

BEYOND THE GAME



devotional

# beyond the game

## dichotomy of rich vs poor

South Africa is a country with extreme beauty, and metropolitan cities such as Capetown, Durban and Johannesburg.

Developed, thriving industry and tourism might lead the average on-looker to believe that all is well, yet in the shadows of these cities are all the challenges that exist in other African nations. HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, tuberculosis and death are a way of life for the nearly 2.5 million orphans of South Africa.

The nation of South Africa has the distinction of being the wealthiest most developed African nation, yet 61% of its people still live within the grasps of extreme poverty. In this post apartheid era millions of South Africans eke out an existence and survival is an everyday struggle.

With the World Cup in town, new stadiums will be built, roads will be improved and in general South Africa will put its best foot forward. They aren't going to flaunt their extreme poverty, but the wealth and the beauty of their nation. The question for us is, where do we do that too?

### suggested reading: matthew 23

1Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

5Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6they love the place of honor at

banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

8But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11The greatest among you will be your servant. 12For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

15Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

25Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

### pray

Lord, search my heart. Reveal to me where I have been a Pharisee and put on my religious or "good" face while hiding my sin. I want to honor you, oh Lord, with my entire heart and soul. Reveal to me where I am double minded. May I allow you access to all areas of my heart.. I choose now to hold nothing back. Do your work in me and purify my heart. I love you Lord and want to serve you.

### apply

Plan to take a chunk of time for reflection. During this time:

- Meditate on Psalm 139:23-24
- Bring a yellow pad of paper and your bible
- Ask the Lord to search your heart for areas where you have been more performance oriented (like the Pharisees)
- Write down what you feel the Lord is sharing with you

# beyond the game

## globalization

Globalization: describes a process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through a global network of communication, transportation, and trade.

Until the invention of the internet in the 90's, getting world news at your fingertips was difficult at best. We relied on television, radio and even letters (gasp!) for our information. Today, we can hear, read and see what is happening all across the world in an instant. The riots in Kenya are a good example of this. Within moments of rioting beginning, you could follow blogs, Twitter and Facebook updates. The world is shrinking. No longer can we consider what is happening in Africa as some faraway land. Globalization is redefining the concept of "who is my neighbor?" We can see, hear and because of that, feel the lives of people across the world.

**The question is:** how does that change things for us? Do we consider them our neighbor? And if so, what do we do about it?

### suggested reading

Red Letters: Living a Faith that Bleeds by Tom Davis (chapter 2 is on globalization and how it affects us, or should) and Luke 10:30-37 (niv)

30In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31A priest happened to be going

down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

### pray

Lord, so often I am like the Levite and the priest, passing by others' pain. I do this with the people who are my physical neighbors, like the hurting in my own neighborhood or even the homeless man on the street corner. And yet, You illustrated in this story that not only should I love those in my own neighborhood but those from foreign lands like the Samaritan did for the Jewish man. Help me Lord. Open my eyes to the rest of the world and help me to be a good neighbor.

### apply

Choose to connect yourself to other parts of the world.

- Read blogs by missionaries throughout the world.  
<http://jumbogerber.myadventures.org/>  
<http://mariusdeetlefs.myadventures.org/>  
<http://pastorgift.myadventures.org/>
- Plan to go on a trip like the one HopeChest is taking back here to S. Africa in October. (Email [vince@hopechest.org](mailto:vince@hopechest.org) for more information)
- Ask the Lord to search your heart for areas where you have been more performance oriented (like the Pharisees)

# beyond the game

## orphans and children

There are approximately 3.8 million children who have lost one or both parents in South Africa alone.

These children live with malnutrition, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS as a daily reality. The life of an orphan is difficult in any country, with no parents to love, support and guide you. Add to this emotional devastation a physical devastation where you are not sure where your next meal may come and the reality is overwhelming.

\*US State Dept

### suggested reading

Mark 9:36-37 "36 Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf[a] welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.""

Matthew 25:34-40 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. 36 I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

37 "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

40 "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,[f] you were doing it to me!'"

### pray

Jesus, I see in Your word how you have asked me to bring others into my arms, both the children and the needy. The orphans of South Africa fit both of these categories. Lord, I ask that you open my heart and my eyes to their plight. Lord, I ask that you speak to my heart on how I can offer my hand to those in need. I want to serve you Lord, show me how.

