



unto[®]

A Cru[®] Ministry



Jesus: the Humanitarian

Learn to Love
in Word and Deed

RELIEVE SUFFERING | **RESTORE** DIGNITY | **REVEAL** HOPE[®]

More Than Just Doing

In a world obsessed with fixing social problems, even the best humanitarians recognize their efforts are limited. People are broken. Laws are limited. Governments cannot solve every ill.

We need a better way — one that meets people’s physical and spiritual needs. We need the way of Jesus.

Jesus is the great humanitarian. He healed incurable illnesses and fed enormous crowds. He ate with sinners and visited outcasts. He blessed little children and restored paralytics.

But He did not stop there. Meeting physical needs led to meeting deeper, spiritual needs too. He offered people the bread of life and living water. He announced their forgiveness and affirmed their faith.

Jesus did what no one else could — He healed people’s physical situations in order to show Himself as the One who could save them spiritually too.

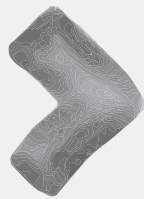
Today He calls His followers to carry His message to the world. Go to the least and lost. Give them what they need for today, and tell them about hope for all eternity.

Let’s learn from Jesus and then follow His lead to love in word and deed.

Getting Started

1
PREPARE

Decide if you will do the study by yourself, with family, friends, or your small group. You can do one devotional daily for seven days, or you can cover one a week for a seven-week study.



2
PLAN

Set aside time to study. You will need a Bible, a copy of this devotional, and a way to take notes. If you are studying with others, set aside daily or weekly time for discussion.



3
PRACTICE

Ask God to show you how to practice what you are learning through His Word. Invite Him to help you see ways to serve others near you and around the world.

About Unto®

For 30 years Unto has leveraged strategic global partnerships and the service of dedicated volunteers to relieve suffering, restore dignity, and reveal hope. Our field staff teams serve in more than 50 countries worldwide to carry out humanitarian projects and share the message of Jesus with those who have never heard about Him. By providing local staff teams with humanitarian aid and coaching, we help them access unreached people, build credibility in the communities they serve, and increase ministry effectiveness so they can share hope with those who have never heard.

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Lesson 1: Abundant

“And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.”

Matthew 14:20



READ Matthew 14:13-21



REFLECT

Jesus had just learned of his cousin John’s beheading. Gruesome and tragic, He needed time to grieve. But the crowds of people following Him clamored for more — more teachings, more healings, more miracles. Despite our often-selfish motives, Jesus shows us how to serve while suffering, how to sacrifice while sorrowful.

His disciples meant well when they tried to step in and send the people home for dinner. But instead of looking to the Provider, they looked at other things. They focused on the lack — the place was desolate (Matthew 14:15). They set limits — the day was over. They saw the little — they only had five loaves and two fish (14:17).

Jesus wanted to show them a better way, so He issued a challenge. “You give them something to eat” (14:16). As they considered what was in their hands, they saw no way to meet the needs of those around them.

Finally, Jesus told them to bring what they had to Him. He briefly prayed, and then without speaking another word, He distributed the food to the twelve.

Jesus could have performed the miracle alone, weaving through the crowd as they watched in amazement as the food multiplied. Instead, He invited the disciples into the lesson. He let them participate

in the miracle. In so doing they discovered Jesus can always provide more than enough.

Roughly 20,000 people ate that day, not a bite, but a full meal. Someone decided to pick up the leftovers and place them neatly into baskets. There were twelve of them — one basket for each doubting and distressed disciple.

The food was not too little. The place was not lacking. The day’s sunset did not limit God’s plan. The disciples were simply short on faith. Yet Jesus graciously taught them by placing the provision right into their hands.

