



Summer 2021 • Newsletter

SOMETHING WAS MISSING IN MY LIFE.

Now, I feel so much closer to God than I ever have.

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Jessica's grandmother was a Sunday School teacher and during her childhood she had always been a part of a church. After a few setbacks in life, including a toxic relationship, Jessica felt called to attend Radiant Life Church. "It was a beautiful church and I needed a change in my life."

After meeting Pastor Josh, he recommended that Jessica meet with Kris, the director of the Mentorship Program for Hope United. Jessica and Kris met and after hearing what the program had to offer, Jessica decided to sign on and their mentoring relationship began.

Kris says that the first step to helping Jessica was to help her identify the greatest need in her life. After some assessments they determined it was forgiveness. "I needed to learn how to forgive all the people who have wronged me in my life" Jessica says "And to forgive yourself" adds Kris. Once the need is identified clients and mentors do different exercise as well as read through books together.



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Mentors needed and training is ongoing. Would you consider standing alongside someone in this way?



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When asked what she would tell other people considering this program, but nervous to start, Jessica says "Do it. Kris has helped me out immensely. They would feel a lot better because I know I do." As for what Kris gets out of their relationship? "Joy unspeakable and full of glory joy for the Lord." She acknowledges that it's not always easy, but that being obedient to God in this calling only brings more joy.

"I feel so much more confident." Jessica's hopes for the future are to continue working with Kris, growing closer to the Lord, and raising her children in a way that they can see the changes happening in her life and in her heart. She has moved into her own apartment and was blessed with some new furniture through Hope United's Restored Furniture Ministry.

If you are interested in serving as a mentor additional information can be found on Hope United's website <https://hopeunitedsjc.com/hope-uniteds-purpose> or by contacting Kris at krischarles@hopeunitedsjc.com or **269-281-4047**.



SUPERHERO FUN RUN/WALK



Join in the fun, get some exercise and support Hope United on **June 19th** at **9:00am**. Whether sprinting or strolling all ages are welcome. 5K and 1-mile options. Register soon for best rate!

Check out www.hopeunitedsjc.com under the events tab to register and find more information.

Hope United in the Community: **RADIANT LIFE CHURCH**

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"We've misunderstood what the church is. The people in the chairs every week. They are the church. They are the ones called to meet the need within the community" says Pastor Josh Herrema, Assistant Pastor at Radiant Life Church. Pastor Josh and Jill met years ago and quickly realized that Hope United's goal of helping meet the needs of the community of St. Joseph County was something Radiant Life Church wanted to be a part of.

Pastor Josh and some other pastors in the community have recently completed a class based on the book *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert. During this class, they realized that **"One of the key components of Hope United is coming alongside churches and looking at making disciples because if we are disciples, then meeting the needs of the people around us and in our communities will be a natural outcome."**

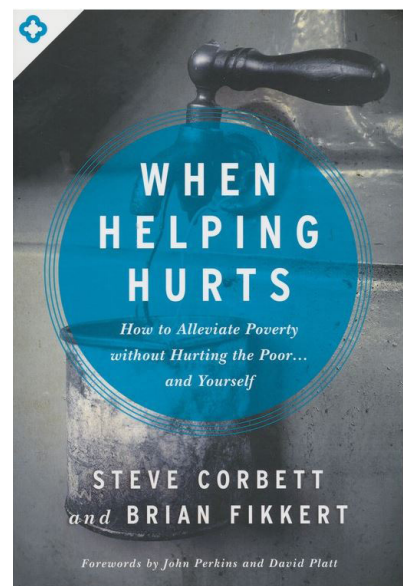
Pastor Josh is focusing on helping his congregation not only see the needs in the Community, but providing practical way to go about community building. One is "Meet the Need" which Josh says "is a platform that allows you to share needs and it gives people the opportunity to see what the needs of the community are and sign up to meet those needs." Radiant Life church is also in a sermon series called "Move to More" in which the congregation is learning to move from just being believers to being disciples.

Ultimately, Pastor Josh says that the best way we can learn to help our communities is through relationship, "Start small. Get to know your neighbors and where the need is there. Ask your pastor for suggestions. Join Hope United's Mentor Program, Restored Hope Furniture ministry, or volunteer at Amanda's House. There are practical things, and you don't have to go real far to find those things."

Please visit Hope United's website or reach out to their team if you are interested in ways to help serve.



Would you help Meet a Need? Current needs available include bedding, prayer and more. See Hope United Website for current list.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE POOR

Up to 66% of American households are considered to be middle-class. The majority of us who fall into this category, often believe that it is our job to fix those who are materially poor. But what if I told you that the root of material poverty causes brokenness in us all? Poverty can actually be defined as a breakdown in the fundamental relationships that are essential to our wellbeing in life. These relationships are with God, self, others, and the rest of creation. For some, this breakdown in relationship does indeed result in material poverty or an inability to provide for basic needs. But these breakdowns in relationships that are a direct result of The Fall of Man affect us all, they just present themselves in different ways. Because of this, we all suffer with poverty. Until we understand this and deal with our own brokenness, our efforts to help those in need are more likely to hurt them and hurt us in the process.

The brokenness of the wealthy and that of the materially poor are a toxic mix! Brokenness in the materially poor often exposes itself as shame and feelings of inferiority. For those who are not materially poor, it often exposes itself as what is called a god-complex; a belief that wealth has been acquired through our own efforts. This belief is often followed by an unconscious sense of superiority. When those with a sense of superiority try to help those who feel inferior, we hurt instead of helping.

These concepts and more are some that are addressed in the book *When Helping Hurts*. The authors, Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett, challenge their readers to take a deeper look at the true meaning of poverty and the issues leading to poverty. The authors also challenge their readers to determine if our efforts to help those in need call for relief, rehabilitation or development. Our default in most situations is to offer relief services and we often continue to do so even when what is needed is rehabilitation and development assistance. Relief is the easier route to take and offers a path of least resistance. However, this means of assistance can keep individuals in perpetual cycles of brokenness instead of helping them overcome the barriers to wholeness.

Hope United is excited to implement some of these concepts into our ministry and outreach designs and will be offering opportunities for our community to learn more through classes and upcoming training. I highly recommend *When Helping Hurts* for your next read! The concepts in this book will guide us all to healthier, God-centered ways to serve those in need. We look forward to using this knowledge and understanding in a way that will enable us to love our neighbors well!

Blessings, Jill Gunn