### apply

- Pray for the orphaned in S. Africa and beyond.
- Considering joining our iFast team that fasts and prays for the world's poor, hungry and oppressed as we study Isaiah 58 [www.ifast58.org](http://www.ifast58.org)
- Get your church or community involved in joining in relationship with a community in S. Africa thru going on our Vision Trip in October. (Contact [vince@hopechest.org](mailto:vince@hopechest.org) for more info)
- Sponsor a child ([hopechest.org](http://hopechest.org))

# beyond the game

## trafficking

Read this excerpt from ESPN's "Outside the Lines"

By John Barr and Nicole Nore

"In Johannesburg, where the World Cup begins Friday, the number of brothels has doubled within the past year, according to one law enforcement source. The source, who spoke to "Outside the Lines" in an extensive interview in early May, agreed to speak on the condition of anonymity because of the undercover nature of his work. He explained that he has spent years penetrating human trafficking syndicates and that he had found 10 trafficking victims in Johannesburg-area brothels alone in just the two weeks before the interview.

"In the last couple weeks, there has been an increase in domestic trafficking, and it has been for the World Cup," the source said.

He went on to speak of a Cape Town organized-crime syndicate known as "The Firm," an umbrella organization made up of roughly 100 smaller criminal groups that collectively run the sex trade in Cape Town. The Firm, according to the source, recently expanded to include Chinese crime syndicates. "Cape Town is cut and dried into organized crime like you can't believe," he said."

"Some of the worst trafficking we're seeing is amongst Southeast Asians and Chinese," said Councillor J.P. Smith, the Cape Town city official responsible for safety and security during the World Cup.

"I can tell you we've been raiding [brothels] in my suburb and surrounding suburbs for 10 years. ... I have never seen the amount of Chinese nationals we've seen in the last six months

to a year." Smith said the Cape Town vice squad, created in September, has been profiling prostitutes since November. Since then, according to Smith, the number of foreign nationals working as prostitutes has doubled.

"Where we're starting to see a lot of foreign nationals is in brothels in residential suburbs," Smith said. "Chinese nationals, Mozambican, Zambian, Zimbabwean and other Southeast Asian. That's worrying. And they were not here a year ago."

"These girls didn't come here by themselves," Smith said. "They're being brought here through syndicates, who have the means to manipulate immigration processes, to bribe border patrol, border guards, to bribe immigration officials."

When asked for an explanation, Smith said: "The only assumption you can make is they're anticipating increased business around the World Cup."

**suggested reading** Matt 13:45,46, Psalm 10:17, Isaiah 1:17

### pray

Heavenly Father, I see in your scripture the high value you place on justice. I praise you as the God of justice who sees the oppressed in their time of need. I confess that I have not put a high enough value on the things that you do. Lord, give me your heart for justice. I want to seek after your heart and your kingdom as a pearl of great price. I want to live sacrificially seeing your kingdom come. Teach me, oh Lord. Break my heart for what breaks yours and then guide me in how I can seek justice as you call me to do.

### apply

- Read "Priceless" by Tom Davis to learn more about the issue of trafficking
- Visit [www.sheispriceless.com](http://www.sheispriceless.com) for more facts, figures and ways to get involved
- Spread the word about the issue by posting and reposting Tom's blogs as he follows this issue in S. Africa and beyond.

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## trafficking

A 2005 survey found that 91.3% of the white respondents agree with the statement, whereas 85.9% of Indians, 65.2% of coloureds and 48.5% of blacks agreed that they had enough food to feed their families.

Approximately 57% of South Africans live under the poverty line. The poverty line defined by the World Bank is \$1.25 per day.

This leaves millions of people living in shacks and shanties throughout S Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa without enough food to feed their families, money to send their children to school or the ability to receive appropriate medical care when needed.

### suggested reading

Luke 12:16-21 He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. He reasoned within himself, saying, 'What will I do, because I don't have room to store my crops?' He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry."' "But God said to him, 'You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared—whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

### pray

Father God, make me a person of generosity. Reveal to me where I have been building new barns instead of blessing those around me. I want both my heart and my actions to please you. I want to lay up for myself treasures in heaven. Lord, help me to do this. In this world that continually tells me that I need bigger and better "barns" help me to remember the people of S. African and Sub-Saharan Africa who do not even have enough food for their families.

### apply

- Examine your budget, looking for "bigger barns"
- Commit to making changes in your financial life to sacrifice "barn building" to give more
- Join [www.5for50.com](http://www.5for50.com) and pledge \$5 per month to aid in emergency food relief