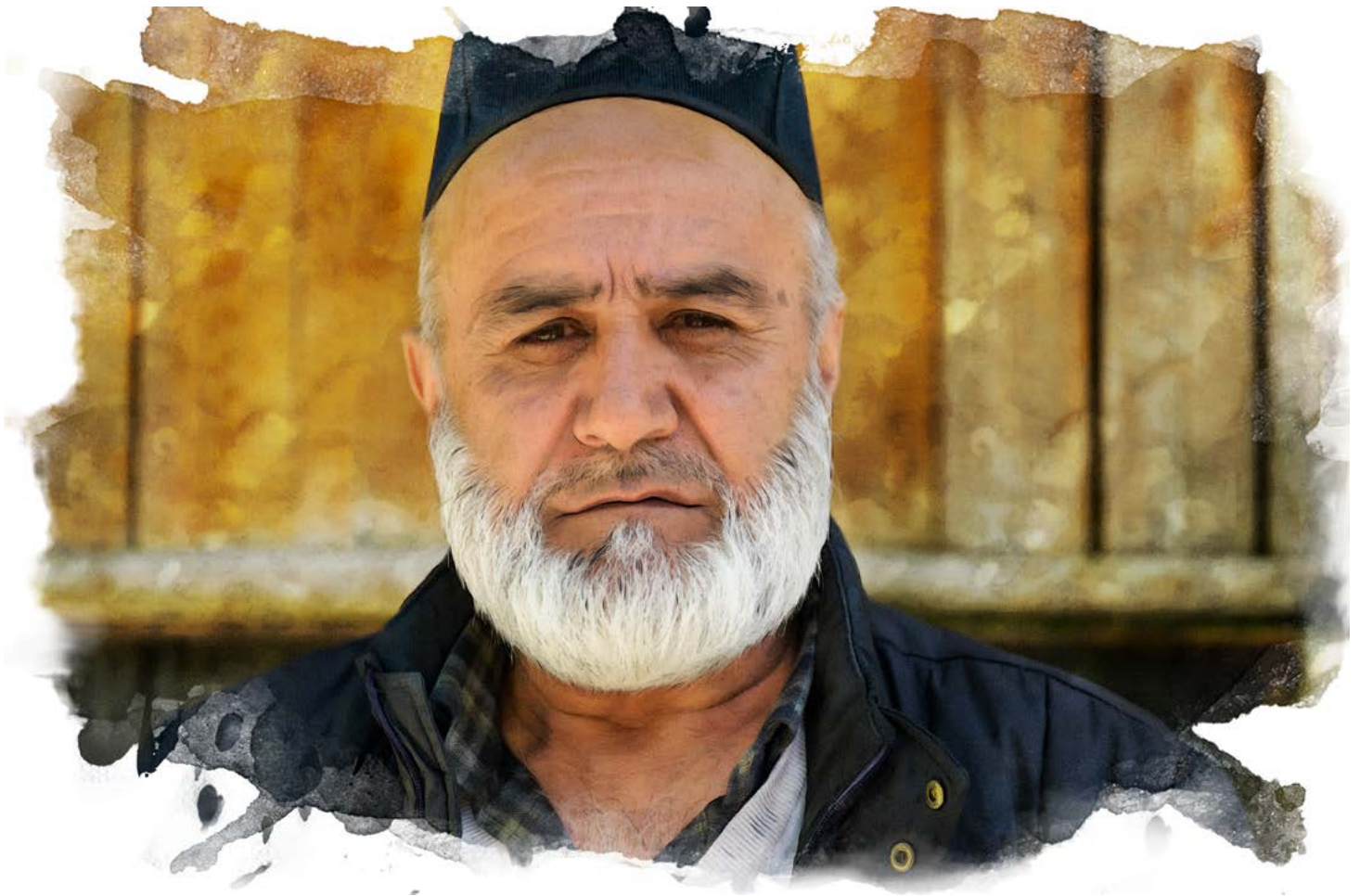
All of us have limits. We face challenges and obstacles with no way around them. We struggle through seasons of suffering and sorrow that threaten to crush our souls. We feel weary and want to get away for a few moments.

But when situations do not afford us time off, when life will not stop spinning, Jesus shows us a better way. ***When you are lacking, trust God’s limitless supply.***

Take your stress, pain, or exhaustion to Him. Place your little in His abundant hands. Let Him make up for what is missing.

Will you trust Him?

From the Field: Hope in Unlikely Places



Jamal* never thought he would be in this place. But war in his home country forced him to seek safety in a neighboring Middle Eastern country where he lives as a refugee.

It is a difficult life as families have no choice but to live in crowded camps and rely on the humanitarian assistance of people like you just to survive.

Our local Unto staff member met Jamal while distributing meals in the refugee camp where he lives. The two began talking, and eventually their conversation turned to God and finding the right path. Jamal asked our team member, “Are you a Christian?”

When our team member said he follows Jesus, Jamal wanted to know more. “Do you pray five times a day?” he asked.

Our team member explained that prayer is simply talking to God and can be done anytime we have something to share. He also offered Jamal a Bible and gave Jamal his phone number should he have more questions.

The team began praying for Jamal. And he kept calling with spiritual questions! After weeks of talking to our staff, he responded to the message of Jesus. He is being disciplined and consistently shares about eternal hope with others in his camp!

