

**Week Five – *Helping Without Hurting***  
**Deuteronomy 24:17-22**

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day One**

1. Have you ever heard of the Five Love Languages? Basically, they are five different ways that we give or receive love. Which one are you? If you don't know yours already, start your time by taking the free online assessment:  
[5lovelanguages.com/profile/](http://5lovelanguages.com/profile/)
2. Which love language are you? Does this make sense? Would you have guessed this about yourself?
3. If you have a spouse or family member, could you make a guess as to what his or her love language is?
4. Now here's a hard one. Which love language do you think God is? Through which love language does God show His love for you? How do you think God wants you to show your love for Him?
5. Turn to James 1:27 and read it out loud. Which one act does James call out as "best" in showing our love to God? How would you evaluate yourself at using that particular love language to God?
6. Close your FIFTEEN by using your prayer as words of affirmation to God. Thank and praise Him for all the wonderful things He has done for you.

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two**

7. What is the church's job, to tell people their sins are forgiven, or to help people have better lives? Explain your answer.
8. Which one of those things did Jesus do when he was alive? Read Mark 2:5-12. Which one does Jesus say is the hardest? Why?
9. When John the Baptist doubted Jesus, how did Jesus explain the proof of His identity? Look up Matthew 11:2-5. What did Jesus show as evidence?
10. Since we are made in the image of Christ, what do you think our role is to the blind, the lame, the leprous and the deaf people around us? What should be the ratio between telling them about Jesus and actually helping to fix their problems?
11. Now that you've identified a ratio, evaluate what your own personal ratio has been. How much time do you spend telling others about salvation vs. working to meet their needs? What would you say your church's actual ratio is?

12. Spend some time praying for the hurting people in your community. Pray that the sick would be cured, the hurting given comfort, the broken would be healed – and that you will have the opportunity to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to those who are perishing!

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three**

13. The people of Israel had been God's people for hundreds of years, but they always fell into patterns of disobedience to God. Which specific act of disobedience do you think led to God banishing them from Jerusalem?
14. Read Isaiah 58:1-14. What criticisms of Israel does God have?
15. Reread verses 5-7. Israel's worship of God was fine (in other words, they went to church every Sunday!), but what was lacking?
16. How do you think God would judge our worship at St. John today? Do we fall into the same problems as the ancient church? What could we do differently?
17. Have you ever taken the opportunity to serve locally through St. John? What was a blessing about that experience? What was challenging about that experience?
18. If you've ever served in your community – through St. John or elsewhere, did you see that as being connected to your worship of God? Why do you think most people treat service and worship as separate things? What does Isaiah 58 show us about their relationship?
19. This week, commit to finding a way to serve people in need in your community. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer and ask God to help you clearly see the needs in your community.

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four**

20. As we've seen this week, there is a clear principle in Scripture that God's followers are supposed to take care of the poor. What are some ways that you already contribute to taking care of the poor? Do you have any personal ministries with which you're involved?
21. Are there better or worse ways that we can try to use to alleviate poverty? What are some good methods for helping poverty? What are some with which you disagree because they don't help in the right way?
22. Read Deuteronomy 24:17-22. What are the basic principles in this passage?

23. In the book *When Helping Hurts*, authors Corbett and Fikkert point out one problem with how poverty is often handled in the U.S.: "The way that we act toward the economically poor often communicates – albeit unintentionally – that we are superior and they are inferior." How does this Bible passage help combat that particular problem?
24. The practice described here gave the poor the chance to work for their own betterment, even as they received charity. Think of the people in need in your community. What would you guess are their needs? Based on your answer, if you wanted to help, how could you do it in a way that gave them agency in the solution?
25. How about your church? What are some ways that the local church can come alongside the economically challenged and not just solve their problems from above?
26. Close your FIFTEEN by going to St John's website at [stjstl.net/servelocal](http://stjstl.net/servelocal). Find one of the many upcoming local service projects that you could join.

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five**

27. It can be overwhelming to see all the needs that are out there in the world, but the good news is that we don't have to fix all the problems ourselves. Read 1 John 3:16-18. Where can we start to help?
28. Which brothers and sisters around you are struggling in any way? How have you been placed in a position to help them?
29. Read Matthew 25:31-46. How seriously does Jesus take our actions of helping those in need?
30. The Bible is clear that we are saved by Jesus' actions alone, but if you were standing in front of Jesus in this scenario he describes, would your current works of service line you up with the sheep or with the goats? Explain your answer.
31. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer and ask God to providentially place people in need in your path. (Be warned, this is a dangerous prayer!) Pray that God will give you the means and the perspective to bless those you come across who are in need.