



## World Vision President | Richard Stearns | November 15, 2009

**Note 1:** Child sponsorship—the raw count is 1,492 children sponsored—all that World Vision brought to Spokane! This number will rise as the envelopes are opened at World Vision (some were multiple children sponsored). Hurray!!

**Note 2:** Operation Christmas Child—the deadline was Sunday, but the Adventureland Team is graciously giving people a few more days. Boxes can be placed on the Info Center counter through Wednesday. After Thursday morning, people will be responsible to either deliver boxes to Heritage Congregational (29<sup>th</sup> and Pittsburg) or mail them to the address inside the brochure.

### A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

### B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

All of us have a worldview or ‘view of the world’ which informs the way we live in the world, the decisions we make and the attitudes we hold toward the rest of the world. The “Rick Steves” view sees the world as a wonderful and fascinating place filled with magnificent monuments, historical places, cultural attractions, quaint bed and breakfasts, coffee houses and fabulous restaurants and food. And all of that is true about the amazing world that we live in. But the “Rich Stearns” view is a darker, more sinister worldview; this view is full of famine, violence, diseases and destruction, lives lived in slavery, destitution, and terror. This view of our world is mind numbing, and it is completely understandable why most of us would do almost anything to put it out of our minds. Unfortunately, God does not allow us that option. God wants us to see the world the way that He sees the world. He wants us to see it through His eyes – not through the distorted lens of our modern, affluent and insular American culture. We must come to God as did World Vision’s founder, Bob Pierce, when he prayed this now famous prayer – “Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God.”

#### 1. What does God expect of us?

God’s expectations start with a broken heart. Are our hearts broken by the things that are happening outside of the comfortable walls of our homes, our churches, our neighborhoods and our workplaces? There seems to be something fundamentally missing from our understanding of the gospel. God wants more from us than just believing the right things, reading our Bibles and going to church on Sunday. We must ask ourselves, “Am I willing to be open to God’s will for my life?” God expects us to be open to His will and to listen to His call, because underneath every one of the horrible statistics and mind-numbing global problems are individual men, women and children, each made in the image of God and each precious in His sight—people that Christ loves so much that He died for them.

So, what does God expect of us in the face of all of this? **Ephesians 2:8-10** says: “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” Good works are the evidence that we have experienced redemption and renewal in Christ. It isn’t our good works and deeds that result in our salvation. Rather, our good works and deeds are the evidence of our salvation. God is not pleased with those who claim to believe but bear no fruit. In **Matthew 7** Jesus discusses the same principle we just saw in **Ephesians 2**: “*By their fruit you will recognize them.... A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.... Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit*

*you will recognize them.” Jesus later continues: “Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!””* God’s expectations are pretty simple—Love God and love our fellow man. In the end, we are called to do these things out of love for our Savior. Our concern for the least of these should flow from our hearts in love. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus—and then Jesus sent us to be His hands, feet and heart to the poor.

## **2. What can I possibly do to make a difference?**

One of the most common mistakes we can make is to believe that we have nothing of significance to offer—that we’re not rich enough, smart enough, skilled enough, or spiritual enough to make much of a difference at all, especially in the face of huge global problems. The point is, God doesn’t expect any of us to do the impossible—He just calls us to place our piece into the puzzle. In the words of Mother Teresa: “We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” If any of you believes poverty is hopeless and that you are too insignificant to make a difference, you need to think again! Start by helping one single child through an organization such as World Vision, which can change the lives of many. Every single person has the ability to help. We must take up this challenge because God commands it. If our hearts are broken for the less fortunate, we are on our way to viewing the world through God’s eyes. The heart and soul of the Church of Jesus Christ, the very integrity of our faith and our relevance in the world, hang in the balance.

### **C. Life Group Questions** (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. Stearns contrasted two different ways of viewing the world: the "Rick Steves" and the "Rich Stearns" worldviews. What truths do you see in each of these views, and how do you think God views the world? What experiences and knowledge have defined your own worldview, and how has it been challenged through this series?
2. Stearns said, "Jesus came to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." How have you experienced each of these in the last few weeks? Read **Luke 6:46-49**. How does Jesus’ question relate to you on a personal level—what are you sensing God desires from you?
3. Considering Stearns’ metaphor of a barren tree versus a fruit-laden tree, what do you believe may be some of the fruit growing out of your relationship with God at this time? What further fruit would you like to see God produce through your life in Him?
4. Regarding the whole gospel, which is concerned about eternal salvation that begins in the here-and-now, how have you been engaging in bringing about justice and care for the poor before the series or as a result of the series, and what are you considering for future actions? How can you prevent these from being drowned by the busyness of daily life?

### **D. Personal Application** (1-3 Minutes)

- Be a part of Life Center's partnership with World Vision to help love our neighbors in one part of Swaziland. If you were unable to sign up for a child on Sunday, WV people will soon send us a website link that will be encoded with our church code AND the Maseyisini ADP information. So if you weren’t able to sponsor a child (or wanted siblings, etc.), you will be able to soon. Later in the week check our website at [www.lifecenter.net](http://www.lifecenter.net).
- Gently keep each other accountable for the plans you’ve committed to during this series.

### **E. Prayer Time** (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Thank God for His grace, His gifts, and the redemption He offers us through His Son, Jesus.
- Ask God to help you take concrete and sustained action to love and help others. Tell Him you're willing to place your "piece of the puzzle" wherever He calls you to do so.
- Pray that God will use us to make a difference in our community and the world.