

### Who and What Should a Christian Support?

## <u>2 Corinthians 9:6</u>: (NASB) Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.



One of the hallmark characteristics of being a Christian is compassion. Jesus was the epitome of acting in a way that helped and cared for others, and we are called to walk in his footsteps. Simple enough - or is it? In our world, there are a myriad of causes we can be kindhearted towards: the poor, the undereducated, the abused, the oppressed, the homeless, the disabled, and the unborn. Then there is the wider scope of life: endangered species, abused and homeless animals and the environment. Then there are the social and political issues that rage across our media 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All of these and more can easily demand our attention, our money and our time! What do we do? What causes are support-worthy for a Christian? Where do we invest our time, effort and resources to be truly God-honoring followers of Jesus?

First of all, doing "good" is a given for a successful Christian life:

<u>Galatians 6:10</u>: (NASB) So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good <18> to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

All people, especially to...the household of the faith - believers in Christ.

Good: Strongs #18 agathos; good (in any sense, often as noun):- [translated] benefit, good (-s, things), well

Thayer's Greek Lexicon: of good constitution or nature, useful, salutary, good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy, excellent, distinguished, upright, honorable

*Good* here means to do things in an appropriate and compassionate manner, to be helpful.

How would we know if Jesus was focused on giving to the poor?

and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

Let's go back to the Old Testament Law to see how he formed his teachings: <u>Deuteronomy 15:7-9</u>: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; <sup>8</sup>but you shall freely open your hand to him,

The Old Testament Law included an awareness of and required action for the concerns of others. Who are *the poor, one of your brothers*? Those of the nation of Israel, God's chosen and separated people.

<sup>9</sup>Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of remission, is near, and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you.

The Jewish Law provided that every seven years would be a "Sabbath year" or "sabbatical year," a seven-year agricultural cycle to allow the land to rest for maximum production. (Leviticus 25:1-7) The Year of Jubilee counted seven Sabbath years (seven times seven years) when property ownership automatically reverted to its original owner and those who sold themselves as indentured servants would regain their liberty. (Leviticus 25:8-54)



(Source: Biblical commentary by Matthew Henry) A law for the relief of poor debtors, such (we may suppose) as were insolvent. Every seventh year was a year of release, in which the ground rested from being tilled and servants were discharged from their services; and, among other acts of grace, this was one, that those who had borrowed money, and had not been able to pay it before, should this year be released from it; and though, if they were able, they were afterwards bound in conscience to repay it, yet thenceforth the creditor should never recover it by law.

Every seven years there was an equalizing factor. Every family was given a portion of the land when they first arrived. Sometimes things went wrong or people were careless, resulting in those who went into debt and gave up their possessions or land. This was a way to find your way back and make it right again. God warned against the thought of not lending in the sixth year. He did not want it used as an excuse to not be cognizant of your brother's situation.

<u>Deuteronomy 15:10-11</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. <sup>11</sup>For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.

In other words, give out of a full heart. Maybe during this seven-year period you did well for yourself, but maybe in the next seven-year period you will be the one in need.

After all of the lecturing about giving with goodness and generosity, God makes a peculiar statement: *For the poor will never cease to be in the land...* This is an important principle. Even with the provisions in place every seven years (and then every 50 with the Jubilee), poverty would still happen because life happens.

Let's move on to the New Testament.



## Jesus in the house of Lazarus when Mary anointed his feet with the costly perfume:

John 12:4-5,7-8: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, who was intending to betray him, said, <sup>5</sup>Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?... <sup>7</sup>Therefore Jesus said, Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.

Judas was murmuring, "That is a lot of money being poured out onto his feet!"

*The poor* - an ever-present issue. It looks like Jesus' answer quoted from the Jewish Law. He recognized the issue of the poor, but this event showed the importance of Mary's sacrifice honoring him. Jesus would die to ultimately fix the plight of the poor. He was more important at that moment than the poor.

Sacrificing for others shows a giving heart to whomever the Lord puts before us. It is being Christlike to help or to be a blessing, so we should always look for opportunities.



## Mary gave in such a way that Jesus specifically said the sacrifice would be talked about for generations:

<u>Matthew 26:13</u>: (NIV) Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.

#### Is Jesus saying to NOT help those with desperate needs now, because he will help them later?

Already this gets tricky. All we have seen so far is that the Old Testament Law made specific provisions for the needy. The carrying out of those provisions was largely left up to each individual. The mandate was to pay kind and generous attention, not to solve the problems of the poor. Jesus is speaking directly in line with that mandate.

