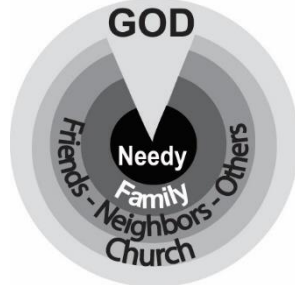


OUTLINE – BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP FOR TODAY

- 1) Overview – Biblical Stewardship
- 2) Money – Making Money is Easy, Keeping it is the Hard Part
- 3) Debt – The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly
- 4) Tithing – The New Testament Way
- 5) **Benevolence Giving – Do's and Don'ts**
- 6) God's Wisdom on Money
- 7) God's Economy
- 8) Prosperity Preaching – Pros & Cons
- 9) Attitude is the Key for God to Bless
- 10) Biblical Investing vs Gambling
- 11) Retirement and Taxes



INTRODUCTION

- The simple definition for benevolence is very similar to “grace” – providing assistance to someone in need without looking for payback.
 - ♦ The difference between benevolence and grace is in eligibility.
- Where grace has no eligibility requirements, benevolence does or should have. For example, why pay the electric bill for someone who has sufficient funds in the bank or they are able to work, but doesn't?
 - ♦ There has to be a minimal set of requirements to justify giving away someone's hard-earned money to someone else.
 - ♦ From a biblical perspective, benevolence should include qualification and accountability – else you are ripe to be scammed
- Why would God allow people, including His chosen children, go through tough times? The biblical answer seems to be 6-fold:
 1. God-ordained happenstance [Matt 5:45](#) – It rains on just & unjust
 2. Testing [Luke 4:1-13](#) - Testing of Jesus
 3. Instructional [Luke 15:11-17](#) - Prodigal Son
 4. Preventative [2 Corinthians 12:7](#) –Thorn in the flesh
 5. Chastening [Revelation 3:19](#) – Godly discipline
 6. God's Glory [Ps 142:7](#) – Prison Release → Thanksgiving
- [Luke 15:16-18](#). “*And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, **and no one was giving anything to him. And when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned ...”***”

Definition of Prodigal: Given to extravagant expenditure; expending money or other things without necessity; recklessly or viciously profuse; lavish; wasteful; not frugal or economical

FAMILY. Family is the first ring of defense for the needy. In fact, one of the very first questions to ask any needy individual seeking assistance from the Church should be “where is your family?”

FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, OTHERS. So what should the needy do if they have no family, or the family will not or cannot help, and the church should not help? The next recourse is to seek help from friends, neighbors, community resources, or even government assistance. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away [Proverbs 27:10b](#)

CHURCH. If a widow meets all the qualifications listed in [1Timothy 5](#), she is then qualified to fall under full-time church support. This would entail food, clothing, shelter and medical care:

- ♦ Being over sixty years of age
- ♦ Has been faithful to her husband
- ♦ Is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble; and
- ♦ Devotes herself to all kinds of good deeds

Based on what we find in Scripture, there are two main objectives for benevolence from a church perspective:

1. To provide short term relief for those faithful believers caught up in economic turmoil or persecution; and
2. To provide long term support for faithful widows who meet very restrictive qualifications.

GOD. Finally, and fortunately, when widows, or others, have no other resources to help them in their time of need, they can always call out to God “night and day” for relief [[1 Timothy 5:5](#)]

- ♦ God is actually the source of help to everyone for any legitimate need, anytime, anywhere, and He specifically is interested in the prayers of the destitute.

| Benevolence Passages Seemingly Expounding an Open Pocketbook |
|--|
| Matthew 5:42 – Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. |
| Luke 6:30 – Give to everyone who begs from you...[NRSV] |
| Luke 6:35 – But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. |
| Luke 18:22 – Sell your possessions and give to charity. |
| Hebrews 13:16 – And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. |
| James 2:15-16 – If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, & one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” & you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? |
| 1 John 3:17 – Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? |

| BUT, BEHAVIOR DETERMINES TEMPERED BENEVOLENCE. We need to avoid helping the Wicked, The Lazy, and the Prodigal |
|--|
| Proverbs 10:3 – The Lord rejects the craving of the wicked. |
| Proverbs 19:19 – If you rescue [a fool] you will only have to do it again. |
| Isaiah 9:17 – “Nor does [God] have pity on their orphans or their widows; For every one of them is godless and an evildoer” |
| Isaiah 26:10a – Though the wicked is shown favor, He does not learn righteousness. |
| Isaiah 31:2 – In wisdom God brings disaster on evildoers and on those who render aide to them (summarized) |
| 2Chron 19:2 – If you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord, you bring God's wrath upon yourself. |
| Jeremiah 5:25 – Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you. |
| 2 Thes 3:10 – if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. |

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / BENEFITS

- Scripture is clear – the family needs to take care of their own – assuming, of course, the needy family member is not a prodigal.
- If the needy is a prodigal individual, then helping them only prolongs their misery, enables and encourages their bad behavior, and keeps them from more quickly humbling themselves and heading back to their family in the right spirit of humility [Pr 26:11](#)
- We need to avoid helping the wicked and “loving” those who hate the Lord – and so incur wrath on ourselves [2Chron 19:2](#); [Is 31:2](#)

NEXT WEEK: God's Wisdom on Money



Remember: Scripture says to “Prove All Things” [1Thes 5:21](#)