

Giving to the Poor

This study is designed to help us understand God's heart for the poor and our responsibility to them as Christians.

What does the Bible say about actions regarding the poor?

Proverbs 14:31

- How are our actions toward the poor and needy seen by God?
 - Oppressing the poor shows disrespect toward God.
 - Showing kindness to the needy honors God.
- Why does God take our treatment of the poor personally?

Proverbs 19:17

- Why do you think God rewards us for being kind and generous to the poor?

Proverbs 21:13

- God will not hear our cries if we do not respond to the cries of the poor.
- We are to respond to the poor and needy as we wish God to respond to us.

How does God expect us to act towards the poor?

Proverbs 29:7

- What are the rights of the poor?
 - To be treated with dignity, love, care and respect.
 - To not be oppressed, but to be helped.
- When God's Word speaks of justice for the poor, it refers to our responsibility to do what we can to give them a hand up, as we are able.

Matthew 25:31-46

- Here Jesus paints a picture of the final judgment.
- Jesus makes it abundantly clear that he takes our action or inaction toward the poor and needy personally.
- What are the characteristics of the "sheep" in this passage?
 - Concern for the poor that leads them to feed, house, visit, clothe and look after the poor and needy.
 - This is more than simply good intentions, but sacrificial actions.
- What are the characteristics of the "goats" in this passage?
 - Disregard for the poor that leads them to ignore their needs.
 - This disregard for the poor is seen in a selfish lifestyle that neither feeds, visits, clothes, or looks after the poor and needy.
- What are you most convicted about from this passage?

Questions:

- How can we live a life of care and concern for the poor and needy that is both sacrificial and financially responsible?
- How is this lifestyle going to require greater faith and trust in God on your part?
- Are you willing to make a lifelong commitment to helping the poor and needy, as you are able, and according to your personal faith (2 Corinthians 9:7)?