What was Jesus' attitude towards the poor? There are differing opinions within Christianity. One can create debates over the social issues of our day by saying, "If Jesus was here, he would support issue 'x'?" What side was Jesus actually on? What were his priorities?

## Remember the rich young ruler who asked Jesus about eternal life? Jesus mentioned the poor:

<u>Mark 10:18-22</u>: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him...<sup>19</sup>You know the commandments, Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother. <sup>20</sup>And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. <sup>21</sup>Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. <sup>22</sup>But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

Jesus' advice to this good man did not center on the poor; that was only part of the equation. Jesus instead focused on the man completely divesting himself of his earthly attachments. He knew this man owned much and was attached to his possessions. *How do I inherit eternal life?* Jesus knew his heart was in the right place but he needed to detach from his worldly things. Move upward. It was not about the poor; the subject was about the man divesting himself.

And give to the poor - this man would have understood the attitude under the Law of giving to the poor - not to solve the global problem of poverty; rather, to help those in front of you in that specific moment.

If you are following after Jesus, your focus must be on him and not the distractions about solving the world's problems. Back then the poor were physically close to the community. You saw poor people walking down the average street. Nowadays we can get involved in supporting causes without knowing anyone specifically with a click of a button.

We are not saying we should not be kind-hearted; we need to understand how these things work. In those days, you gave something of value to someone in front of you. Now we click "send" to a charity and the money gets distributed. Giving today has a different environment than the giving in Jesus' day.



Q ↓ wind ↓ ↓)Cost of charities, *The Best and Worst Charities*, *WhatTravisSays* 

• A foundation could hire a telemarketer to actually get the job done and get the word out there, but when everything is said and done, they might owe the telemarketer more money than they brought in. And that happens with a lot of charities. Telemarketers are expensive; they're annoying, but they're expensive (they're really expensive). Sometimes the people running the charity are involved in a scam, but a lot of times they have no idea, but that's no excuse. The donors are still getting ripped off. Police, disaster relief, children with cancer - these are all triggers that people have and they want to help. And when these charities pop up, and they're like, "Here, help the kids with cancer, with these police dads who were affected by a tsunami..." a normal person would be like, "Ah! Take all my money!"

Should we be discriminating about what, how and why we give?

We are told to love our neighbors as ourselves; we should be aware of the needs of those around us. "Charity begins at home," which is an important foundation for our giving.

We are not going to tell you to which charities you should donate; rather, we want to go through scriptural principles for you to make your own spirituallyminded decisions where your money and time go to and why.

Luke 12:29-34: (NASB) <sup>29</sup>And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. <sup>30</sup>For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup>But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup>Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you - what we have NEED of will be given to us; not necessarily what we WANT. Again the advice is to focus on divesting yourself of earthly attachment from which the poor may benefit. Get rid of what you do not need and take care of people who have those needs. We can all downsize and do without clutter.



We have a lawn service and I mentioned to some of the workers that we had furniture we no longer needed. One of the workers was moving into an apartment and he was excited to have these things.

Charity is more powerful in terms of our witness when it can help face-to-face.

Jesus was not saying the poor were the most important thing; *divesting of your earthly attachments* is the most important thing, and the poor can benefit.



Jesus seems to see helping the poor as a "do what you can along the way" issue rather than a "solve the problem" issue. Why?



The future kingdom is the big solution for the poor. Showing compassion along the way is Christlike. It depends on what they need. You have to be careful. If you know the beggars on the street corners use the money for their drug habit, avoid them. But if someone is in need of a meal, buy them one. Listen to them. Give them your time and attention and make suggestions to help.

Our best charity begins at home. Be thoughtful when trying to fulfill someone's needs.

This next true example displays great wisdom in dealing with some dangers of giving financial aid.

### (I)) John's letter to Abraham Lincoln

(spelling errors are retained from the original document)

- Late 1850, Abraham Lincoln's stepbrother, John D. Johnston, wrote to him and asked, yet again, for a loan with which to settle some debts. Said Johnston:
- "I am dund & dogged to Death so I am all most tired of Living, & I would all most swop my place in Heaven for that much money. I would rather live on bread and water than to have men always duning me. If you can send me 80 Dollars I am willing to pay you any interest you will ask."

