

# WHERE RICH AND POOR COLLIDE: THE GOSPEL AND POVERTY

## HOT TOPIC: POVERTY

JUNE 1, 2025

### LESSON ONE: THE WEALTHY ARISTOCRACY -THE CONVINCING REALITY

(Luke 10; Eph. 2:4-7; Prov. 21:13; 28:27)

**INTRODUCTION:** The Book of Luke gives a summary of all God's Commandments to His people: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." **"Love Your Neighbor as Yourself"** - is a core principle in many religious and ethical traditions, urging individuals to extend the same level of compassion, kindness, and respect to others that they desire for themselves. We have insulated and isolated ourselves from the massive material poverty that surrounds us. We have filled our lives and our churches with more comforts for us, all while turning a blind eye and a deaf ear of hopeless poverty of others. We have a gaping hole in the way we see the world, and we need a new sight. We need our eyes opened to the Gospel for how we live.

### THE WEALTHY ARISTOCRACY – THE CONVINCING REALITY

We need to start by seeing how rich we are. First and foremost, we are spiritually rich, for all who have turned from their sin and trusted in Christ - have been raised to new life. Without question, our greatest wealth is found in the Gospel itself, for God has saved us from our sins, and has given us new life with Him.

The command of Christ to *love our neighbors as ourselves* surely includes care not just for the believing poor, but also for the unbelieving poor. If the love of God is in our hearts, then it is not possible for us to ignore the poor. For if we don't act in this way, then it may become clear that we were never Christians in the first place. Yet, conviction from God's Spirit can drive you back to God's Word, where you will begin seeing God's heart for the poor.

- **James 2: 14-17** - James is addressing the idea that simply believing in God isn't enough to demonstrate a genuine faith. He's arguing that true faith should manifest in actions, not just words.
- **1 John 3:16-18 – TEST OF LOVE:** If we have worldly possessions and see a brother or sister in need, but fail to have compassion and help them, it's an indication that we lack the love of God.
- **Matt. 7:16-** Jesus is teaching His followers to use discernment and critical judgment to identify genuine faith and truth from deception.
- **2 Cor. 8:9** – This refers to Christ's Divine nature and His wealth, not just financial riches.

**JUNE 11, 2025**

**LESSON TWO:**            **FREE TO WORK AND “WANT TO”**

(Eph. 2:8-10; 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:11; Gal. 5:6)

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Bible talks about **work** in terms of actions fueled by faith to bring glory to God, and the Bible celebrates this kind of **work**. The Book of James talks about this kind of **work** when he speaks of loving the needy, showing mercy to the poor, and caring for the suffering. Paul speaks of “**work produced by Faith,**” and “**faith working through love.**” Paul says, “We are God’s Workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” God created us for good works! If you are a follower of Christ, then you are free to rest in His finished work on your behalf, and at the same time, you are free to do good work according to His Will.

The “**Want To**” is especially significant because it became clear or fixed to Christians’ motivation to care for the poor. Christians in our culture shouldn’t care for the poor merely because we’re constrained by a low-grade sense of guilt. Instead, real authentic, sustainable care for the poor will only happen when any low-grade sense of guilt is conquered by a high-grade sense of the Gospel.

- **Exod. 34:6 -Describes God’s character, proclaiming Him as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in love and faithfulness.**
- **1 Sam. 2:8 – States that He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap...** In essence, it highlights God’s Power to lift the downtrodden and elevate them.
- **Ps 146:7 – [The Lord] “upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.” Which emphasizes God’s commitment to justice for those who are unfairly treated and provides for those who are in need.**
- **1 Sam. 25:4 -This verse praises God for being a source of support and protection for those in need, particularly during times of hardship and oppression.**
- **Luke 4:18 – These characteristics of God are ultimately revealed in Christ, who came “to proclaim good news to the poor” and “to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”**

As people whom Christ has cared for sacrificially in our poverty; aren’t we compelled to care for others selflessly in their poverty? One of the primary ways we help the poor is through diligent **work**. Jesus promised eternal blessings for those who care for the homeless and destitute. “**IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.**” Acts 20:35

