

Lesson 1: Recognizing the Kind of Help We Need

Primary Objectives for Today:

- 1. Clarify Expectations for the Class: The Why and What**
- 2. Develop a Biblical Perspective on "Needy People"**
- 3. Engage 3 Questions Everyone Asks**
- 4. Introduce Next Lesson: Understanding the Heart of the Matter**

1. Clarify Expectations for the Class: The Why and What

1.1. Examine the title of the class focusing on each word:

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: How to Help Others Change

What do you expect a class based on a book with this title to be about?

Is there anything in the title that raises questions or makes you uncomfortable?

1.2. Watch the short video of Paul Tripp.

<https://store.paultripp.com/pages/about>

What did you learn about the author's struggles and passions?

Did you hear anything in the video that would make you more inclined to engage the material of this class than just the title of the class itself?

1.3. Clarify the "why" and the "what" underlying this class.

1. A personal inclination toward theology / study of God.
2. A lack of insight and skill helping others work through real-life challenges they were facing.
3. The observation that others were giving counsel all the time, but often not grounded in biblical truth.

Goals for the class:

- Gain a fresh biblical perspective on how people experience transformative change.
- Develop a more integrated, intentional approach to helping others grow.
- Build confidence and skill in being used as an instrument in the Redeemer's hands.
- Consider taking a study like this into your small group – to help others put it into practice – at a community level.

2. Develop a Biblical Perspective on “Needy People”

2.1. Select one of the following scenarios that currently relates to you or someone you know. Describe in a brief sentence or two what you think that person needs.

Fred and Ellen enjoy their relationship with the Smiths, but the Smith kids are driving them crazy. They know the Smiths are struggling parents, and they have talked together about it. They know they should do more – but what?

Over their regular weekly lunch, Jean told Crystal about her ongoing struggles with her husband. Crystal managed to mumble some heartfelt words of comfort, but she really didn't know what else to say.

Drew's anger toward his parents grows daily. When he's not at school or work, he is holed up in his bedroom. He has talked to his friends about leaving home, but they seldom say anything helpful. He can't imagine finding an adult he could confide in.

Richard's life is dominated by his work, and his friend George can see its effect on Rich's spiritual life and his family. When George brings up the topic, Rich is prickly and defensive. George knows it's wrong to back off, but he doesn't know what else to do?

(scenarios taken from *Instruments*, p 37-38)

2.2. Observe in Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15-18 what the first humans God created needed to fulfill their purpose.

Genesis 1:26–28 (ESV): Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 2:15–18 (ESV): The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

What did the first humans need to fulfill their purpose?

2.3. Identify some implications of Gen 3:1-7 for what people need.

Genesis 3:1–7 (ESV): Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

How does the serpent get the woman and the man to disobey God? What does he promise them will be the outcome?

What does this scene and its aftermath tell about the fundamental problem that humans need to have remedied?

2.4. Underline the main imperative verbs in Hebrews 3:12-13 and Hebrews 10:24-25. Describe the outcome these actions are intended to produce.

Hebrews 3:12–13 (ESV): Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (ESV): And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

2.5. Summarize what the passages studied teach about what people need.

3. Consider 3 Important Questions Everyone Asks

Anyone involved in helping others grow is faced with the following questions at some level:

1. Why do people do the things they do?
2. How does lasting change take place in a person's life?
3. How can I be an instrument of change in the life of another person?

4. Introduce Next Week's Lesson: Understanding the Heart of the Matter

We're going to be looking at the first question above: Why do people do the things they do?

We'll explore the relationship between what rules the heart and what drives our conduct.

We'll consider the implications for how real change takes place in a person's life.