The will of you perceit. In quest contents each party claim, to act in accordence with the will of you. Bott may be an one must be brong. you can not be for and equint the percenting at the percention. In the present child was it is quite possible that good perpend is pomeeting at formed for the proper of either perty and you the human instrumentation, working pert on the for an of the last adaptation to effect the funger. I and some they for got the series the former that for many to say this is pretaily the a there goes made the say this is pretaily the at there are the former contract, and will the a star of the none contractory, the could have a set parce or contragent the benever have a human const ter. yes the contract lager - And having kyon the content for the final victory to getter see ory day. Yet the content proceeds

• On previous occasions, Lincoln simply would have agreed to such a request. This time, however, sensing an opportunity to impart some wisdom, he responded with the following letter of advice and a proposal...

<u>Galatians 2:7,9-10</u>: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised... <sup>9</sup>and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. <sup>10</sup>They only asked us to remember the poor - the very thing I also was eager to do.

There is an important principle here. The apostles are preaching to different groups and going in different directions. Their specific focus was the poor within their brotherhood; showing compassion and Christlikeness.



It is not just money! How to support the poor or less fortunate in our line of sight:

- Work in soup kitchens.
- Volunteer services give rides back and forth to the hospital to those going through chemotherapy.
- Take the needy and infirmed grocery shopping. Also bring the needy food now and then.



- Mow their lawn, shovel their snow, or do some house cleaning if you are able.
- Make a cash donation once in a while, as long as you do not enable them.

Look around you and if you are compelled to give to the less fortunate, that is a good thing. But do it wisely and in a way you can control the outcome to see results.

## Does the Bible give us guidance on Christian responsibility to protect the environment and animals?

Some of the largest causes in our world today are those that revolve around the earth and animals. Because the Bible was written so many centuries ago, there was not any mention of such causes, but the Scriptures do give us principles. Naturally, these principles are subject to our interpretation.

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. – Mahatma Gandhi

 $(\neg, \eta)$  What to look for, The Best and Worst Charities, What TravisSays

• So, how do you donate wisely? Well, number one: crowd funding is very risky. If there's a tsunami disaster, all of these charities popping up saying, "Here, donate us money. We'll get the money to these people right away; we promise..." but you've never really heard of them. Before you donate money, look for a track record. The company has to have something backing it. Like, "Look at all these years of experience, look at how awesome we are, now give us money - you can trust us with it." If a nonprofit pops up saying they are going to give these people affected by a disaster, A: if you've never heard of them, that's a red flag and, B: if there's not really much information about them online, that's another red flag. Now don't go immediately thinking that they are a scam, but if they're new to the game they might not have the perfect administration, and it might take a really long time for your dollar to reach the people who need it.

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When Rick is solicited for donations, he asks how much of the donation actually goes to helping that cause. If it is too low (sometimes as low as 10 percent), he gives money elsewhere.

The money you earn is supposed to be used in God's service, so we want to make sure our generosity is in line with Jesus' footsteps.



CharityNavigator.com is a good place to check before giving. According to their website, they are the largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities in the United States.

Managing animals and the environment. First, the animals are given for man's use:



<u>Genesis 9:1-3</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. <sup>3</sup>Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

God told Noah all the animals would be afraid of man, but they would be available for food. God was talking to Noah, the one man he could trust. He gave it to the best possible carrier of this information. Noah could tell the story, "God delivered us through this deluge and He gave us the earth and the animals."

## But just because you have dominion does not mean you can be disrespectful or careless:

Exodus 23:10-12: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, <sup>11</sup>but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. <sup>12</sup>Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, may refresh themselves.

Man's dominion would have guidelines; including letting the land rest. Even when people were working for you as indentured servants, you were not allowed to work them seven days a week. Everybody deserves rest. The lesson: Be respectful even though you have dominion.

## Dominion means respect, not only for that which is created, but more so for the Creator:

<u>Psalms 50:10-12</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. <sup>11</sup>I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. <sup>12</sup>If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains.



With the scriptural principles we have just seen, what are some ways we might view our giving and support for animals and environmental issues?



Some suggestions: Do not waste food. Recycle. Use pet-friendly weed killer in your personal space. Use the spirit of a sound mind - as Christians, we should not be wasting our time fighting for animal rights or against global warming, as the kingdom will solve all the world's issues. On a personal note, we adopted a rescue dog from Alabama. (See "Beta" on the right.) If you see someone harming an animal, report it.





By adopting this dog, Jonathan was saying, "I can make a difference with something in front of me. I am not going to change the world, but I can do 'this' and 'this.'"

One of the issues we have to be careful of is our Christianity can be defined by the causes we support. Should it instead be defined as being a follower of Jesus? What causes did Jesus support? The kingdom to come. He preached *love one another*. He was careful, respectful and merciful.

