



Stewardship: *Deciding Who Needs Help* Lesson # 9

Giving to the Family

Who really deserves our help? Are there those we should not help? These are two questions we need to answer for ourselves as we contemplate our sharing of resources with others, especially family members. Asking others for these answers will generate a variety of opinions and if we rely solely on our emotions we will likely end up broke. As is regularly the case our ultimate source of wisdom for these answers is God's Word.

- **Some We Should Not Help!**

Why would God specifically direct us to not help someone? He may be using material difficulties to direct someone to Him or to strengthen their spiritual lives. If we interfere, we may cause that person to miss God's best.

Then there are those who are living in rebellion to God, and the way in which God has chosen to reach them is through financial crisis. To interfere is to risk God's wrath or at least His irritation. For more insight read **2 Thes. 3:10-11**. "¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat.'¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies."

In our society the get rich quick attitude can be the source of financial need. See **Prov. 28:22** "²² A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him."

Sometimes good stewardship requires us to discipline our own families financially. All too often parents support unruly, undisciplined children-to their own hurt. **Prov. 13:1 & 18** speaks to this issue. "¹ A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. ¹⁸ He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored "

- **Those We Should Help!**

In this age of political correctness and crumbling moral values, there has been an effort to redefine the word family. God's Word teaches that family is more than just husband, wife and children. It also refers to a complete group including mother, father, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and grandparents. All are potentially deserving of our help, if they are unable to meet their own needs, even

with their best efforts. See **1st Tim 5:8.**” ⁸ *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.* “

We are instructed to provide, not profit or protect. In **1st Tim 5:16** “¹⁶ *If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.* “

We learn that it is family, not government that is the first line of defense for assistance. This point is driven home further in **Matt 15:5-6** “⁵ *But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’* ⁶ *he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.*”

Sharing With Others

It seems almost inconceivable that there are hungry Christians in the world today, but there are. In fact it has been estimated that there are more hungry Christians today than ever before in history. The worst witness we can have before the world is to ignore the needs of those in the body of Christ. Read **1st John 3:17-18** “¹⁷ *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*” ¹⁸ *Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*” and **James 2:15-16** “¹⁵ *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.*” ¹⁶ *If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?”* then **James 2:26.**” ²⁶ *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*” God’s expectation is clear, isn’t it? Remember too that “Rewards” in eternity, last forever!

Sharing With The Shepherds

Many Christians somehow feel that the shepherds of our faith should live at a lower standard than anyone else, but that is contrary to what God’s Word says. Spirituality is not proportional to poverty. Paul addresses this point in **1st Cor 9:7& 9.**” ⁷ *Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk?*” ⁹ *For it is written in the Law of Moses: “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.”* Is it about oxen that God is concerned?

We clearly see our responsibility in **3rd John 5:6** “⁵ *Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.* “ and in **1st Cor 9:14** “¹⁴ *In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.*”

Sharing With The Unsaved

It seems obvious that most Christians would recognize the need to help the body of Christ, although even those needs go unmet many times. But, using that logic, we easily could exclude the unsaved. Maybe you have asked, “Why would God expect us to use His money to feed the unsaved?” He shows just how important this idea is to Him by the sheer quantity of references in His Word. One such reference is **Matt 5:42** “⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Typically however we tend to judge those who come to us for help. If tempted to do that we should quickly recall the words of Jesus in **Matt 25:44-45** “⁴⁴ ‘They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’⁴⁵ ‘He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’” and recognize that it is He we are serving when we help the unsaved. Before throwing up ones hands in frustration about not being able to do all things for all people think of this scripture. **Matt 10:42** “⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” It is not the amount but rather the attitude that reflects the condition of the heart, right?

Where Should Your Gifts Go?

Obviously, we must be sensitive to God’s direction in our giving. He provides opportunities not only to give to the needs of the saints but also to invest tithes and offerings in His work. Unfortunately, we are besieged by requests for giving so it requires discernment on our part to filter out those that may be selfishly motivated. That requires a balance of compassion and good stewardship. There are some basic questions, answers to which we should expect from those who solicit our support.

1. Is the organization communicating a message true to scripture?
2. Are people responding positively to its work and message?
3. Is the organization seeking and accomplishing biblical goals?
4. Are the lives of its leaders consistent with biblical principles?

God’s Two Promises

Prov 28:27, says, “²⁷ He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.”

It is important that we acquire the proper perspective concerning with whom to share and when. After reviewing God’s Word the following is evident. We are required to share in needs, not wants or desires (**Prov 16:26**) “²⁶The laborer’s appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on “.

We are to help those unable to provide for themselves (**Luke 14:13-14**) “¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

There is no way to out give God, the more we are willing to share, the more God can and will entrust to us **(Malachi 3:7-11)** “⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’”⁸ “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings.”⁹ You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me.¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty.”