

# Synopsis: Guide to Benevolence Giving for Church and Family

## INTRODUCTION

- God commands us to take care of the poor, whether they are saved or unsaved, members or non-members

Passages on Benevolence Expounding an Open Pocketbook – Untempered Benevolence
<b>Leviticus 25:35.</b> <i>If your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you (NRSV)</i>
<b>Deuteronomy 15:4-11.</b> The Lord blesses when we meet the needs of friends and family and other poor individuals (summarized)
<b>Psalms 82:3-4.</b> <i>Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.</i>
<b>Proverbs 27:10b.</b> <i>Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.</i>
<b>Matthew 5:42.</b> <i>Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.</i>
<b>Luke 6:30.</b> Jesus also said, <i>Give to everyone who begs from you... (NRSV)</i>
<b>Luke 6:35.</b> <i>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.</i>
<b>Luke 12:33a; Luke 18:22.</b> And Jesus said, <i>Sell your possessions and give to charity.</i>
<b>Hebrews 13:16.</b> <i>And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.</i>
<b>James 2:15-16.</b> <i>If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?</i>
<b>1 John 3:17.</b> <i>But 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?</i>

## BUT, with such Grace, we need Discernment

Scripture Also Proclaims Tempered Benevolence
<b>Proverbs 19:19.</b> <i>A man of great anger (who is a fool) will bear the penalty, for if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again</i>
<b>Isaiah 26:10a.</b> <i>Though the wicked is shown favor, He does not learn righteousness...</i>
<b>Isaiah 31:2.</b> In wisdom God brings disaster on evildoers (summarized)
<b>2Chronicles 19:2.</b> If we help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD, we could inherit God's wrath meant for them
<b>Jeremiah 5:25.</b> <i>Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you.</i>
<b>2 Thessalonians 3:10.</b> <i>...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.</i>

We also need to differentiate between an enemy and a wicked person. Our enemy may not be a wicked person.

## BENEVOLENCE PRINCIPLES

- We have no contradictions in Scripture, just different perspectives, clarification, or elaboration

Bare BONES of Biblical Counseling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Balancing Principle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Example. Tell the Truth in Love ..... Eph 4:15</li> <li>- Without Truth you have a license to do anything</li> <li>- Without Love it is tyranny (Talibanism)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Overriding Principle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Obey man vs God ..... 1Peter 2:13 vs Acts 4:1</li> <li>♦ Compassion is better than Sacrifice..... Mat 12:7-13</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Negating Principle</b> ..... Mat 19:21 vs 1Thes 3:10                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If a man doesn't work, he doesn't eat</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Explanatory Principle</b> ..... Mat 12:1-7                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Sabbath is made for man's benefit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Sequential Principle</b> ..... 1 John 1:9                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Confess + repent + restore / restitution</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- The Church was never intended to be a bank or a day-care facility; rather the Church is a source of training for perfecting of the saints ..... Eph 4:11,12
- The poor should work to live. Deut 24:19-21; 1Thes 5:11
- The intent of financial help is to provide a short-term fix to allow the needy to recover so they can take care of themselves and others, and, as a last resort, to care for true widows ..... 1Thes 4:11-12; 1Tim 5:3-11
- **Rewards:** God rewards us when we find opportunities to provide food & drink to our brothers & our enemies who are not wicked ..... Deut 15:4-11; 24:19; Prov 25:21-22
- **However,** we need to discern who to help, when to help, how to help, and how intensely to help (aliens, widows, orphans) ..... Deut 26:12; James 2:15-17, Ps 82:3-4
- Do we just throw a token quarter at the problem, or do we open our doors and wallets to bed, clothe, mend and feed for as long as needed? ..... Luke 10:30-37

## THE ORDER OF HELP FROM SCRIPTURE IS:

- 1st ..... Family, first and foremost
- 2nd ..... Individuals, Friends, Neighbors, Others
- 3rd ..... Church
- 4th ..... God

**Case Study.** A godly widow with no family, no friends, younger than 60 → What Would the Apostle Paul Do?  
 Do Everything?  Do Little?  Do Nothing?

- **Ponder 1Tim 5:5.** Now she who is a widow indeed, and who has been left alone (no help), has fixed her hope on God, and prays night & day for relief. →→→→
- Now, if we should not help certain widows, why do we assist more able-bodied people?