## As we ask ourselves about where to put our time, money and support, we need to think carefully:

<u>1 Corinthians 4:1-2</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup>In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

Stewardship means we are watching over something that is not ours. A good steward does this as if it IS his. What we have belongs to God through Christ. Would God want us to be concerned about issues in the world? Yes! Worried and consumed by specific issues? We do not think so. That may cause distraction in your walk.

Be sure your support is not all-consuming.

マリ) You're an idler, Abraham Lincoln

• January 2, 1851: Dear Johnston: Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little you have said to me, "We can get along very well now," but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now, this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting your time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

## Right along with stewardship is the principle of sound doctrine to be fully observed and practiced:

<u>Titus 2:1-8</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. <sup>2</sup>Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. <sup>3</sup>Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, <sup>4</sup>so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup>to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. <sup>6</sup>Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; <sup>7</sup>in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, <sup>8</sup>sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

## Let us not be consumed by things that are not Christlike just because we feel strongly about them.



### The Bible is telling us to use spiritual clarity in our charity. What about charity and the brotherhood?

What we give and how we support our fellow Christians is a very different paradigm, according to the New Testament. This is an area that is not only mentioned frequently but it is spoken of as a singular and distinct way to serve God. Helping one another helps you fulfill your covenant of sacrifice.

(I)) Favorite charities, The Best and Worst Charities, WhatTravisSays

• Some of my favorite charities include Disabled American Veterans. Their head honcho who runs the whole thing makes zero dollars. Zilch. St. Jude Research Hospital: 100 percent of all donations goes to these kids with cancer who have no insurance to pay for treatment - 100 percent. The Make-A-Wish Foundation: once again, 100 percent of your donation goes to this special wish of a dying child - 100 percent. Direct Relief: 98.7 percent of all money donated either goes to help or goes to fundraising. And since fundraising and spreading awareness only takes up .5 percent of whatever is donated, nearly all of your dollar goes to, as the name states, give direct relief. Ronald McDonald Houses: Say whatever you want about the food, but 100 percent of everything donated goes to housing parents who have critical children in the hospital.



My grandmother had relatives in a foreign country in need. She sent them money to buy a cow so they had the opportunity to reap benefits from their care and love for this animal. They agreed to use the money to buy the cow.

# First principle of giving financially to the brotherhood - each must do their part:



Ephesians 4:27-28: (NASB) <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil an opportunity. <sup>28</sup>He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

It does not matter what your background is. If you are capable, apply yourself. Do not be a cause for charity; be a conduit from which charity can flow through.

There is no use whatever trying to help people who do not help themselves. You cannot push anyone up a ladder unless he is willing to climb himself. – Andrew Carnegie



Consider hospitality. Invite someone in need to a meal so you can help them (in addition to the food) with spiritual encouragement, focus and fellowship to help raise their heart and mind higher.

### Do NOT create an environment where it is acceptable to be a slug:

<u>2 Thessalonians 3:10-13</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. <sup>11</sup>For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. <sup>12</sup>Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. <sup>13</sup>But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.



How do we create an environment of productiveness? Let us see what Abraham Lincoln did...

### (I)) Proposed solution, Abraham Lincoln

• You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get; and, to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making 20 dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County.

"I will help you only after you help yourself."



The critique of charities where 10 percent of your donation goes directly to help is not necessarily a fair point. Most charities that do the most (e.g. most funds raised for cancer research) may only spend 10 percent directly, but the 90 percent is spent on marketing, corporate solicitation, government lobbying, etc. This in turn often generates many magnitudes more net dollars for cancer research. Suddenly, your dollar is worth \$20. Most hoard entirely too much money in this country and have plenty to give a lot more freely. Having an attitude of skepticism of those asking for help only sets up barriers in our hearts.

Rick's opinion: Decide what is important and give first and foremost what is local to you where you can have an effect on where your efforts and dollars go. Are we supposed to be working towards government lobbying? If your Christian conscience is clear, then go ahead.

#### Second principle of giving to the brotherhood: Set your mind to it:

<u>Romans 12:10-14</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.



What are some practical ways we can give to others financially, keeping in mind the proper attitude of helping for the sake of helping and not for reward?

Giving money is not always the best thing. Consider giving bags of groceries or gift certificates to specific stores, or paying a bill. Giving to someone without their knowing the source of the gift may sometimes be appropriate. If you own your own business, you can hire someone. You can pay someone to do work at your home.



