



Lesson 5

How are you going to help me?

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you bring us into your work to help the hurting with hope. We may wonder what it will look like to do this important task. Use your Word and guide our hearts to understand and make plans how our congregation can do what you call us to do. Bless our time in your Word and guide our discussions and plans. In your name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

It's a blessing when God gives us an opportunity to help the hurting with hope. Here's a recap of what we've learned.

- 1) We have seen who the hurting are: they are just like us; sinners who need God's forgiving love in their lives.
- 2) We have taken time to know what the hurting are like: they are sheep Jesus wants close to himself; we take time to ask them questions to know them.
- 3) The Lord has led us in his Word to see why we want to help the hurting: when we help them, we are helping those who need Jesus their Savior, who wants them to be close to him.

In our lesson today, we will put down plans for *how* we will help. We'll be able to answer the hurting, on behalf of our congregation and ourselves, when they ask us, "How are you going to help me?"

Search the Scriptures

1. In order to answer someone who asks, "How are you going to help me," let's look at Scripture to note God's guidance in how we will want to help. If you were going to help someone who is hurting, use each of the Bible passages to help you answer their question. Finish the sentence after each passage.

Philippians 2:3-7

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

How am I going to help you? I am going to help you by _____ .

Give the participants 30 seconds to formulate their own answer before opening it up to hear the answers from the larger group. Answers will vary. Possible answers: ... having the same mindset of Christ and being like Jesus to you (loving, forgiving); ... valuing you more than I value myself, and serving you and not serving myself; ... serving you in humility; ... helping you see Jesus, because he's shown himself to me. These answers won't necessarily be said to the person whom we are helping, but we are answering these questions for ourselves. With our new nature, we are answering how we are going to help the hurting.

Option: Have the participants come up with an answer on their own and then share it with a person next to them and explain why they answered that way. Then take samples from the larger group. This allows more dialog among the participants instead of having the same people raise their hands and offer their input.

John 13:12-17

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

How am I going to help you? I am going to help you by _____ .

Give the participants 30 seconds to formulate their own answer before opening it up to hear the answers from the larger group. Answers will vary. Possible answers: ... helping you in whatever ever area you need, just as Jesus helped with what the disciples needed; ... serving you with what needs to be done for you and to serve my God; ... imitating my King to give you the best thing for you. Don't miss the blessings promised in verse 17. When we serve others, imitating Jesus, we will be blessed by God. He's promised that. Serving someone else brings blessings to me. Would I want to rob myself of those blessings God has promised?

Option: Have the participants come up with an answer on their own and then share it with a person next to them and explain why they answered that way. Then take samples from the larger group. This allows more dialog among the participants instead of having the same people raise their hands and offer their input.

- How we help someone is going to be a fruit of our faith. Christians bear the fruit of looking and acting like Christians. From Paul's list describing the fruit of the Spirit, what will each of these look like when we bear this fruit? Pick out three from the list below and give an example of what it would look like in helping the hurting with hope. We'll hear samples.

Give the participants about 1.5 minutes to complete this learning activity. Answers will vary. Some possible answers are given.

Option: Assign tables or groups a set of three in the list and come up with answers as a table or group. This will make sure everything in the list gets covered. Then, in the larger group, have the groups give one of their examples. For time purposes, only hear one example for each fruit of the Spirit. At the end, the leader can ask the group if there is one that wasn't mentioned that they thought was particularly good.

Galatians 5:22,23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Fruit of the Spirit	Example of what it would look like when practiced by the Christian at our congregation
Love	This is love that doesn't look at what it can get from a person but what it can choose to do for another. It's offering to help with a need even though a person hasn't earned or deserved anything.
Joy	It puts a smile on your face and in your heart that you can serve someone. It doesn't look at what you are giving up but is excited to be part of helping someone.
Peace	This is the opposite of unrest. It doesn't see helping or serving someone as a burden, a waste of time or resources, or extra work for everyone involved. Peace put into practice means having a broad view of what we are doing as a congregation and seeing that because of the peace Christ's brings, what we do for others doesn't rattle us. Peace sees helping as part of God's plan for us to serve.
Forbearance (Patience)	You are willing to listen and get to know them. We take time for them even if it is inconvenient for us. Also, I see where the person is at in their walk with Jesus, and I don't expect them to

	be a model of Christian behavior. Patience means knowing that there is a growing process (example: their language may be rough).
Kindness	If someone isn't the best dressed or doesn't smell the best, we don't walk by them, ignore them, or avoid them. We want to help them and be a benefit to them.
Goodness	When I take an interest in a person's welfare, I want them to succeed and do well. I want to help relieve the pain they are experiencing and to do what I can to assist them.
Faithfulness	Be faithful in attending worship, serving at church, and show them that this is something of value to you and that they would want this as well. ... Not giving up on the person if it becomes difficult. It means sticking with them to help them.
Gentleness	Treating someone gently, not making it obvious that their differences from us make us uncomfortable. A gentle spirit shows that you care.
Self-Control	Controlling my humbleness and not elevating myself above them. I practice what Christ modeled for me in service to others. ... It is restraining my emotions. Some may need someone to be a calming influence because all they've seen from others is chaos.

