Relationships :: Those less fortunate

Answer the following questions:

*Off the top of your head, brainstorm some key ideas in the Bible about being poor. What is God’s heart for the poor and needy?*

*Do you have any close friends whom you would consider “less fortunate?” If you don’t, why do you think that is? (If the person is in the room, don’t say their name out loud)*

Sometimes, when we look at Christian culture, it can be hard to see what’s really important to God. Christian pop and rock musicians have their designer clothes and their photoshopped-perfect faces plastered all over glossy album covers… TV preachers walk around mega-stadium stages in $5000 suits… Christian movies feature upper-middle-class families helping other people become upper-middle-class…. and on and on and on. The message that all of these things imply is that if you’re a faithful enough follower of Jesus, He will give you what is most important: Comfort. This message is not true.

**The Bible, time and time again makes it very clear that even the most faithful believers in Christ can face hardships—persecution, poverty, loss, death.** The 12 disciples each lived lowly, uncomfortable lives that (for the most part) ended in horrible martyrs’ deaths.

Not only is misfortune common for Christians in the New Testament, but **throughout the entire Bible we see that the poor, orphaned, widowed, and oppressed are given a very special place in God’s heart.** This does not mean that being poor and needy is at all “better” or “more spiritual” than being otherwise. This also does not mean that people shouldn’t work hard or be responsible with their money. **What it does mean is that since God cares deeply for those less fortunate, we should care deeply for them too.**

Answer the following question:

**Proverbs 22:2 says that “The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.” This means that in God’s eyes, poor people and rich people are equally important and valuable. In light of this, how should we treat those less fortunate than us?**
One of the most shocking verses in the whole Bible on this subject is found in Proverbs 21:13, which says “Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.” **It means that if we ignore the poor and their needs, God will ignore us and ours.** This is how important the poor are to God.

**Fill out the following chart, listing the following things in each of the three columns:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List all of your basic needs:</th>
<th>List some of the luxuries or “extras” that you own:</th>
<th>List what you would buy/do if you were handed $1000:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>But it’s not only the a lot of time in the James 1:27, James says Father, is this: to visit keep oneself instead of doing all please God should and widows. 1 John sees his brother in God’s love abide in but in deed and in truth.” <strong>If any of us claim to have God’s love in us, it should be shown in part by how we treat the poor, the orphans, the widows, the oppressed.</strong></td>
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<td>poor that God cares for in Bible talking about orphans “Religion that is pure and orphans and widows in unstained from the world.” <strong>kinds of religious rituals, love and care for others—</strong> James 3:17-19 says “But if anyone need, yet closes his heart him? Little children, let us this way. He also spends and widows. In fact, in unfiled before God, the their affliction, and to <strong>James is saying that people who want to in this case, orphans has the world’s goods and against him, how does not love in word or talk</strong></td>
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But as Christians, our relationships with those less fortunate should not only be about befriending them and lending a helping hand. We should actually be helping fight for justice in our towns and around the world. “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause,” this is the message God gave Isaiah to speak to the Jews after they had been in a period of ignoring God (Isaiah 1:17). This tells us a lot about God’s heart for His people to fight on behalf of the oppressed.

**Answer the following questions:**

**How might your cell group do a better job of reaching out to those less fortunate?**

**Why do you think God cares so much about this group of people? (Hint: part of it has to do with how spiritually poor we all are without Jesus)**
How can you stand up against injustice and oppression in your own school? In your own town?

It’s so important that we care for the needs of those less fortunate, but we don’t just want to care for their needs. We want to care for them as people. We want to help them get to a place where they can help themselves, as well. Most importantly, we want them to come to put their faith in Jesus and find eternal riches in Him.

Without Jesus, we are all completely spiritually poor and needy. **We can do nothing to earn “spiritual wealth” except place our faith in Jesus and accept salvation.** God likes for His people to depend on Him, and He likes to care for them. And He wants us to share that heart by also taking care of those who can't take care of themselves.