Third principle: Trust God and give. Support and help the body of Christ! Paul DEEPLY encouraged the support of those Christians who were destitute beyond their control by those who had enough.

#### The beauty here is that one group did not even know the other:

<u>2 Corinthians 9:6-7,12-15</u>: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>12</sup>For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup>Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, <sup>14</sup>while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!



#### We are emphatically told to monetarily help those of us who are less fortunate. How else can we help them?

We can put giving and support into overdrive. Financial support is a great tool, especially for those we do not know. An even better tool is personal active support of those who are in need of it. This is harder since it will require a time investment and is more challenging, because it takes our serious focus as well.



We have looked at giving to the poor and realize that Jesus told us the poor will be with us always, repeating what God said in the Old Testament. We are to be kind-hearted towards the poor but we cannot solve the problem of poverty. Jesus preached love and God's kingdom, which will solve the problem of poverty in the future.

We are required to respect the world around us. We should not be consumed or overwrought with all of these problems, or make fixing them our personal cause...because our personal cause is Christ.

We talked about giving to the brotherhood, especially financially. The New Testament is full of examples of that kind of giving, so this is where our giving should be focused. Beyond financial giving, we want to support each other in other ways.

*It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.* – *Napoleon Hill* 



We are to support the brotherhood in a personal and spiritual manner. All other giving, outside of the brotherhood, is peripheral to the Christian life.

## First and foremost, we belong in the service and support of the brotherhood:

<u>1 John 3:16-18</u>: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup>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? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

It is not about love because you say you love. Love must be shown in what you do and what is right on a spiritual level. These are the basic principles of where our greatest charity work should be.

### (I))Conclusion, Abraham Lincoln

Now, if you do this, you will be soon out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But, if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for 70 or 80 dollars. Then you value your place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the 70 or 80 dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and if you don't

pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than 80 times 80 dollars to you. Affectionately your brother, A. Lincoln



Personal responsibility is a powerful tool. We want to facilitate that in our charity wherever possible.



### GIVE A MAN A FISH, YOU FEED HIM FOR A DAY. TEACH A MAN TO FISH, YOU FEED HIM FOR A LIFETIME.

(Yes, that's a real fish!)



<u>Galatians 6:1-5</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

This kind of support requires a spiritual and merciful mind, as it is dealing with the subtlety of sin. *If anyone is caught in a trespass* - this means we are involved with the lives of the brotherhood enough to realize such a thing might be happening. Maybe they are confiding in us or we observe their behavior is off. We can talk to them about these things, speaking from the heart in fellowship. It implies being close to know something is wrong.

This closeness is probably not as common as it should be. We should be more involved with one another so that we can support along those lines in the spirit of gentleness.

<sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

*Bear* - literally, to take up and carry the heaviness. It does not mean you take *responsibility* for the weight; rather, it means you just help with the heaviness of the burden. That is a hard thing to do. Sometimes we go over the line and take the burden of someone when it did not belong to us. This relieves them for a moment but does not help them. We want to help others through the pain.

<sup>3</sup>For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup>But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

Our attitudes and hearts have to be in the right place. We are bound by the Law of Christ to care for one another. Doing so requires self-examination of one's own strength in the Lord to make sure that strength is genuine and humble. It is not about "me" rescuing anybody; that is the wrong source. We are stewards of what God has given us, so by His grace if an opportunity opens before us, thank God for the opportunity He provided. Our attitude should be, "God, give me the strength to fulfill that opportunity." We need God's wisdom to go to His word to find the fix.

<sup>5</sup>For each one will bear his own load.

The word for *load* is also used for the freight, the lading of a ship, an invoice that tells you what is in a box. Every individual Christian is fully responsible for the full delivery of what is assigned to him. If I am the one in need, I am responsible for the full delivery of the trial. I might have trouble with the weight of it, and you can help me, but it is ultimately me who has to deliver. The helper has a responsibility to have a humble heart before God to use that opportunity.



What do we do if we feel like our own spirituality may not be strong enough to help someone?



Recommend that the brother or sister go to someone who can give wise counsel. Recommend Bible verses.

James 5:16: (KJV) The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Just because we are not capable does not mean we do not do anything; we can give encouragement and stay involved. This is where our greatest charity should lie. We need to build one another up. We are to be faithful unto death and receive the crown of life (<u>Revelation 2:10</u>) so we can help relieve all of the world's problems in the kingdom.

