

New Covenant Theology



New Covenant Giving

- When we looked at the question of tithing, we saw that the standard for New Covenant giving is that we are to give ***generously*** and ***cheerfully*** (without compulsion) (2 Cor. 9:7, 1Tim 6:17-19)
- So for the last few weeks we have been looking at the question: Who all should New Covenant believers be generously and cheerfully giving ***to***?
- We have seen that several categories of giving are mentioned in the NT:
 - Pastors/Elders
 - Ministers of the Gospel
 - The Poor
 - Other Possibilities?

Giving to the Poor - Review

- We began by looking at a number of NT scriptures that show that we have a biblical duty to give to the poor.
- Last week we began to explore the following questions about giving to the poor:
 - Is it ever **wrong** (or at least a bad idea) to give to someone in financial need?
 - Are there **limits** to how much we should give to the poor? If so, what are they?
 - Even if we gave away **all** of our money to the poor, we can't help everyone. So how do we go about prioritizing who we **do** help?

Limits on Giving to the Poor - Review

- We looked at 2Thes. 3:7-15 where the Apostle Paul teaches that it is wrong (and I suggested, unloving) to give anything (even food) to someone who is able, but ***unwilling***, to provide for their own need.
- We then looked at four practical considerations we should take into account before helping the poor*
 - Is there really a crisis at hand?
 - To what degree was the individual personally responsible for the crisis?
 - Can the person help himself?
 - To what extent has this person already been receiving relief from you or others in the past?

**When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

Priorities in Giving

- Our greatest obligation in giving to those in need is to provide for our family and those in need should look first to their families for help:
 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1Tim. 5:8)*
 - *If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows. (1Tim. 5:16)*
- The command to help the poor is an extension of the command to love our neighbor and therefore applies to **anyone** in need – even our enemy.

Priorities in Giving

- However the scriptures do seem to suggest that we are to be **especially** concerned with looking after the needs of fellow **believers**:
 - *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and **especially to those who are of the household of faith**.* (Gal. 6:10)
 - *“Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ ... or naked and clothe you?” ... ⁴⁰ “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these **my brothers**, you did it to me.”* (Mat. 25:37-40)
 - *If a **brother or sister** is **poorly clothed and lacking in daily food**, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?* (James 2:15)
 - *But if anyone has the world's goods and sees **his brother** in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?* (1John 3:17)

Priorities in Giving

- It seems to me that we should it should be a higher priority to help people with whom we are able to have ongoing personal interaction than to help those with whom we are unable to have much contact.
- Why do you think I would say that?
- We live in a society where there are numerous safety nets in place – to a point where there is really no reason why almost anyone in our society should have to be without the basic necessities.
- Should the existence of these safety nets affect how (or even *if*) we go about helping local people who are poor? If so, how?

Priorities in Giving

- Which is better:
 - To help a person with ***serious*** needs (i.e., food and clothing) who lives in ***another country*** where there are no safety nets or legal protection
 - Or to help a ***local*** person who is struggling financially with genuine needs that are ***less serious*** (helping them to repair a car, buy a water heater, purchase a bible or a good commentary, take a much needed getaway as a couple, etc.)

Questions?

