

**Spiritual How-to's**  
**Giving to the Needy**  
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**Intro. According to the Gallup Poll, 73% of American donated to a charitable cause as of 5/2020. Prior to this, it was 79%.**

**Lending Tree's statistics say that as of 11/2021 that number was only 56%.**

**And in 2022, 31% of donors gave to non profits.**

**Generationally, 47% Millennials give through a website,**

**45% of Gen Xers give to crowdfunding campaigns,**

**72% of Baby Boomers give to a charity**

**Giving to the needy is declining in our day, by every measurement and yet, it is what God expects of us and has for generations.**

**I. In Jesus' sermon on the mount and his messages Kingdom life in the real world that followed, the next topic He addresses (as we have been studying) is in Matthew 6:1-4, and it's about giving to the needy. It says this –**

**A. It is striking that giving to the needy is NOT really his issue here.**

**B. It is the motivation for giving that He is concerned about.**

**C. He says, 3 times in the passage, WHEN YOU GIVE don't do it to be seen by men.**

**1. Beware-** of practicing your righteousness before other people

**2. So –** when you give to the needy don't trumpet it

**3. But –** when you give don't let it be known

**4. Clearly, Jesus' message was who's recognition are you seeking when you give**

**5. If it's to be seen by men, that's what you'll get and that's all**

**6. If it's to be seen by God, do it in secret w/o human accolades.**

**D. In Judaism, giving to the needy was a pillar of piety.**

**1. Religious leaders, Pharisees, gave to be recognized by men tho'**

**2. Jesus was addressing the hypocritical attitude.**

**3. They didn't really care for the needy, they just wanted their own honor**

**4. They were doing the right things for the wrong reasons.**

**E. How did this happen?**

**II. From the very beginning of Israel's history, they were commanded by God to care for the poor.**

**A. In Deuteronomy 10:17-19 it is laid out in the law.**

**1. "God is the God of God's and Lord of Lord's, He is great and awesome and He is not partial...He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, giving them food and clothing."**

2. **And 161 times in the OT and 78 times in the NT** this caring for the poor is repeated.

B. Each Israelite family was given a portion **of land**.

1. Some would prosper
2. Some would fall on hard times
3. The poor would fall into debt & sell themselves into slavery

C. So God ordained a **regular system of being released from debt and slavery in the law**. Deut. 15:1-18

1. At the end of 7 years, all debts would be canceled
2. The pledges that secured the loans would be released and the debt cancelled
3. This was a command. It was law.

D. Even in harvesting the fields, **the Israelites were commanded to leave behind** sheaves, grapes and olives for the poor to gather.

E. **Through the generations, the Israelites followed this law as the Rabbis taught how to care for the orphan and widow.**

F. **By NT times**, these specific practices for caring for the needy were codified and called **“gemilut chasidim” = acts of charity**. All Jews practiced them, religiously.

G. **The overriding philosophy of the acts of charity is THE NEEDY HAVE A GOD-GIVEN RIGHT TO AID AND THE GIVER HAS AN OBLIGATION TO GOD TO HELP.**

H. Even under **Alexander the Great, in 325 BC**, when Simeon the Just was high priest, the **Jews duty to orphans** and widows was clearly defined and actually became **distinguishing characteristics** of Jews and Judaism’s responsibility.

I. That is why so many of the **NT accounts mention caring for the needy**, the orphans and widows. Matthew 5:42, 6:2-4, 10:42, 19:21, 23:5, 25:35-40; Mark 10:21; Luke 6:38, 19:8, 18:22; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-33, 9:36, 10:1-4; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16; James 1:27, 4:17; 1 Timothy 5:3-16

1. Those looking for eternal life, who obeyed the law were told to give to the poor
2. True religion is defined as taking care of the orphans, and widows and keeping ourselves unstained by the world.

III. **How had it become perverted?** Returning to **Matthew 5**, **Jesus** is correcting them for **doing the right thing for the wrong reason.**

A. Their giving had become so habitual and routine, they were trying to out perform one another.

1. They wanted recognition for their giving
2. They wanted the focus on them for their giving
3. They wanted man’s praise for what they had done or given
4. They were not caring for the needy. There was only self-love, not others love.

B. Jesus called them hypocrites. Matthew 23

C. The law initiated in the OT, was meant to be implemented in the NT being mixed with Jesus’ love, grace and mercy for the needy.

D. So, His Body, the growing **NT church**, was to display **generous giving to the needy**.

1. We see this in Acts 2
2. People sold possessions to give to the needy
3. The church took care of people's needs
4. THIS was God's intention

E. **But even that was touched with notoriety**. Acts 4:32- 5:11

1. Ananias and his wife sold a piece of land
2. They agreed to make it look like they were giving the whole sum to the church, when in fact, they were only giving a portion of the full price
3. When they gave it to Peter and told their lie, the Holy Spirit told Peter they were lying and within 3 hours both of them laid dead at Peter's feet
4. Why? Seems harsh right?

F. **God's kingdom values are truth in the inward parts and the outward parts**.

1. His priorities are always love, mercy, and grace
2. Not status, recognition, competition, or achievements
3. Ananias and Sapphira were motivated by pride
4. Pride is an enemy in God's kingdom and was judged in their life and in the life of the infant, NT church
5. AND the church grew because of this!

G. God's more interested in the **condition of our heart than the amount we give**.

1. Giving because love and are grateful
2. Rather than out of obligation or religious duty

IV. Remember, **"the needy have a God-given right to aid and the giver has an obligation to God to help."**

A. Let's remember God is the centerpiece of our giving. Not man. Not obligation or duty.

B. When we give to the poor, we are lending to the Lord. Proverbs 19:17

C. He will reward us.

D. So, dear friend, it's report card time. Evaluate your life and your helping the needy

1. Do you help the needy?
2. Why or why not?
3. Our motivation and out giving is important is important if we are seeking to please the Lord.
4. Let's open our hearts and eyes to use our influence to see and help the needy around us.

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