



Study Guide for Untouchables Poverty

November 1, 2009

Open Up

- 1) One way to understand how poverty is “invisible” or “untouchable” is to ask your group to list some movies or TV shows that include characters who are poor. How does this compare with shows and movies about the middle or upper classes? OPTIONAL: For the shows that do include characters who are poor, what other cultural factors are often linked with poverty?
- 2) Ask your group, “Do you think poverty is an untouchable issue that Christians avoid discussing?” Why do Christians find it awkward to discuss? What are our fears about it? TRANSITION: No matter what our personal feelings about poverty, or our political views on the issues linked with poverty, in this study time, we will try to learn more of what God says about the poor.

Dig In

- 1) Read Luke 4:16-21. Jesus fulfilled God’s commission to bring good news to the poor and society’s other untouchables. Ask your group to recount some examples of how Jesus touched the poor. If you need some examples to start the discussion, check Mark 10:17-27; Mark 12:38-44; Luke 12:31-34; Luke 14:7-14; Luke 19:1-10. BACKGROUND: Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61:1-8. What additional promises does God make to His people if they are faithful to His commands?
- 2) Read Isaiah 58:2-10. God spoke through Isaiah to a society that followed religious rituals, but ignored compassion and practical charity. What connection does Isaiah make between helping the poor and receiving God’s blessing? How do these words relate to our own society and church?
- 3) Read Matthew 25:31-46. Bible experts differ about some of the interpretation details of these verses, but no matter what opinion a reader might have about the specifics, Jesus certainly calls people to help others for His sake. Ask group members to share examples of ways the church has touched the “least of these.”

Work On

Download the next-step opportunities list from <http://alexlozada.wordpress.com> (message resources for “Untouchables: Poverty”). Either choose one opportunity to take on as a group OR let each member choose the opportunity that fits his / her interest OR consider other helping opportunities that aren’t on the list.

Lift Up

Use the printed opportunity list to guide your prayers for a project your group did NOT choose. Ask someone (or allow several people) in your group to pray aloud for God to raise up others at Mountain to meet these important needs.

Another Step – Advanced Study

Read James 2:5-8 and Ephesians 2:8-10. Discuss the BALANCE between trusting in God’s grace instead of our human achievements AND working with diligence and without bias in helping the poor. What does James say about our attitude towards the poor?