



Week 2:

## Strengths, Not Weaknesses

In our culture, when we think of poverty—whether across the world or close-by—we are conditioned to focus on what is lacking and broken. We come from a mindset that those in material poverty are fundamentally broken, with so many problems that they need us to fix.

There is another way. When Jesus healed people, he seemed to do it from the inside out. "Your faith has healed you," he would often say. He looked inside people and saw hope, goodness, and possibility.

An approach called "asset-based community development" (or ABCD) focused on the gifts and assets of people and communities amidst poverty, rather than the problems. The key to overcoming poverty, they argue, are developing these gifts.



## Key Principles of an Asset-based Approach

**Everyone has gifts.** We need to find and develop them. Everyone can contribute, and has part of the solution.

**Relationships are important.** We cannot help people and communities without knowing and loving them. Relationships are the basis of trust and community. Involve as many people as possible.

**Avoid the "quick fix."** Our cultural mindset can be biased toward pre-planned, efficient, fast

approaches, but that is rarely the path to a sustainable solution to poverty.

**Listen.** Many charitable initiatives fail because they try to blindly impose outside experts' solutions. Ask questions, rather than giving answers. Really listen.

**Motivation is key.** Even good strategies will not go anywhere if participants don't feel motivation to act. Find out what people care about deeply. Discover their dreams.

### Learn More on the Website

**Short Videos** – 2 minute intro to ABCD, Angela Blanchard's TEDx talk "You Can't Build on Broken," and two others.

**Stop Trying to Save the World** – An intriguing article on how "Big Ideas are Destroying International Development."

Visit:

<http://gospel.link/helping2>