

## **'God Helps Them That Help Themselves' Is Not a Verse from the Bible**

### *Student Handout*

Economics is seldom the favorite subject of students. Brooke and Devin are no exception. They sit by each other in the class and often help each other with problem assignments. They are also friends in the same youth group.

Today the teacher has divided the class into two groups and has asked them to prepare to debate the topic of welfare and the government's responsibility to provide services to the poor.

Brooke and Devin have been assigned to argue for a high level of government responsibility and contribution to welfare to protect the weakest in society. The opposing side will argue that only the minimum amount of services should be provided.

The class debate is lively and full of spirit. The longer the students debate the topic, the more they find themselves embracing and understanding the view they have been assigned. At one point, Brooke makes the point that caring for the weakest in society is consistent with the Judeo-Christian heritage of our country. Furthermore, she says, "It's just the right thing to do."

Tim, a student arguing from the other side, looks at Brooke and asks, "Are you trying to tell us that God says we should have a state welfare system? If that's the case, you are dead wrong. The Bible says, "God helps those that help themselves!"

Brooke and Devin both respond by saying, "No way!" They try to explain that the Bible doesn't say that at all, but other students disagree. Before too long, Brooke and Devin's team begins to debate among themselves. In the midst of the discussion, one person looks at Devin and Brooke and says, "Well, if you are so sure this isn't in the Bible, then what does it say about the poor?"

Just as the guy finishes the sentence, the bell rings, signaling the end of class. Even though the discussion ended, Devin and Brooke knew they weren't off the hook! They realize they know very little about what the Bible really says about the poor. They go home, find an online Bible concordance and start to read.

### **Now It's Your Turn**

Read the following Scripture references and try to determine what God is saying about the poor and how we should relate to the poor.

#### **Deuteronomy 15:3-11**

**What do these verses tell us about God's perspective towards the poor?**

**What do these verses tell us about how we should relate to the poor?**

**Are there any promises from God for the poor or for people who help the poor?**

Psalm 69:30-33; 82:2-4; 140:12-13

What do these verses tell us about God's perspective towards the poor?

What do these verses tell us about how we should relate to the poor?

Are there any promises from God for the poor or for people who help the poor?

Proverbs 19:16-18; 21:13; 28:26-27

What do these verses tell us about how we should relate to the poor?

Are there any promises from God for the poor or for people who help the poor?

**What are the three most important things you can take away from this discussion about the poor?**

1.

2.

3.

### **What Can You Do?**

In some communities poverty is evident and the problems of the poor are obvious. Is that true in your community? If so, what are the most obvious needs of the poor that you observe?

In other communities, poverty is not so obvious. Some people live their daily lives without seeing the needs of the poor. If that is your case, how can you find out about needs in your community? in other areas?

Drawing on what you learned from the Scripture passages today, what do you think God is calling you to do in response to those in your community who are in need? If you don't know what you can do, to whom can you go for guidance? What would you be willing to do? Would you be willing to give of your time and your abilities?

### **Do Some Research**

Where did the adage "God helps them that help themselves" originate?

### **Do Some Analysis**

Do you agree with the adage "God helps them that help themselves?"  
Why or why not?

### **Do Some Praying**

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to direct you to help those who are in need. Offer yourself as a willing and humble servant.