

**Thank you for previewing a *youthministry360* Leader/Student Guide. We're pumped you're considering purchasing a ym360 Bible Study resource.**

**We put a lot of intentionality into the content and the layout of our lesson plans. This short intro will help you know what to look for as you evaluate this preview.**

### *Looking At Your ym360 Leader Guide*

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This Leader Guide combines deep, meaningful Bible study with relevant, creative activities. You'll find all our lessons plans both easy to follow and easy to teach.

**Each ym360 Leader Guide is broken down into the following sections:**

- **Teacher Prep Videos**—Short, straightforward videos designed to help you prepare to teach the lesson
- **Bible Background**—A one page, easy to digest snapshot of the specific passage's context and main biblical truth. Use this to help prepare to teach your lesson.
- **The Lead In**—An interactive, thematic intro to the lesson
- **The Main Event**—An intense, deep time of Biblical study designed to drive home the lesson's truth
- **Bonus Round**—An optional activity that goes deeper into the lesson's biblical theme
- **The Last Word**—A final activity allowing you to really hone-in on the lesson's application

**Additionally, every ym360 Bible Study resource features a student component.** This lesson features a Student Guide that corresponds with an activity in the Leaders Guide.

**If you have any questions about your Leader Guide/Student Guide preview PDF, please do not hesitate to email ([feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com)) or call us (888.96.ym360).**

# THE LEAST OF THESE Lesson 1: So Many, So Little

**Objective:** The point of the lesson is that your students understand why poverty exists and also begin to increase their awareness of it in their communities and in the world.

**Focus Scripture:** Genesis 1:27-30; Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 1:28-32

**Overview:** Why does poverty exist? Believe it or not, even though these three passages don't mention the word poverty even once, they make the case perfectly. Look closely in Genesis 1. What do you see? In this passage, we see God's original creative intent. Man and woman living in harmony with God in the Garden with all of their needs provided for. Then what happened? Sin happened. And in the passage from Romans 1, we see sin's effect. By the time Paul was writing, the world had gone from perfection in Eden to imperfection. Sin corrupted God's plan, and all sorts of evil emerged as a result. While poverty has many causes (individual greed, corruption of governments, inability to earn a wage, and so on), its existence can be explained by sin's effect on God's creation.

## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

*Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *The Least of These* Lesson One Teacher Prep Video, click on the URL below and view the video entitled "The Least of These Lesson 1: So Many, So Little."

- [www.youthministry360.com/the-least-of-these-prep-videos](http://www.youthministry360.com/the-least-of-these-prep-videos)

## Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

### The Details

#### Who wrote the Books of Genesis and Romans?

While there's no specific author named within the text, the traditional authorship of Genesis (as well as the rest of the Pentateuch) is attributed to Moses. The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans as a letter to the Christ-followers in Rome.

#### When was it written?

Put simply, it's hard to know exactly when Genesis was written. There are two different arguments for the date of the actual Exodus of the Jewish people from Israel, an earlier date (around mid 1400s B.C.) and a later date (around the mid 1200s B.C.). The writing of Genesis would fall sometime around these general dates.

The widely accepted date for Romans is sometime during Paul's third missionary journey, probably in 57 A.D.

#### What was the purpose for its writing?

##### GENESIS

Our English title for the Book of Genesis actually comes from the Greek translation of the Pentateuch. The Greek word for *Genesis* means "origins." The Hebrew title is derived from the first phrase in the book, "in the beginning." So Genesis is a book of origins, or beginnings. Genesis tells the story of the beginning of creation, humankind, and God's people.

##### ROMANS

Paul was writing to address the issues that would no doubt come up in a Church made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Paul addressed big-picture issues such as whether or not the Law could save a person, what the implications of God making salvation available to the Gentiles was for the Jews, and how Christ-followers were to handle such delicate issues as observing Jewish dietary restrictions based in the Law.

### The Main Point

#### GENESIS 1:29-30

For the purpose of this lesson on why poverty exists, the main point of Genesis 1:27-30 is verses 29-30. Here we see God with a blank slate. He had just created the world, humankind, the animals, the plants . . . everything. So it's a great opportunity for

## THE LEAST OF THESE : Lesson 1

# >> SO MANY, SO LITTLE

us to look and see what God originally intended. When God originally crafted the order of the world before sin corrupted it, what did it look like? How did things function? In verses 29-30, we see a glimpse of God's provision for His creation.

