

Fall 2026
1 credit hour

Effective Compassion
Oct 22-24, 2026

The biblical admonition to care for our neighbors in need is clear. But how should we help? How can we ensure that our compassion for those in poverty is also effective in addressing their needs? This course will focus on: the necessary connection between the ministries of Word and deed; church-based mercy ministries; and a framework for thinking about public policy related to poverty. This course counts toward the Certificate in Theology and Public Life.

Instructors:

Rev. Chris Sicks
Dr. Jennifer Patterson

Class meeting times:

Thursday, Oct. 22, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 23, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 24, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Assignments:

- ☐ Reading digest: Write 2.5 to 3 pages, double-spaced, for each of the two assigned books (2 pages summary, plus an additional half- to full-page with 2 to 5 bullets summarizing key take-aways/applications for your own life or ministry).
- ☐ Write a final paper (6-8 pages, double-spaced) that summarizes key observations from this course on the nature of poverty and how biblical principles should shape our response. Include an application section that shows how you will relate what you've learned in this course to your life or ministry.

Readings:

1. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself*. (Moody, 2014)
2. Chis Sicks, *Tangible: Making God Known Through Deeds of Mercy and Words of Truth* (NavPress, 2014). Copies available for purchase through RTS after Labor Day. Please contact Jennifer Patterson at jpatterson@rts.edu for details.
3. Selected readings available on Canvas.

Due dates:

1. Reading digest due by midnight, Saturday, Oct. 31. (Note: The expectation is that reading will be done before the class sessions begin.)
2. Final paper due by midnight, Saturday, Nov. 21.