

## I See You: How Love Opens Our Eyes to Invisible People

**Terence Lester**

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The real question posed by Terence Lester's thoughtful, inspirational Christian book *I See You* is whether we are willing to see ourselves in the faces of the poor and forgotten.

Lester's work succeeds both at comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. It begins with the premise that seeing people and the world more clearly makes change possible. It next defines its terms. Here, poverty is not just monetary, but is about "lack of access," moving related debates beyond economics into a wider community space. Poverty, Lester says, is a shared problem, and together we need to reconsider justice.

Lester peppers the book with personal anecdotes about working with the struggling people of Atlanta, Georgia. His work reflects a Christian message that takes Jesus at his word regarding caring for the poor and building a new kingdom in the here and now. It's hard hitting, with challenging themes like facing stereotypes and misconceptions, considering responsibility with nuance, and the need to create communities that address poverty epidemics better.

The book's tone and style is conversational, offering needed understanding about how hard it is for privileged people to face up to its challenges. Dashes of hope and inspiration come alongside heartfelt stories about young parents struggling to feed their infants, for example with spaghetti sauce instead of expensive baby food.

There are no simple weekend projects involved. Instead, Lester suggests ways to strengthen our emotional understanding, moving from ignorance to engaged empathy. His text includes resources to help navigate mental health concerns, general discussion and reflection questions, and a detailed bibliography.

The gospel in *I See You* is far from trendy, arising with an almost old-fashioned hope that dignity and community can change the world, and the lives of those who are less fortunate, for the better.

JEREMIAH ROOD (September / October 2019)

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