3. Our new person the Holy Spirit created in us wants to serve God and serve others. Our new person delights in helping those who are hurting because it means we are serving someone in need and bringing loving service to our Savior. Read the following passages that connect us with helping the hurting with hope. Take a minute to answer the following two questions on your own. If you'd like, compare your answers with someone next to or near you. We'll hear samples.

a. What common ideas are in these passages?

Possible answer: When the Bible calls on us to love one another, it isn't a feeling. It's an action. Take actions of love. Don't just talk the talk. Walk the walk. We can't command our feelings to love. We can command our actions to carry out love toward another. We want to look for opportunities to do the loving thing toward those who are hurting.

b. What conclusions can you draw from these passages when it comes to helping the hurting?

Possible answer: It isn't a suggestion to love others. You will do this because this is who you are as one with the new person inside you from the Holy Spirit. When you love your Savior, you will do this. God took care of everything I need for my salvation. I don't have to earn it or pay for it. Now I get serve with loving actions toward my God and others.

1 John 2:3-6

³We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

John 13:34,35

³⁴[Jesus said,] “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Ephesians 5:1,2

¹Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

4. Helping brings blessings to others and to us. Based on the Luke 14 passage section below, name at least two blessings the hurting and the ones helping each receive.

Possible answers: Blessings of the hurting–They are cared for; they are given the Word; they enjoy the banquet of the feast with God in heaven.

Blessings for the helping–I get to be a part of inviting and sharing the banquet with others.

God promises he will bring blessings to me when I do. I don’t know what the blessings will look like, but I will be blessed because Jesus says so. We’ll be blessed at the resurrection and will be told “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enjoy your master’s happiness.”

Luke 14:13,14

³“But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Bringing It Home

5. With those at your table, with another table, or on your own, complete the following SWOT analysis of how our congregation is doing helping the hurting with hope.

Because of time constraints, the leader may need to direct the participants to put down only one for each box below. Give them an option of working with others on this learning activity (with a person next to them or as a group at a table). The answers will vary from congregation to congregation. This allows self-evaluation of the congregation, but also offers opportunities to come up with ideas how to improve, change, or incorporate something new at the congregation. It can be easy to let these suggestions stay only in this Bible study. With whom are these suggestions below going to be shared? What will be the next step your congregation will take to implement what is suggested below? Is it a new team that needs to be formed? Is it an existing group already functioning in your congregation? Ask, "So what's the next step?"

How is our congregation helping the hurting?	
STRENGTHS <i>What is our church good at doing when it comes to helping the hurting?</i>	WEAKNESSES <i>Where do you think there is a need for improvement for us in helping the hurting?</i>
Answers will vary at each congregation.	Answers will vary at each congregation.
OPPORTUNITIES <i>Opportunities are outside our church. We don't have it right now. Name something we could pursue to achieve our goal.</i>	THREATS <i>Threats arise from outside and are uncontrollable. They prevent us from achieving our goal.</i>
Answers will vary at each congregation.	Answers will vary at each congregation.

6. So what is it going to look like at our congregation? Complete this sentence in as many ways as you can: Our congregation will help the hurting with hope by...

Answers will vary at each congregation. We pray that we have a mindset, desire, and spirit of wanting to welcome, care, and incorporate into the life of the congregation those who are hurting because of the mess sin has made in their lives.

7. Write a haiku – Write a haiku to summarize what you learned today. A haiku doesn't need to rhyme. It is three lines with syllables of 5-7-5 for the lines.

Answers will vary. The 5-7-5 syllable pattern—or the opportunity for humor—might catch the fancy of adults who normally wouldn't be into writing a poem.

A possible haiku example:

God brings the hurting—I search for ways to love them—To each God blesses

Living My Faith

It starts with one person. One person leads by example and more follow. Carry out a helping spirit with those who come to us hurting. Instead of waiting for someone to ask how we are going to help them, put your faith into action and let them have no doubt we will.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, you show us how we can help the hurting and you provide the motivation and power do so. Bless our congregation and each of us with a heart that wants to help the hurting and says that they are part of us. Give us opportunities to put this into practice. Bring the hurting to our place of worship that they may enjoy your helpful hands using us as your instruments of grace. In your name we pray. Amen.