

STEPPING UP AND STEPPING OUT



LEARNING A NEW MINDSET ON BENEVOLENCE

OPENING QUESTION:

What does it mean to be “poor in the eyes of the world” according to James 2:5? Are we not all poor in that sense? Discuss.

MAIN POINTS:

Have people read the verses listed in the box to the right. Discuss: What does scripture say about our responsibility to the poor among us?

OLD TESTAMENT ON THE POOR

POINT: It is defensive on Gods part.

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow...

How does God defend the cause of the poor?

POINT: It is offensive on our part.

I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy...

What does it mean to be “open handed?”

POINT: It is extensive on the world’s part.

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them...

Why does our world seem to have so much poverty?

SESSION 2:

THE VIEW OF SCRIPTURE ON THE POOR

OLD TESTAMENT

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing”

(Deut. 10:18).

“If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs”

“There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land”

(Deut. 15:7-8, 11).

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

(Is. 58:6-7)

NEW TESTAMENT

“All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along” (Gal. 2:10).

“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:13).

“Listen, my dear brothers: 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).

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

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NEW TESTAMENT ON THE POOR

⇒ **Our Attitude:** What are our choices?

We should be eager to help the poor.

Read and discuss how we should have the mind of Christ (attitude) from Philippians 2:1-11.

⇒ **Our Attributes:** What is our mindset?

The poor are chosen by God for His Kingdom.

Read and discuss what our mindset should be from Ephesians 1:3-10. Compare with Phil. 2.

⇒ **Our Attention:** Where is our time?

Pure and faultless religion is looking after the poor.

Why does he mention looking after the poor before he mentions being unstained by the world?

Read and discuss what real religion is according to Galatians 2:19-21.

CLOSING:

After seeing how concerned God is for the poor, what are ways we can each *individually* show that same grace and truth to those in poverty? What about as a church?

Family Discussion/Question for the Road:

What are some ways you as a family can become more active in helping the poor? Brainstorm ways you could have a family service project, or visit the local Christian Service Center, Love and Care Ministries or other non-profits for ideas.

SESSION 2:

THE VIEW OF SCRIPTURE ON THE POOR

Personal Notes

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SESSION 2:

EXTRA MATERIAL

Here is some supplemental material on the view of scripture and the poor:

- [Becoming Whole](#), Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kopic
- [https://erlc.com/resource/what-does-the-bible-say-about-poverty/#:~:text=Anyone%20who%20lacks%20%E2%80%9Csufficient%20money,\(John%209%3A3\).](https://erlc.com/resource/what-does-the-bible-say-about-poverty/#:~:text=Anyone%20who%20lacks%20%E2%80%9Csufficient%20money,(John%209%3A3).)
- <https://www.compassion.com/poverty/what-the-bible-says-about-poverty.htm>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/feeding-the-hungry.html>
- <https://www3.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/Attitudes.html>
- <https://www.idlewildfoundation.com/resources-item/the-poor-will-always-be-with-you/>

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SESSION 2:

LIFE GROUPS

Discuss Matthew 6:1-4 and the verses below:

1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Our offerings and gifts are not for us or for our glory, they are to be designed and intended to bring glory to God (2 Corinthians 9:11). Any other gift is unworthy (2 Corinthians 9:7).

So, we must act. But as we do so, it must be with a pure heart.

We have all been given one or more spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11). But God calls upon believers to act out both in the area of their spiritual gift or gifts, but in other areas as well. For example, you may not have the spiritual gift of evangelism (1 Corinthians 4:11), but the lack of that gift does not relieve you of your duty to help fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Likewise, you may not have the spiritual gift of giving (Romans 12:8), but that does not mean you can ignore either giving to God or helping the poor (Luke 11:41).

Every man, woman and child has something to give, some way to serve or help. Even the poorest and most physically disabled can encourage through word if not deed. Some of us have wealth, some of us have talent (s) and skill(s), some of us have influence, some of us can serve with physical help, all of us have at least some time. What we have is a part of the wealth God has given us, even if it is as small as the wealth of the widow's offering (Luke 21:1-4). Of what we have, we have a God-given responsibility to do something. Doing nothing is not an option.

And with the investment you put in, you are “purchasing” an opportunity to share the reason for your offering. It is an offering to those in need and of praise to God, and it is an opportunity to share the love of God (1 Peter 4:10-11).

But, “I’m not wealthy, in fact, I am broke!” If not money, give your service, your talents, your skills, your expertise and your time. God has more opportunities for you to serve than you could ever imagine. Serve Him by the way you work and your attitude and enthusiasm at work (Colossians 3:23-24). Catch that part right at the end of Colossians 3:24, **“it is the Lord Christ you are serving.”**

How can we show grace and truth to those who are materially (and spiritually) poor as a life group?