

# Book of the Week: Small Group Guide

Week 4: Amos

June 28, 2026

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**Icebreaker Question:** When in your life have you become newly aware that someone around you had far less than you—and how did that experience affect you?

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## Key Sermon Takeaways

1. **God is protective of the poor and needy** - This theme appears in 2,000-3,000 verses throughout Scripture
  2. **Everyone answers to God for their actions** - God is impartial and doesn't care about our status, wealth, or political affiliation
  3. **Affluence without compassion brings judgment** - Material blessing carries responsibility
  4. **The theme of Amos:** God's impartial response to our treatment of the poor
  5. **Integrity is measured by activity, not intent** - Good intentions aren't enough; God looks for action
  6. **Worship outside validates worship inside** - How we treat others reflects the authenticity of our worship
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **Historical Context:** Amos prophesied around 750 BC, 30 years before Israel's fall to Assyria. Why do you think God gave them this warning with a window of opportunity to change?
2. **The "Bullseye" Pattern:** In chapters 1-2, Amos condemns surrounding nations before focusing on Israel. What does this literary approach reveal about God's perspective on Israel's sin?
3. **"For a pair of sandals":** What does this phrase tell us about the level of injustice in Israel? Can you think of modern equivalents?

### Personal Reflection

4. **Uncomfortable Truth:** The pastor noted that the average American has a better standard of living than 85-90% of the world. How does this reality challenge or convict you personally?
5. **Amos 5:21-24:** God says He despises Israel's worship because of their treatment of the poor. How does this passage challenge your understanding of what constitutes acceptable worship?

6. **Callousness Check:** The sermon mentioned the risk of becoming callous after being taken advantage of. Have you ever experienced this? How did you (or how can you) guard your heart against becoming hardened?
7. **Intent vs. Action:** Where do you see a gap between your good intentions toward helping those in need and your actual actions? What prevents you from closing that gap?

### **Application & Action**

8. **The "Ani" Category:** The Hebrew word for "poor" (ani) includes the economically disadvantaged, disabled, elderly, children, single women, and those with medical conditions. Who in your sphere of influence fits into one of these categories? How might God be calling you to respond?
9. **Worship Connection:** The sermon stated, "Worship outside the church validates worship within the church." What would it look like for you to worship God through caring for those in need this week?
10. **Risk and Stewardship:** The pastor shared a story about choosing to help despite the risk of being taken advantage of. How do you balance wise stewardship with generous compassion? Where should Christians land on this tension?
11. **Complexity as Excuse:** The sermon suggested that the complexity of poverty issues in our culture can lead to complacency. Do you agree? How can we avoid using complexity as an excuse for inaction?

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### **Closing Prayer**

Pray together:

- For soft hearts toward those in need
  - For wisdom to act, not just intend
  - For opportunities to serve
  - For protection against callousness
  - For gratitude for God's mercy toward us
  - For specific people or situations that came up in discussion
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