

video 3. God's mercy for those in poverty.

Poverty in a Western context is complex. Some would argue there's no real poverty in countries such as Britain. We are presented with stark images of those who deserve our help and those who do not. In a society where some are trapped in poverty through no fault of their own, but others fall into it through their bad decisions, are Christians supposed to be concerned for everyone who comes to them asking for help?

Most of us (if we're really honest with ourselves) will have a cut-off point for our compassion. It might be a group of people we dislike or don't understand. It could be those who are demanding or ungrateful. Perhaps it is the people we've helped time and time again, who keep making the same mistakes.

God is calling his people to be radical mercy-bringers. When deciding who to help, we are called not to look at the person in front of us, but to Jesus.

discussion questions.

- look at the list of people on the next page. Who would you help first? Who would you help last? Explain why.
- who do you struggle to show mercy to? E.g. a specific group of people, those who don't say "thank you", people who keep making the same mistakes...?
- are Christians supposed to help everyone who asks?
- practically speaking, what does it look like to show mercy to people? Give some examples of what might be merciful in one case but might not be in another.

spend some time praying for each other to have hearts that are increasingly merciful.

The Myth of the Undeserving Poor by Martin Charlesworth and Natalie Williams (2014) is available to purchase online.



Bible and prayer plan.

day fifteen.

Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35

Pray for those who are trapped in slavery, sick, stressed.

day sixteen.

Galatians 2:7-10 and 6:9-10

Pray for those who are tired, trafficked, struggling with temptation.

day seventeen.

1 Thess. 5:15-19; 2 Thess. 3:13

Pray for those who are unborn, unemployed, struggling with Universal Credit.

day eighteen.

Titus 3:1-14

Pray for volunteers in social action projects, voiceless, living with someone violent.

day nineteen.

James 2:5 and 2:13-18

Pray for those who are worried, wearied, without hope.

day twenty.

1 Peter 2:9-12 and 1 John 3:13-18

Pray for youth who should have been sitting exams this year.

day twenty-one.

Revelation 21:1-4

Pray for yourself.

social action course.

Jubilee+

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exercise for discussion.

imagine you come across the following people in the next week, each of them asking you for help.

Who would you help first? Who would you help last?

Can you rank the people below from first (1) to last (10)?

As you do this exercise, pay attention to your thought processes and how you make your choices... *

- a widowed mother of three.
- a homeless person begging for change on the streets.
- a homeless person begging for change on the streets while sipping from a can of lager + feeding his/her dog.
- an asylum seeker fleeing persecution.
- an economic migrant who has legally moved to your country for work, better healthcare and a better chance of financial support.
- an illegal immigrant who has travelled to your country to provide a better life for his wife and small children.
- an unemployed woman who has nine children and another one on the way.
- a person who was made redundant after 10 years in the same job and has now applied for 200 jobs with no joy.
- someone who is on Universal Credit and a mistake made by the JobCentre staff to their claim has meant they have now gone 10 weeks without benefits.
- someone who is on Universal Credit but has been sanctioned because they didn't turn up to two appointments with their work coach.

further reading.

a call to act.

Martin Charlesworth
+ Natalie Williams

(Out on 1 September 2020.
Available to pre-order.)

a church for the poor.

Martin Charlesworth
+ Natalie Williams

the myth of the undeserving poor.

Martin Charlesworth
+ Natalie Williams

a deepening crisis?

See the Jubilee+ website:
<https://jubilee-plus.org/docs/A-Deepening-Crisis.pdf>

generous justice.

Tim Keller

ministries of mercy.

Tim Keller

unreached.

Tim Chester

we need to talk about race.

Ben Lindsay

the jubilee gospel.

Kim Tan

global humility.

Andy McCullough

poverty safari.

Darren McGarvey

(This is a secular book.)

*There isn't a 'right' answer. This exercise is supposed to be difficult. It's about our heart attitudes and thinking.



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