

**A BIBLE STUDY GUIDE
FOR USE IN HIV/AIDS PREVENTION COURSES
HELD IN CHURCHES**

1. TEN HEALED, ONE SAVED Luke 17:11-19

BACKGROUND: At the time of Jesus, the lepers had to live isolated from other people, because they were afflicted with this dreaded skin disease. If someone thought he was healed, he had to show himself to the priests (Lev.13-14). The whole Old Testament only mentions about two or three such miracles. As for the Samaritans, the Jews despised them for being foreigners and half pagans.

1. Think about the day when these 10 men realized they had been afflicted with leprosy. What kind of thoughts do you think crossed their minds regarding the future of themselves and their family?

* What similarities do you find between leprosy at the time of Jesus and HIV/AIDS now?

2. What do you think were the highlights in the lives of these sick and isolated people?

3. What did these lepers expect Jesus to do for them - look at their prayer in verse 13?

* What can we learn from Jesus behaviour in the text when we think about HIV/AIDS problem now?

4. The border between Samaria and Galilee is about 50-60 kilometres (35-40 miles) from the cities where Jewish priests used to dwell. Think of various reasons why Jesus didn't heal these men right away, but sent them far away instead?

* What made these men start this difficult journey, even though they hadn't been healed yet?

* Would you call these ten men believers or non-believers at the moment they set out on their journey?

5. The Jewish priests didn't want to have anything to do with Samaritans. Why did the one Samaritan set out for this journey together with the Jews?

6. Think of as many reasons as possible why the nine Jews didn't come back to Jesus to thank him?

* Why did the Samaritan come back to Jesus to thank him?

7. Why was Jesus disappointed about the nine not returning to him?

* Do you think you have ever disappointed Jesus by similar behaviour as these nine men showed?

8. "Your faith has healed you" could be also translated as "Your faith has saved you". Why did Jesus want to say these words to the Samaritan?

9. What is the difference between the faith that seeks healing and the faith that seeks Jesus himself?

* Why doesn't "healing faith" necessarily save those who have it?

10. What did the years of isolation and shame mean to the nine Jews, when they thought about them afterwards?

* What did the years of illness mean to the Samaritan?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus had to experience on the cross the same kind of isolation and shame as the lepers did: "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering... Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Is.53:3-4). That was the price Jesus had to pay for this miracle.

2. THE GOOD SAMARITAN Luke 10:25-37

BACKGROUND: The Jews at the time of Jesus despised the Samaritans for being of mixed blood and half pagans. The Samaritans had their own temple on Mt. Gerizim, 50 km north of Jerusalem. The wounded man in this parable was most probably a Jew. The priest and the Levite were going to the temple to perform their religious duties there. If they touched blood, they would be unclean for the rest of the day, and not allowed to enter to temple.

1. Imagine what kind of thoughts crossed the mind of the wounded man while he was lying helpless on the roadside hour after hour.

* Imagine the feelings of the wife and children when the father failed to come home after his journey.

2. Why didn't these two religious people, the priest and the Levite, try to help the dying man? Think of as many reasons as possible.

* How did the expert of the law probably evaluate the behaviour of the priest and the Levite in the parable (25-27)?

3. How did the priest and the Levite interpret the commandment of love, which they very well knew from their Bibles? (Look at vs. 27.)

* Is it possible, in your opinion, to love God with all one's heart, soul and strength, and at the same time treat a suffering human being in the way these two religious people did? Give your reasons.

4. The Samaritan had many reasons NOT to help the wounded. Think of as many of them as you can.

* What would be the minimal amount of help a decent person should give in that situation?

* What "extra help" did the Samaritan give to the wounded?

5. Two silver coins corresponded to two days' wages, which would keep a man up to two months in an inn. How much would that sum be in our currency?

* Why did the Samaritan want to pay such a sum of money to help a stranger, who wasn't even his own countryman?

* For whom would you be willing to do everything this Samaritan did for a stranger?

6. What are the similarities between Jesus and the Good Samaritan?

* What more did Jesus do for his enemies than the Samaritan?

7. Do you think the Samaritan also kept the first part of the commandment of love (27)? Give your reasons.

8. Why are many people, even Christians, slow to act as good Samaritans for those who are suffering of HIV/AIDS?

9. Who is your neighbour whom you may have been ignoring in the same way as the priest and the Levite ignored the wounded man (37)?

* What concrete steps should you take to help this neighbour?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus Christ himself acts towards you as a good Samaritan. He sees the wounds of your heart and body, stops by you and reaches his hand.

3. ABANDONED BY EVERYONE John 5:1-18

BACKGROUND: Some Bibles have verse 4, some don't. We don't discuss that verse in this Bible study. Archeological excavations in Jerusalem have revealed the whereabouts of this pool with its colonnades.

