

Case Studies

A. Henry, 41 years old, trash collector

Every morning, you are up incredibly early, riding on the back of a garbage truck. Even when it's raining, sleeting, windy, or bitterly cold, you still take your position on the back of that truck. The weather is only one of the challenges of your work. Though your job pays better than some, it also takes a serious physical toll. Depending on what route you're on, you sometimes run ten or fifteen miles behind the truck by the time the day is over. You're also lifting cans full of trash that weigh up to 100 pounds. To say nothing of what is *in* those cans sometimes—discarded needles, broken glass, dead animals—you name it. People put everything in their trash cans.

Your job is hard, but what makes it harder is that you sometimes feel embarrassed about telling people what you do for a living. There's always the inevitable joke about personal odors. Or people just avert their eyes and change the subject. Although many people depend upon your work, you don't often feel like your work is respected.

B. Denise, 20, fast food worker

You've been flipping burgers for about two years. At the end of high school, you thought you might try taking some classes at the community college, and maybe even one day be a teacher. But your family doesn't have much money, so a job had to come first. Fast food wasn't your top choice, but after a few weeks of searching and bills coming due on your apartment and electric, you needed to find something. So here you are. It's usually not difficult work. Actually, that's part of the problem. You've learned all you can about flipping burgers and pulling fries out of the fryer. There's not much of a ladder to climb in this job. Plus, the perks of free fries and chicken nuggets only go so far. It's been really hard for you to avoid putting on weight when you're working the late shift and eating at least two of your meals at work.

You're glad you have a job, but it's still really hard to make ends meet. You get minimum wage, and most months there's a bill that you're late on or can't pay. Thinking about college or getting a car is out of the question. At this point, you're not very happy, but it's just hard to imagine anything else for your life.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- » How might God be seeking to bring good news to the lives of each of these persons?
- » What would it look like for each of these people to not only receive, but *testify* to the good news of Jesus?
- » Would we take their testimonies seriously? If not, how can we become more open to receiving God's good news from very ordinary people?
- » How might we be called to help others experience good news?