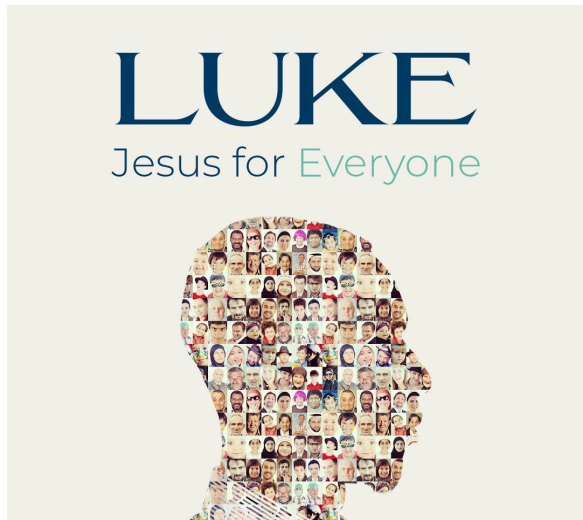


# LUKE: WORSHIP FOR EVERYONE

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## Luke 21:1-4

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; <sup>2</sup>he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. <sup>3</sup>He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; <sup>4</sup>for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

## James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

## REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Jesus lifted up unexpected people as paragons and exemplars of faith: the Samaritan from the famous parable (Luke 10), Mary the disciple (Luke 11), and now this poor widow (Luke 21). Why do you think Jesus does this?
3. While Jesus is lifting up the example of the poor widow in her sacrificial generosity, he is also, quite cleverly, exposing a system in which a widow has nothing left to live on. It was the job of the religious establishment not to *extract* but to *provide* for widows (as James describes it: "care for the orphans and widows"). Have you observed or experienced modern-day religious exploitation? How does it work today?
4. First-century religion and 21st-century church life exist in very different contexts. Even so, focusing on and caring for vulnerable and

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impoverished people —such as orphans and widows of the ancient world — can grow, deepen, and enliven one's faith. Who are the vulnerable and impoverished people that you have a heart to empower and uplift?

5. What do you think it means to be “unstained by the world”? How do you seek to do this in your faith life?
6. The epistle of James has an emphasis on active faith. Prayers, beliefs, and songs are empty without a life of practical and everyday impact.
  - a. Why do you think it's so easy, convenient, and common to reduce faith to a set of beliefs or ideas?
  - b. How do you strive to put your faith into action?
  - c. In what ways does putting your faith into action *in concert with a church family* make a difference?
7. Sometimes people refer to singing, hymnody, and praise songs as “worship.” Another way to understand worship is everything that takes place during a worship service:

praying, singing, communion, preaching, etc. Another way to understand worship is the way you go about *everything you do*—namely, in love and glorification of God.

Why might this last definition be more liberating *and* more challenging? What else might we be tempted to worship in our everyday lives—while we are shopping, working, eating, playing, or relaxing? What would it mean to “worship God” in those contexts, too?