**Name changed for security purposes.*

Lesson 2: Invited

“Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

Mark 10:14b



READ Mark 10:13-16



REFLECT

Wide-eyed wonder. Welcoming smile. Simple faith.

When parents came asking Jesus to place His hands on their children, He refused to send them away. Instead, He welcomed them, scooping them up and blessing them.¹ As the children tumbled on and beside Jesus, He used them to teach us something significant about faith.

Right before this story, the religious elite came to Jesus with a question. They were not really seeking spiritual insight. They were jealous of Jesus' popularity and looking for a reason to condemn Him. Instead, Jesus exposed their own hardened hearts (Mark 10:1-12).

Later, a wealthy young man came to Jesus. He too had questions. Could he work his way into heaven by keeping the Law? With a loving look, Jesus peered right into his soul. He realized what the man loved most — and it was not Him or the Law. Jesus graciously invited him to leave his riches behind for something far more satisfying. Sadly, the young man declined (10:17-22).

Tucked between the two stories about the religious and social elite, Jesus answers everyone's most important question. **How do I get into the kingdom?** If you are not paying attention, you might miss His answer because it is wrapped in such a small package.

Jesus shows us first the kingdom is a matter of the heart. Jesus told those around Him the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like the little children gathered around Him (10:14). The Greek word *belongs* means to *be present in*, and describes someone “fit for a share in the kingdom of God.”²

The kingdom takes place first within us. It is a change of heart. In contrast to the religious elite, the kingdom is not for the pious who have it all figured out. It is for those who come with receptive, trusting hearts.

The kingdom transforms us from within, but it eventually works its way out. We must come to Jesus empty-handed. Many want to take the opposite approach. That is why Jesus answered the rich young man's question with a call. He commanded him to leave what he loved and looked to for security and to come follow Him.

Jesus shows us we cannot reason our way into the kingdom. We cannot work our way into it either. Like a little child, we must come in with wide-eyed wonder and a simple faith. We must come up with nothing in our hands, embracing a gracious God who is ready to scoop us up and welcome us in.

Will you come?

Lesson 3: Satisfied

“... whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Mark 10:13-16



READ John 4:4-26



REFLECT

She is one of the more complex characters in the gospels — with a shaded past and plenty of spiritual questions. And yet we do not even know her name, likely a nod to how most people viewed her.

Despite her status, or lack thereof, Jesus had an appointment with her. The Bible tells us Jesus “had to pass through Samaria” (John 4:4). To any first century reader, the commentary would have seemed strange. Jews did not pass through Samaria. The two people groups historically hated each other. They would go out of their way to avoid the other’s territory.

But Jesus had to meet the woman at the well. Since women did not engage men in conversation, Jesus spoke to her by asking for a drink (4:7).

Startled by the request, her questions began to flow. She quickly realized Jesus was not just another passerby. He used their conversation to show her three deepening spiritual truths.

He began by using a physical problem to describe a spiritual reality. The woman had been drawing water from a well daily for years. It was the only way to sustain her and her family’s life. But Jesus offered her something new — living water (4:10). This was not special water that could keep her from getting thirsty or having to return to the well. Instead, it was an invitation to understand the gospel and the satisfaction it gives.

Next, Jesus addressed her personal pain. He broached the subject everyone knew but few talked about — her complicated past with five husbands. Many claim the woman must have been immoral. But her story is likely more complex. Women did not have legal rights in her day. Most were uneducated and unable to work. Marriage meant survival.³ It is likely that she experienced a terrible mixture of death and divorce, sin and shame. It marked her permanently. So much so that she told her neighbors, “He told me all that I ever did” (4:29).

Finally, Jesus showed her the way to lasting satisfaction through salvation in Him. Jesus rarely identified Himself as the Messiah. He left the religious elite with more questions than answers. He forced the multitudes to determine His deity based on His miracles. But for a few genuine seekers, He showed Himself simply. In rare frankness Jesus told the woman, “I who speak to you am He” (4:26).

We do not know her name. But she made sure everyone knew His. Because of her faithful testimony, an entire village was changed.

We all have problems. We all know pain. We pursue things that leave us empty. **Jesus invites us to seek satisfaction in the salvation He gives.**

Will you come to the One who offers living water?

From the Field: Restoration at a Broken Well

Tarana's* life seemed shattered. When her husband passed away, she suddenly had no way to provide for herself or her two daughters. Like many women in tough places, she felt her only option was to turn to prostitution.

