

comes. If that is your greatest desire, you can be content, whatever may happen to you in this life.

Paul “suffered the loss of all things”, but counted them, “**as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ**” and “attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:8-11). He also wrote, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time **are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us**” (Romans 8:18). Which is better, a few years of ease in this life, or a place in God’s everlasting kingdom? If being poor helps you to think about, and want, the kingdom of God to come, what a blessing God has in store for you!

#### 4. WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD MAKE TO POOR PEOPLE?

The coming kingdom of God on earth will make a major difference to the poor. With Jesus Christ as king of the world, bringing justice, love and peace, the poor will be blessed.

King Jesus came from a poor family. **He will not forget the poor** when he comes. Poverty will be no more. What a wonderful time that will be.

Finally, there is one kind of hunger and thirst that should be your hearts desire. Jesus said, “Blessed are those **who hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6).

If you love God and keep His commandments now, you will have the joy of living for ever. There will be no more tears, no more hunger, no more heartache and

no more death. You will be one of God's immortal saints in His coming kingdom.

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## Christadelphian Bible Mission BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

# Coping with Poverty

### HOW CAN THE BIBLE HELP?

**When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:**

1. Is there anything in this life worse than poverty?
2. Does God care about poor people?
3. What advice does the Bible give about coping with poverty?
4. What difference will the coming kingdom of God make to poor people?

1. IS ANYTHING IN THIS LIFE WORSE THAN POVERTY?

Yes, many things are worse.

- **Imagine** having a severe physical handicap. Remember this saying, “I had the blues because I had no shoes, until upon the street, I met a man who had no feet.”

- **Imagine** being put in prison for a crime you did not commit. Would you rather be unjustly punished and in prison, or poor but free? Treasure freedom.
- **Imagine** one of your children dying as you read this leaflet. Would you rather have riches, or your child alive again? All parents know that a **child is much more precious**.

In spiritual terms, being rich is much more dangerous than being poor! Jesus Christ said, "Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation" (Luke 6:24). He also said, "what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life" (Matthew 16:26).

Do not worry about being poor. James says "Listen ... has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those that love him" (James 2:5).

## 2. DOES GOD CARE ABOUT POOR PEOPLE?

**Of course He does!** God understands that being poor brings many problems. He knows that just trying to survive, working hard and enduring the mental stress of providing for your family every day, can leave little time for anything else.

That is why **God made special provision for the poor** in the laws He gave in the Old Testament. Farmers had to leave corn in their fields so that the poor could gather it. Sometimes families had to sell their land to survive. God commanded that every fiftieth year, the land must be returned to its original owner (Leviticus 25:8-17). Even working cattle has rights to food!

Jesus also knew that it was hard for hungry people to listen carefully to his teaching. He fed five thousand on one day and another four thousand people later. Both God and Jesus taught that **we all have a duty to care about poor people**.

## 3. WHAT ADVICE DOES THE BIBLE GIVE ABOUT COPING WITH POVERTY?

The Bible gives us **both practical and spiritual advice** about coping with poverty. The two main pieces of practical help are:

How to make a little go a long way. How does the Bible do that? By stressing the very important qualities of **self-discipline and good management**. These qualities help Christian families to carefully manage whatever they have. No Christian will waste money on smoking, drinking or gambling as the family suffers. Care for their children, food, clothing and shelter will always be their top priorities.

By encouraging all Christians to **develop Godly characters**. This may not sound like practical advice, but think about it. A Christian's personal qualities may help to get work, if not currently employed. For employed Christians, personal qualities may help to keep them in work.

A Christian should be **an employer's ideal worker**. Why? Because Christians must be honest, reliable, self-controlled, hardworking and cheerful. Such good personal qualities are rare. They are valued by employers. The Apostle Peter told Christians to work well, even for bad employers! (1 Peter 2:18-25). Paul told them to, "obey your earthly masters ... **as**

**servants of Christ**, doing the will of God from the heart"(Ephesians 6:5-8). What more could an employer want?

The Bible tells us that both the extremes of poverty and riches have their problems. However, it offers so much helpful spiritual advice to the poor.

Jesus had a great understanding of human nature. He knew that poor people would worry about the future, so his inspired words to the poor are, "do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on ... Look at the birds ... your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** ... Why are you anxious about clothing? ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But **seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow" (Matthew 6:25-34). Do not forget the power of prayer.

Poor people often think about God more than rich people do. When Jesus preached about the coming kingdom of God, who listened? "The **common people** heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37 KJV). They felt their need of him. There will be more saints in the kingdom of God who were poor, rather than rich.

With a knowledge of Bible teaching, the poor can understand the Apostle Paul when he said, "I have learned **in whatever situation I am to be content**" (Philippians 4:11). What! Be content when in poverty? Yes. People can steal material goods from you. But nobody can steal your hope of being in the kingdom of God, when Jesus