In these verses, God gave Adam and Eve "every seed-bearing plant" and "all the beasts of the earth" for their sustenance and provision. Adam and Eve were perfectly provided for. In a world before sin, God had a plan that accounted for all the needs of His children. There was no hunger, no need, and no want.

### GENESIS 3:17-19

While the entire curse is a heart-wrenching and invaluable study on the results of sin, for the purposes of this lesson, God's words to Adam in verses 17-19 are the main focus. Look at the difference between how Genesis 1:27-31 and Genesis 3:17-19 describe how humans will gain their provision. The contrast is stark.

In Genesis 1, God provided a seemingly effortless and full provision for His children. In Genesis 3, we see "the ground" cursed because of Adam's sin; we see that Adam would eat of it by "painful toil"; we see the harvest of the ground thwarted and frustrated by "thorns and thistles." Sin corrupted God's original plan for perfect provision.

Again, the word *poverty* does not appear in these verses. But they paint an all-too-clear picture of a world where suffering and fruitless labor had entered the picture. Poverty and suffering were never a part of God's plan. They are a result of sin.

### ROMANS 1:28-32

This passage from Romans serves in this lesson as a snapshot of the world of sin compared to the tranquility of Eden. Paul's words in verses 28-29 are our main focus.

Here we see people were completely indulging their sin. And what was the result? Depravity. Evil. Greed. Envy. Murder. Strife. Deceit. And malice. When you consider the societal causes of widespread, systemic poverty, many of them can be found (in some form) in Paul's words. The world functions in many ways out of its sin. There's so much darkness, so much suffering, and so much poverty.

## Wrap Up

Looking at these three passages, we can see that God's original intent had no place for poverty or suffering. These terrible elements entered the world because of the sinfulness of humankind. As we'll see moving through the four lessons of *The Least of These*, God has not turned a blind eye toward those who suffer. Although poverty exists in this world because of sin, God has a response—a powerful, perfect, and compassionate response.

## Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: *The Build Up*, which is a creative, interactive activity that introduces the theme of the lesson; *The Focus*, which is the heart of the lesson and contains the Bible Study section; and *The Payoff* which focuses on driving home the application of the lesson's biblical truth.

### The Build Up

**Title:** The Least of These (Intro)

**Goal:** The idea is to introduce the main points of the next four lessons and get your students thinking about the issue of poverty.

**Set Up:** You'll need the *The Least of These Media Disc* and a way to show the Lesson One Video, such as a DVD player. Or if you prefer to drop the video into your presentation software, open the media disc on your computer, download the .MOV or .MPEG file, and drop it into a slide.

**FIRST** >> remind students that they're beginning a four-lesson study on poverty entitled The Least of These. Explain to your students that they're going to watch a video that introduces some stats on poverty and introduces the main points of the next four lessons.

**NEXT** >> show the video.

# THE LEAST OF THESE : Lesson 1

## >> SO MANY, SO LITTLE

**THEN** > repeat the following statistics from the video, making sure your students caught them. (If you want to use them, a few more statistics have been added to really get your students' attention. The statistics are provided on the "So Many, So Little" slide show using PowerPoint as well.):

- More than 1 billion people in the world live on less than one dollar a day.
- More than 25,000 children die from preventable causes each day.
- One out of seven people in the world struggle with hunger each day.
- Nearly 1 billion people in the world are illiterate.
- One billion people in the world don't have access to safe water. Two and a half billion lack basic sanitation.

Ask your students if these stats get their attention. Explain that poverty is a huge issue. Poverty's impact on people is extremely damaging. Poverty takes an unusually heavy toll on society's most weak: children and the elderly. And it's not just something that happens in developing nations; there are people in students' community, even in their schools, who are not sure if they will go to bed hungry tonight or not. Poverty is an issue that affects people all over the world.

**FINALLY** > encourage your students with the news that this will be a great four lessons where they will learn all about why poverty exists, what God is doing about poverty, and what their role is in His plan.

### The Focus

**Title:** So Many, So Little

**Goal:** The idea is for your students to begin to grasp the theological reasons why poverty exists.

**Set-Up:** Provide your students with Student Guides and something to write with. If you wish, arrange to show the PowerPoint slideshow. The slideshow corresponds with some of the questions, but it's intentionally sparse so that you can customize it based on how you choose to teach the lesson.

