

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?

