

How should we help the poor?

By

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Life Issues › Money and possessions › Politics, society and environment

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The vulnerable and weak have always been God's priority. The Bible shares God's clear instructions on helping the poor. Some specific details may not apply to our culture or time period, but the concepts remain the same.

Don't exploit those in need

“ If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him. “ – Exodus 22:25

“Y ou shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. “ – Exodus 23:6-7

“ Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate, for the Lord will plead their cause and rob of life those who rob them. “ – Proverbs 22:22-23

Be hospitable and welcoming

“ You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him , for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. ” – Exodus 22:21

“ You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. “ – Exodus 22:22

“ You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. “ – Exodus 23:9

“ If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. “ – Leviticus 25:35-37

Be generous with what you own

“ At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless,

and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do” – Deuteronomy 14:28-29

“It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice.” – Psalm 112:5

The instructions to care for the poor continue in the New Testament in Matthew 25:35-36 when Jesus says:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

He continues in Matthew 25:40:

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

The above verses define key ways to help

Meet basic needs (hunger, thirst, clothes, shelter)

Show hospitality (welcoming, visiting)

Care for and show compassion (taking care of the sick, visiting the prisoner)

It is clear that God calls us to care for the poor in several ways. In loving those in need, we are loving Christ.

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