

Week one

What is poverty (and where is God)?

► Getting started

We are going to spend six weeks exploring what the Bible says about poverty, but what do we mean by poverty?

Poverty is ...

■ Bible reading: Psalm 10

|| Discussion questions

1. Which, if any, of the psalmist's feelings can you identify with when faced with global poverty?
2. What images does the psalmist use to describe how people are trapped by their circumstances (v.2, 8-9)?
3. The 'fatherless' (v.14,18) are especially commended for help in the Bible. Are there other groups that might be affected by poverty in a similar way today?
4. Read **Annie's story** (inside back cover). How does this show a contemporary 'poverty trap'? How easy is it for Annie to break out of poverty and what prevents her from doing so? Look back at your definitions of poverty – which apply to Annie's situation?
5. Poverty can be measured in different ways. Compare **'What is poverty?'** (p.14) with your group's definitions. Do your definitions correspond to these three categories?
The UK is 15th in the Human Development Index, Malawi is 165th – does this mean there is no poverty in the UK or that everyone in Malawi is poor?
6. Which characteristics of God does this psalm illustrate and how might these be reassuring to the oppressed and the fatherless?
7. Read James 1:27. Whose role is it to see and respond to the plight of the fatherless?

8. In the light of both passages, why should Christians respond to the needs of the poor?
9. 'Breaking the arm of the wicked' (v.15) can mean breaking the power of the situations that keep people in poverty. How could Christians help to 'break the arm' of the poverty that affects people like Annie? Find out next week how MRDF partners are helping Annie.

Activity

Write a prayer, poem or psalm, adapting Psalm 10 to respond to poverty in your own community or across the world. Use the space below to write your ideas.

† Closing prayer

"Christ has no body on earth but ours; no feet but ours; ours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out to the world; ours are the feet through which he is to go about doing good; ours are the hands through which he is to bless us now." *Based on the words of St. Theresa of Avila*

Eternal God who sees all,
Fill our bodies, minds and souls this week
so that whatever we see, wherever we walk, whoever we touch
can be filled with your blessing. Amen.

◆ This week

Stick one of the 'poverty is ...' post-its in this study guide or in your Bible and pray during the week for people affected by poverty in this way.