

# Who Are the Poor?

*“God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.”*

**SAINT AUGUSTINE**

God has special concern for those trapped in poverty. Jesus himself demonstrated God’s heart for the marginalized by the way He lived on earth. As a child, Jesus was a political refugee fleeing the tyranny of Herod. In His ministry, Jesus spent much of his time with the disabled, the sick, prostitutes, thieves and tax collectors; not with the wealthy or the religious elite. During his public ministry, He did not have a “place to lay his head” (Matt 8:20) and He did not have money enough to pay the temple tax (Matt 17:27).

Poverty is complex. At its root, poverty can be defined as a lack of options—a lack of good options that lead to flourishing in life. This study is meant to help us discover solutions as we learn to create options in the context of growing, Christ-centered relationships. You will hear from God’s Word, watch others share their experience and have the opportunity to engage with those in your city who lack options.

## Scripture

Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people.

**PSALM 113:5-8**

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

**JAMES 2:5**

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

**PSALM 9:9**

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah

was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**LUKE 4:16–21**

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

**PROVERBS 14:31**

## Discussion

1. How does God describe the brokenness of poverty?
2. What might the weight of poverty feel like based on these verses?
3. How does God relate to those in poverty? How is that different from society’s relationship to them?
4. How well has the modern Church related to those who live with few options?

5. How is it that those who are materially poor can be rich in faith?

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 Watch



VIDEO

“Who Are the Poor?”

Discussion

1. What are your initial impressions after watching the film?
2. What lack of options did you see? How did it make you feel?
3. How do you identify with the pain shown in the video?

4. What difference does trusting Jesus make to those in need?
  
5. What questions or concerns come to mind when you consider engaging with those living in poverty?
  
6. What advice did Charles Gilbert, the man under the bridge, offer about relating to those experiencing homelessness?
  
7. Andy Crouch said that he tries not to use the phrase, “the poor,” and instead asked us to view others as people who are coming out of a story of poverty and to see how God is working in their story. Why would that distinction be important?

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 Practice

**READ** Psalm 69:30–33, Psalm 35:10, Isaiah 26:5–6 and Deuteronomy 15:11

**PRAY** Ask God to show you His heart for those in poverty and to give you the same heart.

**JOURNAL** Take time to write down your observations from these scriptures.

**DO** Before the next module, talk with someone outside this group about what you are learning.