LESSON ONE

Why Minister to People with Disabilities?
Social Constructions Impacting the Disability Community

Sadly, many of our societal understandings are set today by the media, where people with disabilities have never fared well.

From the movie
*Tropic Thunder*
Media Myths about Disability

- Pervasive Savant
- Useless Eater
  - Perpetual Victim
  - Perpetual Tragedy
  - Perpetually Bitter Invalid
The 18 Wounds of Disability Ministry

Whatever the disability, people often experience a profound sense of devaluation and wounding, which can be reinforced by societal attitudes.
“You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:14
Religious Myths About Disabilities

Special Angels
Holy Innocents
Object Lessons
Opportunities for Selfless Service

Such erroneous thinking disrespects and devalues people with disabilities as objects to be used for our personal edification.
Identifying with the Disability Community

“Us versus Them”

The expression “same lake, different boat” reflects the reality that we are all *essentially* the same, but *experientially* different.
Why minister to people with disabilities?

1. Share the Gospel with All
2. Alleviate suffering
3. Mediate change
4. Stand for social justice
5. Facilitate growth
6. Change society
7. Love
Disability Friendly Language

- Use People First Language
- Avoid Hurtful Terms

“A kind word cheers.”
Proverbs 12:25

“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”
Proverbs 25:11
What are your personal impressions of the disability community?

- Do you know someone with a disability?
- Have you spent time with an individual or family affected by disability?
- Have you ever considered that one day you might have a disability?
- How prepared would you be to accept a family member with a disability?
Sympathy or Empathy?

What if every person on earth was educated about disabilities until all fears and prejudices melted into genuine empathy for one another?

The Results? Suffering Relieved ● Lives Healed ● God’s Love & Mercy Revealed

Personal Change: Honestly examine your attitudes and actions toward those affected by disability.
Why God Gave Us Emotions:

To help us connect with God and others

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

Mark 12:30