**FIRST** > explain to your students that the question of why poverty exists is a very important one. For many people poverty and suffering are the major reasons they choose not to believe in God. "Why would God allow poverty?" they ask. Explain that it's important to know how to answer this question.

**NEXT** > explain that they'll be looking at three different passages. Explain that they'll be taking a big-picture view of Scripture and using these three passages to understand God's original plan for humans and what sin did to that plan.

**THEN** > instruct students to turn to Genesis 1:27-30. Explain to them that they're about to see a snapshot of what's called "God's creative intent." Explain that the phrase God's creative intent is simply a fancy way of talking about what the world was like before sin entered it. Call on a volunteer to read the passage.

**NEXT** > when the volunteer has finished, direct students' attention to the first section on their Student Guide entitled "The Way It Was Before Sin." Explain that you're going to start by asking students to call out any words or phrases that describe the way things were before sin. Allow students to come up with their own responses before leading them in a short discussion. (If you choose, have them write the answers in the space provided.)

- **What does verse 28 say about the order of things? What was Adam and Eve's role in relation to the earth and the things in it?**
  - o *Answer:* They were to subdue the earth and rule over it. We tend to think negatively when we hear the words subdue and rule. There's no negative connotation here. It was simply God's way of creating an order where Adam and Eve could live in harmony with the earth. In a sense, the earth and the things in it would serve them.
- **What does verse 29 say about how God was providing for Adam and Eve?**
  - o *Answer:* God had a plan in place to perfectly provide food for Adam and Eve. They would not be in need. They would have all they needed in abundance.

Explain that students need to remember these concepts as you move on.

**NEXT** > instruct students to look over to Genesis 3:17-19. Explain that this package picks up immediately after Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating from the one tree in the Garden from which He instructed them not to eat. Call on a volunteer to read the passage.

**THEN** > when the volunteer has finished, direct students' attention to the section on their Student Guide entitled "The Way It Is After Sin." Have students call out any words or phrases from God's words to Adam that suggest a change from the way

## THE LEAST OF THESE : Lesson 1

# >> SO MANY, SO LITTLE

things were before sin. Have them refer back to their notes from earlier to help with the comparison. Allow students to come up with their own responses before leading them in a short discussion. (If you choose, have them write the answers in the space provided.)

- **In Genesis 1:29, we saw God freely providing food for Adam and Eve. How do verses 17 and 18 say it was going to be provided?**
  - *Answer:* Through painful labor! Gone were the days when God provided freely. Now, humans would have to work hard to produce their food.
- **How do these verses contrast with the description of the relationship between the earth and Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28?**
  - *Answer:* The earth was cursed! It would produce thorns. This was a far cry from Genesis 1:28, where Adam and Eve ruled over the earth and subdued it. Sin ruined the order of things!

**NEXT** >> remind students about the purpose of this lesson: to examine why poverty exists. Ask students where these verses mention poverty. The answer, of course, is that they don't. But what these verses do, from a big-picture perspective, is show that before sin the idea of poverty or people being in need wasn't in God's plan. But once sin entered the world, the order of things was turned upside down. Instead of being freely provided for by God in abundance, as a result of sin humans were forced to provide for themselves. Sin separated us from God, and robbed us of being perfectly cared for in relationship with Him.

**THEN** >> explain that they'll look at one more passage that will put everything in perspective. Instruct students to turn to Romans 1:28-32. Explain that they're going to be looking at a letter Paul wrote to the Christ-followers in Rome. Here, he was describing what it looked like when people were given over to their sin. Read the passage aloud as your students follow along. When you've finished, have students come up with words or phrases that describe sinful people. (There will be no shortage here!) Then, wrap up the study with the following few questions:

- **Wow. Describe the difference between what life must have been like in Eden before sin and how Paul paints life here after sin.**
  - *Answer:* Answers will vary, but the difference between the two is intense.
- **Is this a picture of the way God intended things to be?**
  - *Answer:* No.