<u>Galatians 6:7-10</u>: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

We are here reminded that our self-examination is a centerpiece of importance. WHY are we helping? By being clear on our own motivation we can better help others with their personal clarity.

<sup>9</sup>Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup>So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

We end where we began: *Do good to all people* - what does this mean? Everybody in our path should be in line for our goodness that God has given us. Especially to whom? *The household of faith!* How do we give to them? In every way possible. We are responsible to give in a way that brings honor to God. Be generous.

> So, who and what should a Christian support? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!



Join us next week for our podcast on April 23, 2018: What Does Discipleship Cost?

#### **Bonus Material!**

The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well. – Ralph Waldo Emerson



#### No one has ever become poor by giving. – Anne Frank, diary of Anne Frank

## Several other Scriptures that focus us on giving in the right way and with the right attitude:

<u>3 John 1:5</u>: (NASB) Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers.

<u>Colossians 4:5-6</u>: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

<u>Romans 12:10-14</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

<u>Matthew 6:1-4</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

<u>Acts 9:36</u>: (NASB) Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.

<u>Matthew 5:41-42</u>: (NASB) <sup>41</sup>Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup>Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

<u>1 Thessalonians 4:9-12</u>: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup>for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, <sup>11</sup>and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup>so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

#### Full context of this text which we touched on:

2 Corinthians 9:1-15: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; <sup>2</sup>for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. <sup>3</sup>But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; <sup>4</sup>otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we-not to speak of you-will be put to shame by this confidence. <sup>5</sup>So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness. <sup>6</sup>Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; <sup>9</sup>as it is written, He scattered abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever. <sup>10</sup>Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; <sup>11</sup>you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup>For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. <sup>13</sup>Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your



confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, <sup>14</sup>while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

### ARTICLE: Who to Donate to? GotQuestions.org:

<u>Question:</u> "Whom should I donate to? How should I decide which charity/organization/cause to financially support?"

<u>Answer</u>: With the myriad of charitable giving options out there, how can a Christian make a wise decision in regards to whom to donate? What causes, missions, organizations, charities, etc., are most worthy of consideration? How can money be invested to have the greatest possible eternal impact? Many people struggle with these questions. Here are some principles that should help make the decisions a little easier.

### Whom to donate to? - Sound Doctrine

"You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

Does the cause/mission/organization/charity proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and uphold the authority of God's Word? Does everything the ministry does ultimately have the goal of fulfilling the Great Commission, that is, evangelizing the lost and equipping believers into becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)? Even if the primary focus of the cause is to be the hands and feet of Jesus and minister to peoples' physical needs, is the gospel still forefront in everything it does?

### Whom to donate to? - Effectiveness and Expertise

"Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Matthew 13:8).

Is the cause having an impact? Is the charity actually accomplishing its mission, goals, and purposes? Is the organization demonstrating expertise in solving problems? In a crowded field, does one outreach seem to stand out from the rest in truly making a difference in peoples' lives?

### Whom to donate to? - Stewardship

"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Is the ministry using its money wisely? Is the cause investing its resources in the things that truly matter? As in the Parable of the Talents, is the organization burying its treasure or putting it to work in the kingdom of God? Do the charity's financial priorities appear to be in line with the priorities the Word of God outlines?

### Whom to donate to? - Accountability

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22).

Is the organization open and honest about its finances and decisions? Does any one individual have too much influence, or is there a good balance of people involved in important decisions? Is the leadership open to "iron sharpening iron" counsel (Proverbs 27:17)? Is the charity willing to fully disclose all of its



appropriate financial information? Is the cause open to constructive criticism, or is it closed to feedback (Proverbs 27:6)?

#### Whom to donate to? - Prayer

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

Ask God for wisdom in regards to how He wants you to invest your money in ministry (James 1:5). Ask God to give you a passion for the things He wants you to donate to. Ask God to make it abundantly clear how you can best make financial sacrifices for an eternal impact.

### Whom to donate to? - Trust God and Give

"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

While the above principles should help, there is no biblical "thou shalt..." on this question. We believe that, while a Christian's primary giving should be to the local church he/she attends, there is also much freedom with this issue. Should a Christian support a child sponsorship program or donate toward ending human trafficking? Should a Christian donate to a local rescue shelter or a global evangelism outreach? There is no universal right or wrong answer to these questions. It is a matter of discernment, priorities, and passion.

Ask God to give you a passion toward the outreach He wants you to support. Do the research with the above principles in mind. Then, give!

(Source: https://www.gotquestions.org/who-to-donate-to.html)