Shame followed. Then addiction. It seemed like an endless cycle — until the local Unto staff team came to her village to repair a broken water well.

Tarana and her daughters were curious. They attended the well-opening ceremony and had the opportunity to watch the *JESUS* film. That evening her two daughters responded to the message.

A few days later, the local team visited Tarana's home to follow up with her daughters. They had the opportunity to talk with her too and share more about the message of hope. She responded to the message, but she still had so many questions.

How would she provide for her family if she left her old life behind?

The local church began discipling Tarana and her daughters. They helped Tarana start a food stand in the town's community center so she could provide for her family's basic needs.

Today Tarana and her daughters are very active in their local church. Tarana freely shares her story with others so they too can experience hope. The local team was also able to provide Tarana with a Bible so she can continue growing in her faith.

Her life once seemed broken. But Jesus has restored it. Now she wants others to know about the hope she has found.

**Name changed for security purposes.*



Lesson 4: Welcomed

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Mark 2:17



READ Mark 2:13-17



REFLECT

Follow Me.

It was an unexpected interruption. Levi, also known as Matthew, was busy at his tax booth. While crowds of people hurried to hear Jesus' teaching, Levi kept on working. He showed little interest in what Jesus had to say.

But then Jesus saw him. This was not a casual side glance. Jesus paused, perceiving what was within him.⁴ He looked at Levi squarely — in the place of his spiritual sickness, where greed had taken hold of him, where he stole from his fellow Israelites to fill his own pocket.

Tax collectors like Levi were widely seen as sellouts. Jews by birth, they collected taxes for the oppressive Roman government. They took the tax plus a little extra to support their lifestyle.

Levi was the last person most would have considered eligible for discipleship. But Jesus saw beyond his sin and self-sufficiency. He interrupted Levi's day with a simple invitation. And unlike the wealthy socialite in Mark 10, Levi left everything behind to follow Jesus.

The invitation changed Levi's life. So much so that he invited his friends — more tax collectors and sinners — over for dinner with Jesus (Mark 2:15). He wanted them to know the hope he had found.

When the religious leaders heard about the party, they went by to see the scene. In disgust they deliver an ironic indictment against Jesus. “Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (2:16).

Jesus offered them a parabolic answer. Sick people do not need a doctor, nor do righteous people need a Savior.

It could have been mistaken for a compliment. But Jesus intended it as a critique. He told the religious leaders, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (2:17).

What kind of ruler seeks out the sickly? What kind of rabbi sits among sinners?

Everyone in the room that day needed salvation. But only half of them knew it. Levi and his friends recognized their spiritual sickness. They knew they needed a Savior and willingly responded to Jesus' invitation.

The religious leaders needed one too. But they were too self-righteous to see it. Their indictment of Jesus was really insight into their own souls.

It does not matter if our lives appear saintly or sinful. It does not matter if we look strong or sickly. All of us need salvation.

Levi's story shows us, ***Jesus welcomes those who refuse self-sufficiency and self-righteousness — and instead recognize their need for a Savior.***

Jesus invites each of us to leave whatever wealth, sin, or religion we cling to behind. He invites us to answer His call to come.

Will you follow Him?

Lesson 5: Beautiful

“And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.’”

Luke 8:48



READ Luke 8:43-48



REFLECT

Vitality drained from her bones. We do not know what caused the woman’s illness, but we know it had taken a toll. Her body ached; her soul did too.

Pay attention to the people in the story and you will see where she fits into society. Right before she came to Jesus, a synagogue ruler knelt before Him, begging Him to heal his daughter (Luke 8:41-42). The man and woman could not have been more different.

He is noted by name. A wealthy man, he was considered important in religious circles and ritually clean by the Mosaic Law. Meanwhile, her name is never mentioned. A woman without standing, she spent all her money on medical bills, yet she was still ritually unclean and unable to enter the temple.

There are also the people pressing into Jesus from every direction. They wanted to see His miracles and hear His remarkable teachings. The woman only wanted to be healed, preferably without anyone, even Jesus, knowing.

She came to Jesus in desperation. Even Luke the physician noted, “she could not be healed by anyone” (8:43). It had been 12 long years of an embarrassing, isolating condition. And yet she was no closer to a cure than when she started.

Despite the obstacles and opposition, this woman possessed remarkable faith. She was determined to

touch Jesus, even just the very fringe of His robe. And after weaving, pushing, and perhaps even crawling through the crowd, she stretched her hand out just enough.

