

Love the Poor

By

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The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, **19** To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Luke 5:31

The issue of poverty is a social justice issue, the Bible certainly treats it as such. But, the Bible also clearly says that we will always have the poor with us:

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.
Deuteronomy 15:11

For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. John 12:8

In light of Scripture, that means that any gimmick or organization that is working to “eliminate poverty” needs to be carefully weighed in the balance. Should we support such organizations? The poor do not need a handout, ultimately they need the compassion of Christ being displayed through Christians who are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ Himself in a genuine presentation of love and the good news of salvation for all by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus alone! Yes, we should care for the poor, but unless we share the Gospel with them they are still bound for Hell!

The Founders of America were certainly generous and cared for the poor, however, they understood that handouts would not help anyone. They would immediately help the starving man or woman, but once they had their strength back they would have them cut wood, help around the farm, etc... to earn their room and board while they simultaneously helped them look for a job to provide for themselves. At other times, when starvation was not imminent, a man or woman would have to prove that they would work by cutting wood or sewing something *before* they would receive room and board.

Today, welfare discourages people from getting out of the rut they are in because of misfortune, sickness, or fill in the blank. Read the welfare “manual” find out what the government requires individuals to do if they want to keep getting a handout—no marriage, little work, no savings and more!

People need to work with their own two hands—that is a good thing! The Biblical design of gleanings is to allow the poor to come and work to have their needs provided for—gather up the grain left on the edges of the field or overlooked by the gathers.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. **7** For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; **8** Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: **9** Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. **10** For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. **11** For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. **12** Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. **13** But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. **14** And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. **15** Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 (KJV)

I’m writing this booklet because I care for those who are struggling. I care about those who are poor. I myself am a poor man for without the blood Jesus Christ covering my sin I am nothing but a miserable wretch!

God’s Word has the answers. Join me for a look at what Scripture teaches. Really read what the Bible is teaching. Make an outline, take some notes—whatever helps you learn.

Let’s begin.

God's "welfare" system for the poor in Israel

At the end of *every* seven years thou shalt make a release. **2** And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour shall release *it*; he shall not exact *it* of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release. **3** Of a foreigner thou mayest exact *it again*: but *that* which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; **4** Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it: **5** Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. **6** For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. **7** If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: **8** But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth. **9** Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. **10** Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. **11** For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. **12** *And* if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. **13** And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: **14** Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: *of that* wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. **15** And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. **16** And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; **17** Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. **18** It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant *to thee*, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest. Deuteronomy 15:1-18

What is taught in this passage?

- Debts expire—completely forgiven—every 7 years. Of a countryman or a “Christian” (God’s people were “Jews” at this time not “Christians”) you don’t take any interest. The debt, if paid back, is paid dollar for dollar what you gave.

- God says it is ok to place interest on a foreigner or unbeliever who wants to borrow from you. However, the interest should be fair.
- The Israelites will not borrow from other people. The only debts in their nation are “loans” to the poor that are really financial gifts for their real needs. If they can pay back in seven years, great. But the motive is clearly not to make a profit, but to help a brother.
- If you treat your “debtor” wickedly, God will count it as sin to you. O that all the creditors would listen to this admonition from the Lord!
- You must lend to your countryman out of love, because he truly needs it to survive. God is clearly not saying lend money to so and so just because they want a bigger house or will lose their home and luxurious cars that they bought to have an “extravagant lifestyle.” No, you are lending to those who do not have what they need to survive—food, clothing, shelter (but not a mansion).
- God will bless you for following His design for helping a poor countryman or Christian.
- If you have a brother who is enslaved to you—send him away with plenty. Bless him as he leaves. Christian employers, may God enable you to do so. You may not be able to do a lot, but can you give your employee who has faithfully served you an extra week or two’s pay when they leave? Is there anything they need you can supply or help with?
- If someone wants to stay “enslaved” to you, it was their choice and they should be “marked” somehow to prove that.

God's blessings to those who follow His design

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: **2** And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. **3** Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. **4** Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. **5** Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. **6** Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out. **7** The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. **8** The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. **9** The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. **10** And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. **11** And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. **12** The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. **13** And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*: **14** And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left, to go after other gods to serve them. Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Debt should be avoided for everything unnecessary to survival (aka not a car, bigger house, business expansion, etc...)

Be not thou *one* of them that strike hands, *or* of them that are sureties for debts. **27** If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

Proverbs 22:26-27

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

Proverbs 22:7

Be generous

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 22:9

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *riches*, and he that giveth to the rich, *shall* surely *come* to want.

Proverbs 22:16

Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: **23** For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

Proverbs 22:22-23

More verses about the poor—read them and contemplate how you can apply them in your life

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Prov 28:27 (KJV)

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Prov 19:17 (KJV)

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: *but* the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.

Prov 29:7 (KJV)

Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Prov 31:9 (KJV)

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Prov 31:20 (KJV)

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *riches*, *and* he that giveth to the rich, *shall* surely *come* to want.

Prov 22:16 (KJV)

Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: **23** For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

Prov 22:22-23 (KJV)

20 Closing Scriptures on How to relate to the Poor

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. **10** And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God. **11** Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

Leviticus 19:9-11

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Deuteronomy 15:11

Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. **4** Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalms 82:3-4

He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

Proverbs 14:31

Better *is* the poor that walketh in his integrity, than *he that is* perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Proverbs 19:1

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Proverbs 21:13

The rich and poor meet together: the LORD *is* the maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:2

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: *but* the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.

Proverbs 29:7

Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? *was not* my soul grieved for the poor?

Job 30:25

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound

Isaiah 61:1

He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then *it was* well *with him*: *was* not this to know me? saith the LORD. **17** But thine eyes and thine heart *are* not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do *it*.

Jeremiah 22:16-17

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: **10** And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

Zechariah 7:9-10

Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: **36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? **38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? **39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

Matthew 25:35-40

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Mark 10:21

Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Luke 12:33

Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. **13** But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: **14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Luke 14:12-14

And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [genuine love], it profiteth me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:3, brackets added

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

James 2:5