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**FAMILY OBLIGATIONS** ..... 1Tim 5:8

## INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATIONS

..... Mt 5:42; Lk 6:30; 12:33; 18:22; James 2:15-17

- Individuals should relieve the church of caring for the needy. BUT must also use discernment before providing financial help indiscriminately.
- Christ did not heal or feed everyone every time & He never gave money to beggars or to anyone else in need (e.g., woman at the well, or woman caught in adultery)
- Apostles had money to give to beggars, but instead gave them something better → health ..... Acts 3:1-7
- Also, church elders are to labor hard to support the weak (lead by example) ..... Acts 20:34-35

**CHURCH OBLIGATIONS**..... Acts 6:1-3; 1Tim 5:3-11

- **Who gives to whom?** Qualified leaders distribute to qualified needy ..... Acts 4:34,35; Acts 6:1-3
- **Short Term.** Train individuals to be responsible for the qualified needy. Acts 20:34-35; Gal 6:1-5; Eph 4:11-12; and to meet emergency needs of the faithful.. Acts 11:29
- **Long Term Support.** Scripture is very restrictive. Only widows who possess a stellar testimony, have no family, and are older than 60 qualify. All others must rely on:
  - Family ..... Lev 25:25; 1Tim 5:8
  - Friends / Neighbors / Govt . Prov 27:10b, Heb 13:16
  - God → Pray for relief ... Ps 34:6-7; 102:17; 1Tim 5:5

**GOD's OBLIGATIONS** .... Deut 10:18; Ps 34:7; Ps 102:17

**WHO SHOULD WE NOT HELP?** It is vain to help the foolish, lazy, angry, immoral, or wicked ..... 2Chron 19:2; ..... Prov 19:19; Is 9:17; 26:10; 32:6; 2Thes 3:10

- ♦ In wisdom God brings disaster on evildoers to teach, correct, guide, or to prevent further evil. So, to shower them with favor or gifts is unwise..... Is 26:10; 31:2
- **Prodigal Son Syndrome** ..... Lk 15:11-24
  - ♦ Scripture calls lazy, angry, wicked, disobedient, disrespectful, and immoral people fools. If we rescue them once, we have to do it again and again since they return to their folly ..... Prov 12:16; 26:11
  - ♦ The biblical course of action is to patiently wait for them to come to their senses like the prodigal son after he realized nobody gave him anything ..... Lk 15:11-24
- **Foolishness or Laziness** ..... Prov 19:19; 2Thes 3:10
  - ♦ Scripture is clear, fools and sloths do not learn quickly or easily, so making things easy for them by meeting their needs encourages bad behavior and actually prolongs their misery ..... Prov 27:22; Is 26:10
- **Wicked, Unjust, Immoral, Godless**
  - ♦ It is unwise to give to those overtly doing evil. God has no mercy on godless widows and orphans ..... Is 9:17
  - ♦ For us to deliver aid in such situations circumvents God's purpose for them. In wisdom, God brings disaster on evildoers ..... Is 31:2
- **Our Biblical Response to the Unruly, Fool-hardy**
  - ♦ If they don't work, they don't eat..... 2Thes 3:10
  - ♦ We should wait till they come to their senses and come home with the right attitude. with a humbled heart, and willingness to learn

**COUNSELING** ..... Hab 2:6-7; 1Thes 4:11-12

- Since the Church is not obligated to help every needy person, financial and spiritual counseling should be made available

## ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR BENEVOLENCE

- Prove the validity of every situation ..... 1Thes 5:21
- Spiritually qualified leaders distribute to the qualified needy ..... Acts 4:35; 6:1-3
- Don't make snap decisions..... Prov 19:2
- Set limitations, expectations, & accountability... Eph 4:28
- **Grace Trumps Processes.** But discern between grace and gullibility

## CONCLUSION

- To be wise stewards of God's resources and be most effective helping the weak, we need to better discern who to help, how, and when
- We need to discern how best to help or when to withhold help if God is either disciplining or judging an individual
- **Remember.** Some may need to eat out of a pig's trough to learn valuable lessons. If the Prodigal Son had access to the resources of a nearby church, the Salvation Army, the Government, or a gullible giver to keep him from eating with the pigs, he would not have come to his senses and gone back to his family with a humbled spirit as quickly as he did.
- **Also.** If the Apostle Paul had no qualms about refusing to provide church help to a destitute widow, then we should not have qualms about saying "NO" to an out-of-work man or woman, or to an unwed pregnant teenager.

## NOTES

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