1. Imagine what kind of life this man had led under the colonnades of Bethesda for 38 years.
* How did the first 10 years of illness perhaps differ from the final 10?
2. Why didn't the relatives of this man take care of him? (7)? (What was perhaps his own fault, what may have been the fault of others?)
* What impression do you get concerning the character of this man? Look at his words in verse 7.
3. What was the relationship probably like between the sick people who were waiting to get healed?
* Why didn't others let this poor man enter the pool first, even though he had been there longer than them?
4. What did this man actually believe in? (Where did he expect to get help from?)
* What kind of strange "remedies" do sick people rely on in our own day?
5. What was the sin of this man which Jesus referred to in verse 14?
6. Why do you think Jesus decided to approach this particular man, instead of some other sufferer?
* Why did Jesus ask the man a self-evident question (6)?
* Why didn't the man answer Jesus' question clearly (7)?
7. According to Jesus, what is worse than suffering that lasts thirty-eight long years (14)?
* What, according to Jesus, is worse for you than your present suffering?
8. For what purpose do you think the man went to the temple after being healed (14)?
* When did this man come to believe in Jesus?
9. Why did the healed man do as he did in verse 15? Think of various possible explanations.
* Jesus must have known beforehand how this incident would end. Why, then, did he heal the man?
10. What does this text teach us concerning the HIV/AIDS problem?

GLAD TIDINGS: In the end Jesus had to bear the same fate as the man in the text: he was abandoned by all. Jesus even had to experience something worse than an illness of thirty-eight years: he was forsaken by his Heavenly Father when he was hanging on the cross. That is why he is now able to say to anyone who has been abandoned: "You have some one who cares for you. You have me!"

4. A SICK BOY John 4:46-54

BACKGROUND: The official in this text was working for **Herod Antipas**. He was the man who had arrested and killed John the Baptist. (The Herod who had killed the babies in Bethlehem was his grandfather.) The Herods were only half Jewish and extremely unpopular with the Jews. **The distance between Capernaum and Cana is 38 kilometers.**

1. What do you think might have been the good and bad points in the life of this royal official before his son became ill?
 - * What was hardest to this father when his son became ill?
 - * What is hardest for parents if their child is sick with HIV/AIDS?
2. Why do you think the father decided not to send one of his servants to Jesus, but to go himself?
 - * What was this father perhaps thinking while walking 40 kilometers' (25 miles) distance to Cana?
3. What made it difficult for this father to ask a favor of Jesus?
 - * Recall an occasion when it was very difficult for you to ask help from Jesus. Why was this?
4. What do the words of Jesus in verse 48 have to do with the rest of the story?
 - * What is wrong with seeking after signs and wonders in order to believe?
 - * In your opinion, is it possible to apply the words of Jesus in verse 48 to this man? Give your reasons.
5. Why didn't Jesus go with this man to Capernaum, as he had asked him to do (47,50)?
 - * How was the faith of this father changed when he met Jesus (50b)?
6. Why is it so difficult to simply believe in the word of God even before experiencing his help?
 - * In your opinion, is it too late to experience God's help in heaven?
7. Why is the moment, when the boy was healed, recorded in the Bible (52)?
 - * What difference would it have made to the father if the boy had become well at some other time and not exactly when Jesus gave his promise?
8. What does this incident teach us about the word of Jesus?
 - * What difference is there between suffering without the word of God and clinging to his promises while suffering?
9. Why didn't Jesus use his powerful word when he himself was close to death?

GLAD TIDINGS: The word of Jesus is so powerful because he has paid a great price for it: the son of the royal official could live, but the Son of God had to die instead.

5. A WOMAN WHO HAD LOST HER IDENTITY AS A WOMAN Mark. 5:25-34 **(For women's group only)**

BACKGROUND: The woman of the text was suffering some kind of **gynecological decease**. According to the Mosaic Law a woman was considered religiously unclean while bleeding. Nobody was allowed to touch either her or a thing she had touched. Neither was she allowed to enter the temple in that state (Lev.15).

1. Probably this woman had become ill while still quite young. What consequences would this illness have to her life if she were married? What if she weren't married?
 - * What consequences did continual bleeding have to her physical state?
 - * What effect does an illness like that have on one's self-image?
 - * Compare the life of this woman with the life of a person who has been infected with HIV?

2. What do you think this woman thought about God after having conceived an illness like this in her young age?
 - * How had her relationship with God possibly changed during the long years of illness?

3. In verse 26 it says that at one time this woman had some property. Think of different possibilities where she had the money from and for what use it was originally meant.

4. We can imagine that the gynecologists of the day were not very professional. Why was this woman willing to take any treatment and even use all her money for such "doctors"?
 - * How do you think the woman felt about doctors and "healers" at this point of her life (26)?
 - * What was the difference between Jesus and "healers"?

5. How could this woman be so sure that touching Jesus' clothing would make her well (28)?
 - * Have you turned to Jesus with your problems? What happened?

6. Why didn't this woman ask Jesus for help aloud as other sick people did?
 - * Why did the woman choose touching as the means of becoming well?

7. How could Jesus know that someone had gently touched his robe?
 - * Why didn't Jesus let the woman go home without discussing with her?

8. How do you think the woman felt when she heard the question of Jesus in verse 30?
 - * What did the woman see in the eyes of Jesus when he turned around and looked in her face (32)?

9. The woman didn't intend to speak with Jesus, and yet she ended up telling him the whole truth. What do you think she said to him (33)?

10. Verse 34 can be translated in two ways: "Your faith has healed you." Or: "Your faith has saved you." Why did Jesus want to say these particular words to this woman?
 - * Why did Jesus call this woman his daughter although they probably were approximately the same age?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus, too, became ritually unclean when his blood flowed from the flogging and crucifixion. Everyone who touched him became unclean. This was the price Jesus had to pay for saving this woman - and for saving you!
