



the Soulwinner

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ONE SOUL AT A TIME

Mark 15:16 — King James Version 1611

Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature

Promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Inner City

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Loving the American Poor

There isn't a six-digit job for everyone

For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. (Mark 14:7).

Anyone who passes through New York City for any length of time can plainly see the poor people either living on the street or struggling through life with slumlords and a form of poverty. Many middle class people who hate parting with the taxes the government levies on them to help pay for social programs to help these people are ignorant about the different kinds of poor people the government tries to help.

Some poor people actually do “make themselves that way” as many conservatives who basically hate the poor have been known to say. These are American poor people who got caught up in drugs, alcohol, crime or sexual promiscuity and ruined their lives to a point where they could not function in the job market. *But not all poor people are like that.* Some people may have started off working-class or even middle-class and a disability made it impossible for them to hold a decent job and they fell to government assistance like SSDI and SSI which never pay nearly what a person can get from a good middle class job. Sometimes a hard working-class man loses his job at no fault of his own and is not a skilled laborer inasmuch he can find something else and it sends him and his family into poverty to rely on welfare, etc. Some working class people simply do not have the skills to get a job that pays enough to get out of poverty.

So why then would anyone be angry at the government for having programs to help people survive, get training to get a better job, and even programs to send their children to college? Why would someone bitterly criticize decent American poor people for accepting government help when they do not fall into the category of those who “did it to themselves?” Why would people who make an exceptional salary get angry about programs to help the poor when *all of us have to pay those kinds of taxes?* Is the church helping

them? At what length?

Perhaps the reason why some people keep the poor around them is to create an image as though they love the poor but at certain times the poor become a target for ridicule by those who enjoy causing melancholy. There is controversy also about a minimum wage when many conservatives argue that an employer has a right to pay what he wants. But even a minimum wage has proven to keep people in poverty, how much more an employer who pays under minimum?

The Bible has many many warnings about mistreating poor people: **Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause (Exodus 23:3). Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.**

(Exodus 23:6) The poor were always a part of every society, including living among God’s people. It seems that an unequal distribution of wealth was always the factor in addition to disabled people not being able to perform at an occupation.

At one time the church was taking care of the poor ([see Acts 4:32-37](#)), but the extensiveness of the population of poor people in America may have made that impossible. And the problem of a lower class is not just going to go away. Unfortunately, the government involvement that is required to attack the problem of American poverty has made many concerned about the rise of socialism and communism, which make the conservatives very angry. I agree that we certainly do not want that in America—we want to maintain a capitalist country.

So what does God command us to do for the poor who “don’t do it to themselves?” [James 2:14-16](#) says we ought to provide for their physical needs, and Jesus said we ought to give them the gospel:



Garbage cans become a help to poor street people who rummage through them for redeemable cans; however, in the process they make themselves susceptible to diseases. Perhaps a person has a curse upon him from God that renders him to this kind of life, perhaps not. Who are we to judge?

Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. (Luke 7:22)

It is not so hard to love the poor when you consider that in many cases forces beyond their control rendered them that way. Since the church is not providing enough of the assistance they need to be in a position to better their lives, the government has taken over that responsibility to avoid cities with chronic third-world poverty, even though we still have poverty—it could certainly be worse. By giving poor people the gospel, we can arrange for them to have a relationship with God that includes a church to kindly teach them Bible principles. When at once a person is obedient to God he is in a better position for blessings from God, the greatest of which is in his case is to get him out of poverty.