MERCY AND JUSTICE

Christ’s statement in Matthew 26:11, “For you have the poor with you always,” is descriptive of the state of the world until He comes to destroy sin. Not only is it a reality we must accept, but it is one that God uses to mold our Christian characters. As Ellen White puts it, “In the providence of God events have been so ordered that the poor are always with us, in order that there may be a constant exercise in the human heart of the attributes of mercy and love.”

While poverty is a reality we must accept in a sinful world, it is not one we must embrace. The “attributes of mercy and love” are not cultivated when we turn a blind eye to the needs of those around us. On the contrary, God calls His followers to care for the poor among us. “He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given” (Prov. 19:17).

Moreover, a Christian’s duty is to practice justice and mercy in all situations. “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). It may be easier to keep silent when we see oppression around us, but God enjoins us to engage our societies in seeking justice and mercy for the downtrodden.

The Christian realizes that full justice will only be realized when Jesus comes again. But they also recognize their duty to mediate on behalf of the weak and voiceless. This week we consider how Sabbath-keeping Christians ought to be at the forefront of seeking the welfare of the needy.
Write out Leviticus 25 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Leviticus 25:13–17. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Leviticus 25. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How do you balance caring for the environment while not worshiping nature?

In what ways can environmentalism be evangelistic?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/sab09-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How should a Christian relate to the reality of wealth inequality?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/sab09-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Genesis 2:15  
John 5:1–16  
Luke 13:15  
Isaiah 58  
Matthew 12:9–14  
Revelation 11:18  
Micah 6:1–8

What other verses come to mind in connection with Leviticus 25?

Review your memorized verse from Leviticus 25.
Where do you see Jesus in Leviticus 25?

In what ways has your increased love for God impacted your relationships with His creation?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/sab09-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what are personal applications you are convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications you must make in your school, family, workplace, and church?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/sab09-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

What has been your reaction upon seeing the poor, weak, and voiceless in the past?

Though seemingly similar on the outside, how is biblical environmentalism different from humanistic environmentalism?

How is your Sabbath observance connected with planet earth?

How does Sabbath inform our sense of justice?

What are the differences between equality, equity, and justice?

What is the difference between social responsibility and social transformation? Which does the Bible call God’s people to?

How were Sabbath principles revolutionary for Israel’s day? How are they revolutionary today?

How can you manifest God’s justice on this Sabbath?