



Servant's Corner

October 2011

The Myth Of The “Deserving Poor”

By Rich Henderson, Love INC Director

There is none righteous, not even one; Rom 3:10b

“We want to help poor people who truly deserve our help.” Have you ever heard that before? On the surface, it makes sense. Who would want to help someone who was poor due to their own foolish behavior--drug abuse, overspending, get rich quick schemes or just plain old laziness? “**Those** people are getting what they deserve. To help them would enable them to continue to be irresponsible”—so the argument goes.

While it is true that sometimes the most compassionate thing we can do is let a person learn from the consequences of their poor choices, the premise behind the opening statement is false. The assumption is that some people truly **deserve** help. The verse above and many others make it clear that what we deserve, **all** of us, is not HELP, but HELL (Romans 6:23). This includes the would-be helpers who are refusing to help “those people”.

The Biblical teaching of salvation by grace eliminates the awkwardness of the helper-recipient gap. The truth is we are all needy. We are all hell-deserving sinners. Christians are people who have recognized this and have accepted God’s help in the form of a Savior. Jesus became poor so we, the undeserving, could become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). Keeping this in mind will make us more humble and compassionate as we deal with other undeserving people in need of help.



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