**FINALLY** >> close the activity by explaining that while these verses don't mention poverty by name, they allude to many of the causes of poverty. Explain that there are many, many causes for poverty, including corrupt governments, broken social systems, people's own sinful choices (such as addiction or crime), and people oppressing others. All of these things are different, but they're related by one thing: sin. Sin is at the root of all poverty. Why? Because in God's original plan, there was no need. God provided lovingly for His people. Sin changed that. And Paul says that as a result of sin, greed and all kinds of evil have taken over human hearts.

Explain that in God's original creative intent, poverty was nowhere to be found. But the sin of humankind brought suffering, need, and poverty into the world.

Why does poverty exist? Because of sin in the world.

### The Pay-Off

**Title:** Sight Unseen

**Goal:** The idea is to help demonstrate that just because your students don't see poverty, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

**Set Up:** You will need a table or some other surface to place pictures down upon. Open *The Least of These Lesson Disc* on your computer and download the "Sight Unseen" PDF located in the Lesson 1 Folder. Print one copy. The PDF is set up to print in color. If you don't want to print in color, choose the grayscale option in your print window.

**FIRST** >> show the picture of the young girl standing in the door. Explain to your class that this young girl could live anywhere in the world. She could live in Kenya, South America, or the U.S. She's the face of poverty. She might get one meal a day if she's lucky. She probably only has one parent living with her. She probably has very little chance on her own, due to her education level and lack of opportunities, to break out of the cycle of poverty her family has been in for generations. She's a real person with real needs.

**THEN** >> place her picture face up on a table or other surface.

## THE LEAST OF THESE : Lesson 1

# >> SO MANY, SO LITTLE

**NEXT** >> display the picture of the house. Ask students, in their minds, what this picture might represent. They might say stable families, the American dream, or just a place to live. Explain that unlike many of the poorest people in the world, the vast majority of your students and their friends don't have to truly worry about shelter. Explain that while they might not all live in mansions, they all have roofs over their heads. And so they don't worry about shelter. As you say this, make a point of putting the picture of the house directly on top of the picture of the girl.

**THEN** >> display the picture of the grocery store. Ask students to share what this picture might represent. They might say food, or an excess of food. Explain that unlike the billions of people in the world who don't have enough food each day, we go to grocery stores where we choose precisely what we want to eat and refuse to buy what we don't like. And so we don't worry about food. As you say this, make a point of putting the picture of the grocery store directly on top of the picture of the house.

**NEXT** >> show the picture of the iPod® in the blue jean pocket. Ask students to name what this might represent. They might say clothes, music, entertainment, and so on. Explain that most of us have clothes that are clean and protect us from the elements. Many of us spend thousands of dollars a year on clothes. Most of us have cell phones and other electronics. So we don't worry about what we'll wear. We're pretty entertained, too. So that keeps our attention. As you say this, make a point of putting the picture of the jeans/iPod directly on top of the picture of the supermarket.

Hold up the stack of photos so the class can see it. Explain that with all that we have in our lives—all the excess, all the comforts—we lose sight of people in poverty. Explain that whether we see them or not, they're still there. As you say this, peel away the picture of the jeans/iPod, the supermarket, and the house to reveal the picture of the young girl.

**FINALLY** >> explain to students that this lesson is an introductory one. The takeaway was for them to understand why poverty exists and to become more aware of the poverty around them and in the world. Challenge them to remember this object lesson as they go through their week. Just because they can't see poverty, that doesn't mean it isn't all around them. Encourage them to get ready for the next lesson that's all about God's response to poverty.

Explain to students that you'll be posting *The Least of These* digi-posters to encourage conversation between lessons. Decide ahead of time how you'll post these—whether through email, Facebook message, Facebook group page, or through your youth group's website. Challenge students to check in, read and think about the content and to interact with it (if there's a method for interaction, such as a Facebook wall, comment section on a blog, and so on).

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

Do you have questions about a lesson?

Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

**We value your feedback!** Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).

THE LEAST OF THESE

# >> SO MANY, SO LITTLE

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:** GENESIS 1:27-30; GENESIS 3:17-19; ROMANS 1:28-32

## **THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE SIN**

*Read Genesis 1:27-30*

- Write any words or phrases that describe the way things were like before sin.

## **THE WAY IT IS AFTER SIN**

*Read Genesis 3:17-19*

- Write any words or phrases that describe the way things were like after sin.

*Read Romans 1:28-32*

- How does Paul's description of the world after sin compare to the world in Eden before sin?