

Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue; it is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.

Benjamin Franklin

Tell each other why you have chosen to take this course?

God loves the poor. He watches over them, protects them and deals harshly with those who would harm them.

Jesus was poor. As He traveled He relied on the compassion of others. Food and shelter were constant challenges throughout His ministry years. It is no wonder that when he sits on the throne in heaven he will look to us and say, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Jesus feels a brotherhood with the poor.

The character of God is compassion. Therefore the character of God's people should reflect that compassion. The question is, how does that compassion express itself effectively? The first thing is to develop an understanding of how God views the subject. Fortunately, God speaks often of the poor in scripture -- making His heart for them plain to see.

God cares for the poor because they touch His heart and because, often, no one else will.

PlayVideo - Lesson 1 "God's Heart for the Poor"

The Bartletts

In what way does society pre-judge families like the Bartletts? What labels are often applied to people in their situation?

How does God see this family? What is His first reaction to their circumstances?

god's heart for the poor

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 their people.

Psalm 113:5-8

I will praise God's name in song, and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs. The poor will see and be glad; and you who seek God, may your hearts live! The Lord hears the needy, and does not despise his captive people.

Psalm 69:30-33

My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, O Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them."

Psalm 35:10

Listen, my dear brothers: Has God not 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

What makes God's treatment of the poor different from that of society?

Give a modern example of a poor person sitting with princes.

Why would God be more pleased with praise and thanksgiving than with a bull or ox? Why would the poor be glad?

In what way does God protect the poor?

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What breaks the heart of the poor? Makes them captives? What are they prisoners of?

Do your answers to the above questions relate to your life in any way? If so, how?

What is God's reaction to those who mistreat the poor?

It what ways, has the Church failed or succeeded in ministering to the poor and their needs?

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners.

Isaiah 61:1

Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?" - skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat. The Lord has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done."

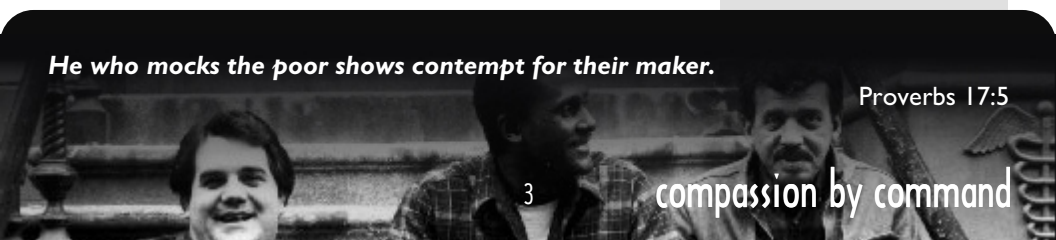
Amos 8:4-7

He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground, and casts it down to the dust. Feet trample it down - the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor.

Isaiah 26:5-6

He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their maker.

Proverbs 17:5



god's heart for the poor

God Bless the Child - (Play video segment #2)

Case Study (Johnsons as working poor)

1. What is your definition of the phrase, "the working poor"?
2. How do the Johnsons compare with your idea of the working poor?
3. What is the cause of the Johnsons' current situation? Why?
4. Where should the Johnsons turn for help?

Home Study

Read the account of the anointing of Jesus.
(Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8)

1. What priority does Christ give to the poor in these passages?
2. Was the reaction of the disciples justified in any way?
3. How does the statement, "The poor you will have with you always," line up to God's feelings for the poor?
4. In modern times does ministry to the poor become an excuse, as it did for Judas in John's account of this story?
5. Knowing God's desire to share the gospel with the poor, how do you interpret Jesus' words about Mary?

Task: Identify one key need of the poor in your neighborhood or community.