She turned to leave but could not. Jesus perceived power went out of Him and asked, “Who was it who touched Me?” (8:45). When all denied it, and even Peter deflected it, the woman was left with no choice. She pushed her way back through the crowd.

For a moment it almost feels cruel. You can sense the shame as she falls, trembling, at His feet. But Jesus was not trying to embarrass her. He wanted to strengthen her faith.

“Daughter,” He called her (8:48). We do not know her name, but it is the best title Jesus could have given her. After years of living as an outcast, she now belonged. She was God’s daughter and part of His family.

Jesus affirmed her faith and announced peace. By faith she was made well physically and spiritually. She could go in peace, experiencing wellbeing of mind, body, and soul.

She came as an outcast. She left as a daughter. Her life is an example to all of us of how God can take the broken things and make them beautiful. **He responds to those who seek Him with relentless faith.**

Will you pursue Him?

From the Field: Something Left to Give

Camila* was not sure she had much value anymore. She once went to church and served in her community, but several years of hardships had left her and her husband nearly destitute. Without a car she was no longer able to attend church. And after retiring as a nurse, she was no longer able to serve her society or help those in need the way she had for so many years.

Then Camila had the opportunity to serve as a translator for an Unto women's health workshop in her hometown.



Her medical knowledge was so helpful to the staff and participants. She enjoyed reconnecting with women she had not seen for many years. As she listened to and translated the lessons, she was reminded of God's love for her.

Camila realized her life still had value. God still had work for her to do. No matter her age or the challenges she faced, she could still serve others in need.

Today she leads a Bible study for other women in her community. She also volunteers with the local staff team to organize women's events.

In her society women are often seen as less than, despite all their responsibilities in caring for a home and family. Camila wants others to know that God sees them, loves them, and has a plan for their lives. Everyone has value in Him.

**Name changed for security purposes.*

Lesson 6: Grateful

“he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks.”

Luke 17:16a



READ Luke 17:11-19



REFLECT

Like a bright light on an otherwise dark and dingy street, gratitude changes the landscape. In a culture of entitlement, it stands out. It did in Jesus’ day. It does in ours too.

As Jesus approached a village on the border of Jewish and Samaritan territory, 10 lepers approached Him. Because of their skin disease, they kept their distance as they cried out for help.

Ironically, Jesus had just told His disciples a story about a master and a servant to illustrate the point that those who follow Him should not consider themselves worthy of special blessing just because they do what they are told (17:7-10). Next, 10 lepers came to Jesus calling Him Master. Their words demonstrated devotion, but their actions betrayed a faulty faith.

Unlike many of His miracles, Jesus did not immediately heal the group. Instead, He told them to go show themselves to the priest. This was the protocol prescribed in Leviticus 14 in order for a Jew with leprosy to be declared healthy and allowed to reenter the community.

In biblical times leprosy was rarely curable. Therefore, those who contracted it were considered unclean according to the Law and were unable to remain among society. They often lived in camps on the outskirts of town along with others stricken by the

same condition that slowly destroyed their skin, nerve endings, and sometimes their limbs.⁵

As the group hurried to the priest, their skin was healed. It does not seem to have taken long because one man immediately turned around. He fell before Jesus with his face to the ground, giving thanks (Luke 17:16).

Where were the others? Jesus wanted to know. Being on the border of Jewish and Samaritan territory, it appears the group was a mixture of both people groups. But only one, a Samaritan considered less religious than the rest, returned.

Jesus told the man to go, “your faith has made you well” (17:19). It is a telling picture.

Blessings are often a test. They reveal what is in our hearts. Do we come to God entitled — quickly forgetting the Giver and failing to give thanks? Or do we come to Him like a faithful servant — humbly seeing every answer as a gift from Him?

Gratitude is ultimately an expression of faith. As we practice it, we acknowledge our dependence on the One who answers our requests even before we ask them.

Jesus invites us to come and call on Him. He also calls us to be faithful and filled with gratitude.

How will you give thanks today?

Lesson 7: Come

“And when He saw their faith, He said, ‘Man, your sins are forgiven you.’”

Luke 5:20



READ Luke 5:17-26



REFLECT

They had been through a lot together. We do not know how long they had been friends or when one man became paralyzed, but their friendship ran deep.

In ancient Israel, and in many tough places still today, mobility aids were not available. Those with physical disabilities spent much of their days at home, lying on a mat. They relied on family to help with meals and hygiene. They depended on friends to carry them everywhere they went.

