

INSTRUCTION TO CHURCHES FOR WHO TO HELP

1 The Church Must Discern Who Are Truly the Needy

1Tm.5:3

 Honor widows who are really widows. (1Tm.5:3)

- In the days the New Testament was written, there was no social assistance system from the government.
- In that day there was one especially vulnerable class - elderly widows, who were without means of support from husbands or grown children, and without means to adequately support themselves.
- Those who were really widows were to receive honor - which in this context means financial support, yet given in a dignified and honorable way.
- Any pastor can give you many, many stories about strangers who call the church and ask for some kind of assistance.
- Any pastor can tell you how hard it is to deal with such situations with love, but without getting ripped off.

2 If One Can Work to Support Himself, He is Not Truly Needy and Must Provide For His Own Needs

2Th.3:10-12

2Th.4:11; 1Tm.5:8

 ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. (2Th.3:10-12)

- God's plan is to provide for our needs through our work. Paul distinguishes between those who "will not work" with those who cannot work.

 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1Tm.5:8)

- God's normal way of providing for the needy is not through the church, but through our own hard work.
- Don't give at the expense of your own family. This is the minimum required of a Christian man.

 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you (2Th.4:11)



3 If Family Can Support a Needy Person, the Church Should Not Support Them

1Tm.5:3-4

 ³Honor widows who are really widows. ⁴But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. (1Tm.5:3-4)

4 Those Who are Supported by the Church Must Make Some Return to the Church Body

1Tm.5:5,10

 ⁵Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. ¹⁰well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. (1Tm.5:5,10)

5 The Church Must Examine Moral Conduct Before Giving Support 1Tm.5:9-13

 ⁹Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, ¹⁰well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. ¹¹But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, ¹²having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. ¹³And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. (1Tm.5:9-13)

6 Support of the Church Should Be for the Most Basic Necessities of Living 1Tm.6:7-8

 ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. (1Tm.6:7-8)

- The things which make a man rich in this world mean nothing in the world to come.
- We can use our material resources RIGHT NOW for eternal good - even though we can't bring them with us.
- A heart of contentment begins with seeing our material possessions and resources in an eternal perspective.



PEOPLE THAT GOD COMMANDS US NOT TO HELP

- The Bible contains specific instructions regarding boundaries, discernment, and withholding help from those whose actions undermine the faith or the community. We should not confuse praying and loving people with helping people.

1 The Deceptive and Manipulative

Controlling

- **Proverbs 6:12-15** describes them as “worthless and wicked” people who continually scheme and deceive others.
- Their intentions are rooted in selfishness and self-gain, leading them to manipulate and exploit those around them.
- **Proverbs 20:19** cautions against associating with those who are deceitful and spread lies (“do not associate with one who flatters with his lips”). **Proverbs 26:24**, “He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself.”
- **Proverbs 12:22** calls lying lips an “abomination to the Lord.” God does not look at them with pity, but with disgust.
- The fruit of their works will be rotten, and it will bring forth confusion, distrust, strife, and betrayal. (**Pr.6:16-19**).
- Helping a manipulator does not set one free. It simply strengthens their control over you (**Pr.22:24-25**).

2 The Foolish and Unwise

Repeating

- **Proverbs 14:7** advises staying away from fools who lack wisdom and understanding.
- **Proverbs 26:11**, “As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.” This illustrates the tendency of fools to repeat their foolish behavior. There is a difference between falling into sin and living a life of practicing sin.
- **Proverbs 1:7**, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” The contrast is between those who revere the Lord, and those who repeatedly disregard wisdom.
- This person does not want transformation. He wants relief. He does not want to break away from what is destroying him.
- Helping them repeatedly refuse to change, it can be a waste of resources and a path to frustration (**Pr.23:9**). The most loving action might be to let them face the consequences.