

Speaking to the soul



Poverty

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Every society has poor people and Jesus affirmed that that would always be the case. But that doesn't mean that we should be unconcerned for the poor. The Bible encourages us to take their needs seriously and do everything we can to support them. Leviticus gave some very practical advice: "When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. It is the same with your grape crop—do not strip every last bunch of grapes from the vines, and do not pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Today's verse is particularly concerned about those who look down on the poor and who even mock them. This isn't merely rude but an insult to God, who will ensure that those who rejoice at the misfortune of others are punished. We are commanded to show respect to the poor for the simple reason that they, like us, have been made in the image of God. They have infinite worth and are loved by God - just as we are.

God has given us all a responsibility to care for the poor. We may be able to give specific financial or other practical help direct to individuals that we know. There are also many organisations that we can support - from food banks and debt advice services to charities that work in developing countries, many of which face horrifying levels of poverty. There is action that all of us can take and, because of our love for a God who cares passionately for all, we need to find our own way of responding.

QUESTION

How can you support people in poverty in your own community?

PRAYER

Lord God, forgive me for those times when I have overlooked the needs of the poor. Please show me what I can do to help. Amen