For many who suffer, the days grow long and lonely. But this paralyzed man had something special — friends who came alongside him and shared a common faith. When they heard Jesus was healing people nearby, they picked him up and went to the house where Jesus was teaching.

The home was packed when they arrived. Religious leaders from all the surrounding villages had come to hear Jesus along with many others. Ironically, the crowd was so intent on listening to Jesus, they refused to pause and help someone in need.

When the friends could not get into the room, they took another route. Houses were commonly one-room structures made of bricks. The rooftops were flat and made of beams topped with reeds and plaster.⁶ The group climbed up the side of the home or walked up the rooftop steps. They removed the roof materials and lowered the paralyzed man to Jesus.

With sunlight pouring into the room, Jesus looked at the faithful crew. But instead of healing the man, Jesus told him his sins were forgiven. The religious leaders quickly jumped to conclusions and condemnations. But Jesus was not finished. He wanted them to understand who He was, not just what He could do. He wanted them to recognize Him as the Son of Man who heals not only physically but spiritually too.

When the paralyzed man stood up and walked out praising God, Jesus’ critics were suddenly silent. The onlookers were amazed. But the band of friends left changed.

Every one of them, even the ones able to walk, needed healing. Paralysis might have been one man’s physical condition, but they were all in need of a Savior. And when they came to Jesus, believing He could restore what had been broken, they each received restoration.

Jesus does what every other humanitarian, king, or preacher cannot do. He heals broken bodies. But He also restores sinful souls. He is the great humanitarian.

Some of us need healing physically, but all of us need it spiritually. We need a Savior who can fix not only what is broken outside of us but also within.

Will you gather some friends and come to Him?

From the Field: Cannot Leave Him

In one remote Southeast Asian province, families had no choice but to drink surface water polluted by chemicals. The water significantly affected people's health, causing frequent miscarriages, birth defects, and cancer.

Local Unto partners were able to drill two new wells in the area. People were so grateful for clean water! Previously, they had been closed to the message of hope. But as they saw Christians caring for their needs, they became open to learning about Jesus.



As people came to faith, a new church was established in the village. Binh* heard about eternal hope through the local church, and his life was completely changed. He had so much joy and wanted to share it with his family.

When Binh tried to talk with his wife, Lan, about Jesus, she would often grow angry. Finally, Lan told him, “Our family for many generations worshipped the ancestors. But today you believed in Jesus, and you forgot our ancestors. That is so bad.”

Over time the conflicts between them worsened. Binh decided to go into the mountains to fast and pray for his family for seven days. During this time, Lan searched for him, but no one knew where he had gone. She realized life was not the same without him.

After seven days Binh returned home. His wife was so happy. Lan took his hands and asked, “Who is your God that you cannot leave Him?”

Binh shared the message of Jesus with her, and that day Lan believed in Him. Since then Binh has also seen his brother's family and many others in his community respond to the message of hope. A new church has been started in Binh and Lan's home. They are excited to see their entire community transformed.

**Names changed for security purposes.*

Prayerfully consider how God would have you serve others, near or far. Then write down your ideas or goals on the bucket below.

Ideas:

- serve at a local food bank
- Help a neighbor in need
- Help at a local shelter
- Pray daily for those suffering
- go on a humanitarian trip
- give to a cause you care about

My Humanitarian Bucket List



complete Jesus: the Humanitarian Devotional



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Scan the QR code to learn more!

unto.com/Trips



Learn More About Becoming a Humanitarian

Ready to learn more about Unto's work and how you can share God's love in word and deed with those who have never heard about Jesus?

Scan the QR code below
or visit unto.com/NextSteps.



*Scan the code to learn
how you can be a part
of humanitarian work with
gospel impact!*

Endnotes

¹Henry, M. “Commentary on Mark 10 by Matthew Henry.” Blue Letter Bible. Last Modified 1 Mar, 1996. Accessed 30 July 2024. https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar_010.cfm

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⁵“About Hansen’s Disease (Leprosy).” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 11 Apr, 2024. Accessed 22 Aug 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/leprosy/about/index.html>

⁶“Roofs.” Nazareth Village. Accessed 22 Aug 2024. <https://nazarethvillage.com/about/research-and-archaeology/the-houses/roofs/>



**FOOD &
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**CLEAN
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For 30 years, Unto[®] has leveraged strategic global partnerships to relieve suffering through humanitarian aid in more than 75 countries. As the humanitarian ministry of Cru[®], we accomplish our mission through three programs: Food and Agriculture, Clean Water, and Critical Aid.



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