

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

A HEART FOR THE POOR: THE 7TH EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

This segment comes from **EPISODE 3: RICH + POOR**.

From decadent medieval popes to modern televangelists with private jets, religion and money can make for an unsavoury mix. But why do we think of charity – care for the poor and the sick – as a good thing in the first place? People in the Graeco-Roman world didn't think so: they mostly thought the poor and suffering deserved what they got. This segment looks at a man who dedicated his life to campaigning for the rights of the poor: Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.



THEME QUESTION

Place a mark on this line to show to what extent you agree with this statement: Caring for the poor should be an important priority for the government.



Disagree

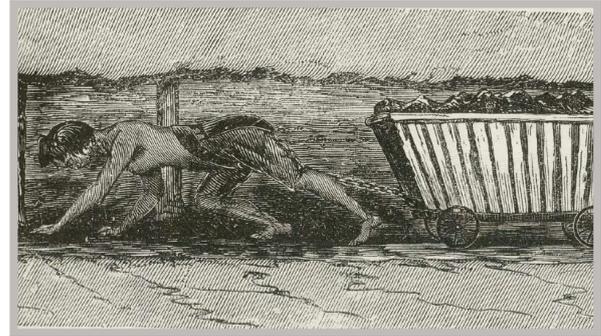


Agree



ENGAGE

1. If you were a politician and could pass one piece of legislation in relation to poverty, what would it be and why? It might be to do with areas such as minimum wage, working hours, public housing, gambling reform, education, or government financial assistance.
2. Do you think a Christian politician should be influenced by their faith? Why or why not? Discuss.
3. Look at the following images of children working in coal mines in the UK, from a government report compiled by the Children's Employment Commission in 1842.
 - a. What is your reaction to these images?
 - b. Write the first paragraph of a short story about a child working in a mine in England in the 1800s.



UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “A heart for the poor: The 7th Earl of Shaftesbury”
(cpx.video/shaftesbury)

1. What was Lord Ashley’s response to the Huskar mining accident? What did he achieve?
2. In the video segment, Simon Smart lists a large number of reforms that Shaftesbury campaigned for, as well as some of the 197 organisations that he was involved with. What do we learn about Shaftesbury from this?
3. Read the following quotes from Shaftesbury’s diary. What do these quotes reveal about how Shaftesbury’s work was motivated by his Christian faith?

17 December 1827: “Whether I shall ever be well off or not, God alone knows; but this I pray, that never asking for wealth, should it be sent me, I may receive at the same time a heart and spirit to lay it out for man’s happiness and God’s glory. ... may I, as I have ever endeavoured to do, begin in God, and, having throughout desired nothing but His glory and the consummation of His word, conclude in the same, to the advancement of religion and the increase of human happiness.”

7 April 1853: “Engaged more than ever: small works compared with the political and financial movements of the day – a boarding house, a ragged school, a vagrants’ bill, a refuge for thieves! No wonder people think me as small as my work; and yet I would not change it, for surely God has called me to this Career!”

4. Imagine you are a reporter writing for a newspaper about Lord Shaftesbury’s funeral. Write a short article about the event, featuring quotes from at least two people who lined the streets of London to glimpse Shaftesbury’s coffin.
5. What is your reaction to this description of Shaftesbury: “No man has ever done more to lessen the extent of human misery or to add to the sum total of human happiness”?

6. In a [lecture \(cpx.video/schluter\)](#), Dr Michael Schluter points out that Shaftesbury could have lived a very comfortable life, but instead chose to give that up to fully dedicate himself to pursuing justice for the poor. Write a short diary entry from Shaftesbury at the end of his life reflecting on this decision and answering the question, “Was it worth it?”

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Jeremiah 22:15-16.

CONTEXT: In these verses, God is speaking against Shallum, a wicked king whose father Josiah was one of the greatest reformer kings of Israel.

1. What do these verses tell us about what priorities a follower of God should have?
2. What is your reaction to the question, “Is that not what it means to know me?”

READ 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

3. What command is given to those who are rich?
4. Why do these verses say not to put your hope in wealth?
5. What do you think Paul means when he talks about the “life that is truly life”?

APPLY

1. Make a list of some examples of current issues in Australia that a modern-day Lord Shaftesbury might work to reform.

1.
2.
3.
4.

2. Read this article from CPX's Simon Smart in ABC News, "[Scott Morrison's Christianity doesn't spell the end of democracy](#)" ([cpx.video/morrison](#)). Write an email to Scott Morrison asking him to act on one of the issues listed above, making references to Lord Shaftesbury.
3. Read this quote from Dr Michael Schluter's lecture on Shaftesbury. Do you think this is the attitude the general public has towards Christianity today? Why or why not?

If you think about an overall assessment of the man, you have to say that perhaps the most significant thing about him is that he made Christianity credible in the general population, because he stood so strongly for his Christian faith. And when the general population thought about Christianity they thought about Wilberforce and then they thought about Shaftesbury, and they thought, "This is **real**, this is something worth **having** in society, this is something we **want**."

EXTEND

1. Read this article in *Christian Today*, "[Lord Shaftesbury: Remembering Britain's great Christian reformer](#)" ([cpx.video/reformer](#)). Write down three new things you learn about Shaftesbury from this article.