



Jayakumar Christian – Following the God of the Empty-Handed

Discussion Guide

This resource is designed to help your small group or college class discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways to understand the issues discussed in this video. You don't need to answer all the questions. Please allow time for discussion and response.

Materials

1. Person Interviewed: Jayakumar Christian
2. Theme of Video: Following the God of the Empty-Handed

Preliminary discussion

Consider the questions suggested below to start the conversation for your small group or college class. They'll consolidate the content of the video, after you've viewed it.

1. What were the major themes in this video?
2. How do those themes relate to your life and context?
3. Discuss the difficulties of the content. What was difficult to understand? Was there anything you would like to clarify with the group?
4. Theological method: How is the interviewee's theology and outlook informed and shaped by their practical ministry and context? What approaches do they take in understanding God in the context of their daily life and ministry?

Explore and apply

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with the theology. Consider the questions that respond to the issues raised in your preliminary discussion. Apply the answers to these questions in your own setting. Ensure the discussion is specifically drawing on your local setting. Make sure the discussion is relevant to the lives of faith for your small group or college class. Encourage relevant and thoughtful examples from each participant.

1. Jayakumar currently serves as *World Vision International's Leader for Faith and Development*. What roles has he had with World Vision in the past? And what does his current role involve?
2. In his book *God of the Empty-Handed*, he offers 6 themes that redefine poverty and that must be addressed as we shape transformational responses. Let's look at some of the things he says, in the following questions:

The first theme is “the captivity of the poor in the god-complexes of the rich, the powerful, and the non-poor.”

3. What are “god-complexes” and where do we see them?
4. How do people play God in the lives of the poor?
5. What effect does this have on the poor?
6. How does the Kingdom of God offer an alternative approach to “playing God in the lives of the poor”?

The second theme is “that poverty is a product of broken relationships.”

7. How do broken relationships create and sustain poverty?
8. How is the church uniquely placed to address this, showing the power of covenant relationships?

The third theme is that “poverty is the result of the marred identity of the poor.”

9. How do “marred identities” help make people poor, and keep them poor?
10. How is the church uniquely placed to address this issue?
11. What happens to people when they realize they've been made in the image of God, and they're loved and valued by him?
12. What does it mean to invest more than money or programs, to “invest life”?

The fourth theme is that “poverty is a result of distorted interpretations of history.”

13. History is always written from the perspective of the powerful. It is never neutral. How do distorted interpretations of history create poverty? Can you please give an example?
14. How do we acknowledge and make it known that “God is active in the history of the poor”?
15. What role does the church have in empowering the poor to dream dreams, and then helping them reach those dreams?

The fifth theme is “poverty is about the distortion of truth.”

16. What truths – especially related to power and poverty – are distorted in ways that keep people poor?
17. What role does the church have in addressing these lies, and offering the truth about these things?
18. How can our work among and with the poor be a “prophetic presence”?

The last theme is “poverty is about the exploitation and manipulation of principalities and powers.”

19. How does Jayakumar explain what this means?
20. What role does the church have in addressing this? And how does it do so?

Let's turn to turn briefly now to some final reflections on "a kingdom-based response to the powerlessness of the poor."

21. In Jayakumar's book, he says that a kingdom-based response is very different to other kinds of responses. What are the key features of a "kingdom-based response to poverty"?

Informing Community

Facilitate the space for your group to respond to the discussion. You might consider this section as a personal time of written journal responses to the following questions.

1. What is God encouraging our group and me, to do?
2. In response to the issues raised in the video, what are areas I want to ask God for forgiveness in? How do I need to change? What does God want me to stand up for?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community, for us to better engage with the contextual issues of our community?
4. How can I gain a better understanding of the issues discussed in this video? What do we ask that God would do in our hearts?

Prayer

Spend time in prayer over what you've learnt.

Invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit to clarify, heal, and inspire change for your participants and communities.

Links

Website: www.theglobalchurchproject.com

Books:

Graham Hill, *GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (IVP Academic, 2016).

Graham Hill, *Salt, Light, and a City (Second Edition): Ecclesiology for the Global Missional Community: Volume 1, Western Voices* (Cascade, 2017).