voter registration. How far has America come since then? How far do we have to go? See what these ten teens have to say, and then decide for yourself.*

Racism is still a problem in America. I think parents have a lot to do with it. Some kids want to be like their parents, so they try to act like them. Also it's probably got a lot to do with friends. People want to fit in with a certain group, so they do whatever they can to fit in with those people's styles.

Krista, 18  
Kansas

What I hate most is whenever people mention gangs; an image of an angry black man comes to mind. It really makes me angry.

Anonymous, 14  
California

In today's society, many people are quick to say that racism doesn't exist, because there's no open persecution of those from a different race. Yet there are scholarships dedicated for only those students that are African American or Native American. Is this ethical? Can there be a scholarship made only for Caucasians?

Leah, 16  
Indiana

It's sad, that when I'm sitting in my civics class getting updated on recent events, if a man is arrested the first question is, "Is he white?" If he's not, the answer is "Go figure."

Amanda, 15  
North Carolina

Although racism isn't a large problem in America, ignorance of racism is. There are those who don't understand the history of slavery in America, or haven't bothered to care. For that, they're ignorant of what racism is and was. Racism does remain in America and is a problem that educators, as well as students, should take to heart.

Sarah, 18  
Pennsylvania

Our country is still racist-- mainly our government. How many African American or races other than white have been our presidents? Answer: None.

Kashia, 14  
Missouri

I am a 14-year-old Navajo, and I get very rude remarks just because of my skin color.

When I travel to a place other than Arizona, Utah, New Mexico or Colorado, I get stared at. That's the reason I think racism is a problem today.

April, 13  
Wyoming

My mom has been out of work for a month. She works in hospital administration. She applied for a job a few weeks back, and recently they contacted her. They told her that they had given the job to another candidate who wasn't as qualified, but that she shouldn't feel bad because they're trying to "diversify their hospital." Obviously they meant that my mom didn't get the job because she was white.

Hilly, 14  
Ohio

I believe racism is only a problem for those who talk about it all the time. If everyone would just let it go, and not worry about what their skin color was, our nation would be much better off.

DeAnna Bray, 16  
Texas

I wanted to submit a poem of mine to be published in a book, and they told me I couldn't enter because of my race. This would be like denying a person the right to go into a restaurant and order food because of their race. We have come a long way with people accepting other races, but I think we still have a long way to go.

Ragan, 13  
North Carolina

[Quotes taken from [www.ChannelOne.com](http://www.ChannelOne.com) — a news site for teens]

## DEVOTIONAL #10: THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

### READ:

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

### PRAY:

Meditate on the lines of the prayer above. Pray for God to transform you during the missions weekend.