**JUNE 15, 2025**

**LESSON THREE: WORK DILIGENTLY AND LIVE SIMPLY**

(Gen. 2:15; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Mark10:23; 2 Cor. 9:11)

**INTRODUCTION:** The gospel compels us to work diligently. When He created man, He “put him in the Garden of Eden to work it.” This was before sin entered into the world; and when we realized work is a good gift of God’s Grace. The Bible doesn’t view work as a necessary evil, and something we must endure to make money, but is a mark of human dignity, a fundamental part of God’s Plan for people to steward the creation entrusted to them, and to develop the culture around them for the common good. We are contributing to our culture in a way that serves people, and honors God by producing goods and services through all our jobs. All sorts of human work are significant, designed by God for the good of the world.

**WORK DILIGENTLY AND LIVE SIMPLY**

Work is one of the most obvious, but often overlooked, ways we provide for the poor. By working daily, we are lending our help to the development of a society that can sustain human life. God commands the rich on earth to store up treasure in eternity. “What matters most is not how much money you earn, but what you do with what you earn.” The Gospel compels us to be countercultural in the way we work. We live in a culture that doesn’t view work as God’s good gift.

The Gospel also compels us to Live Simply, just as we are compelled to work diligently. Paul says, “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. “For the *love of money* is the root of all kinds of evils...” Jesus himself says “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” Paul says, in 2 Cor. that God provides enough for us and excess for others. A simple life prioritizes necessities, minimizes luxuries, and give our excess to others. We can live simply by drawing the line of “enough.” This is a constant challenge. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only weapon to win this war.

- **Prov. 10:4 – Means that laziness leads to poverty, while hard work and diligence bring wealth.**
- **Col 3:23-24 – Instructs believers to work diligently and wholeheartedly, not just for their earthly masters, but for the Lord. It emphasizes that their actions are a form of service to Christ; knowing they will receive an inheritance from Him as a reward.**
- **1 Tim 6:6-7 – True gain in life comes from godliness with contentment, rather than from accumulating wealth.**
- **Luke 12:15 – True wealth and happiness don’t come from accumulating possessions, but from a relationship with God and a life lived according to His principles.**

**JUNE 22, 2025**

**LESSON FOUR: GIVE SACRIFICIALLY AND HELP CONSTRUCTIVELY**

(2 Cor 8-; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 6:38)

**INTRODUCTION:** In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul uses the example of the churches in Macedonia, who in a severe test of affliction and extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity, by giving to starving saints in Jerusalem. They gave beyond their means. Even as we give sacrificially, we want to be careful to help constructively. We must be careful in our giving to the poor to do so in a way that is good for them and for us.

**GIVE SACRIFICIALLY and HELP CONSTRUCTIVELY**

There is a clear pattern of giving in the New Testament Church which is a far cry from our contemporary churches today. What would it look like for us to give with an eagerness and an enthusiasm insisting on the opportunity to truly sacrifice to our impoverished brothers and sisters around the world? Not to just give in a way that is comfortable to us, but to give in a way that really costs us. Many people protest that we have a primary responsibility to care for people in our own families, and our local churches. Without question this is biblically true for if we don't care for the people of our own households, we are worse than unbelievers. I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give, but we can all give something.

The worst thing we can do for the needy is to neglect them. The second worse thing we can do is to subsidize them, and helping them to get through a day, while ignoring how we can help people get through their lives. Scripture does not call us to rescue lazy people from poverty. Scripture calls us to serve and supplement the responsible. Even in 1 Tim. 5 where Paul commands the church to care for the widows, he specifies "the widow who is really in need," and goes on to say that not every widow qualifies for church support. We need to empower those in need to fulfill their purpose, for which God created them instead of enabling them to miss that purpose.

We must give personal attention to the people we are helping, providing accountability in the context of a personal relationship, backed up by a long-term commitment, never looking at people as temporary projects to be played with.

- **1 Tim. 5:8 – But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**
- **Rom. 15:26 – For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.**
- **2 Cor. 9:7 – So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**
- **Heb. 13: – But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**
- **1 Cor. 10:23 – All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.**