



## HELPING OTHERS



# 16



## How not to Help

**1**

Do not consider charity optional.

**2**

Do not think you own anything.

**3**

Do not be stingy.

**4**

Do not always wait for group action.

**5**

Do not be overcautious in choosing beneficiaries.

**6**

Do not confine charity to special occasions.

**7**

Do not publicize charity.

**8**

Do not bring the recipients under obligation.

**9**

Do not encourage laziness.

**10**

Do not grow tired of charity.



## How not to Help

### Introduction

- God saw that everything He created was good, except one thing:  
“man without a helper” (Gen 2:18)

There’s no man or woman in the world who never needs the help of others. But because of the prevalent selfishness, man desires to be a “recepient” rather than a “giver” of help.

- Charity is an integral part of Christianity.

There can be charity without Christianity;  
but there can be no Christianity without charity.

Do we then promote a religion of “works?”  
Are we not saved by grace thro’ faith?  
Yes, we are *not saved “by” works but “for” works* (Eph 2:8-10)

— Not “by” the works of the “Law” (Gal 2:16),  
but “for” the works of “faith & love” (Heb 6:10; Gal 5:6)

That’s what Apostle James stresses —  
Js 2:14,17 ... *Faith without works is dead*

i.e. Paul in Ephesians refers to “works” before salvation;  
James in James speaks of “works” after salvation.

“Works” are not a condition but an evidence of salvation.

## How not to Help

### 1. Do not consider charity optional.

- One of the oft-repeated names of Jehovah-God in the OT:  
“Helper”

eg) Psa 54:4a ... *God is my Helper*

As we move into the NT,

The Son of God is called the “First Comforter;”  
the Spirit of God is called the “Second Comforter.”

*Comforter* = Helper

Jn 14:16

Because each of the three Persons of Godhead is a Helper,  
His children cannot be otherwise —

Eph 5:1 ... *Be followers of God as “children.”*

- There can be no Christianity without charity —  
Let’s see how each of the Christian disciplines and exercises  
is integrated to charity —

- The first and the equally important  
*second commandment:*

Mt 22:37-39 ... Jesus’ answer to a lawyer

— second but not secondary!

When another lawyer asked Jesus, “*Who is my neighbour?*”  
Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37)

In other words,

Helping those in need is as important as loving God!

- Christian life begins with **repentance** —

eg) John the Baptist.

*Fruits of Repentance: "What must we do?"*

Lk 3:11 ... Share your clothes and food

with the have-nots.

When Daniel called King Nebuchadnezzar to repent,  
he challenged him to help the poor —

Dan 4:27 ... *showing mercy to the poor*

- The first blessing of Christian life is **salvation**.

eg) Zacchaeus (Lk 19:8,9)

*"half to poor ... today salvation"*

- The most blessed privilege of a child of God  
is to call God as "*Abba, Father*" and **pray** unto Him —  
But prayer is meaningless without charity —

Isa 1:15-18 ... *even though many prayers ...*

Jesus taught first about charity,  
and only then about prayer and fasting,  
in the Sermon on the Mount:

Mt 6:1-4, 5-15, 16-18

In the case of Cornelius,

both "*prayers*" and "*alms*" went up together  
before God *as a memorial* (Acts 10:2,4)

- Even **fasting** is not acceptable before God  
without charity —

Isa 58:5,6,7 ... "*God's chosen fast*"

especially (v7) ... *hungry ... homeless ... clotheless*

- There is a revival of **praise & worship** everywhere.

In this excitement, we must not forget charity —

Heb 13:15,16 ... *praise ... do good ... share*

It’s not enough if we sing and dance;

we must cause the poor man to sing —

eg) Job 29:13b ... *I caused the widow’s heart to sing*
- **Giving** to God’s work is not superior to giving to the poor—

Prov 19:17 ... *“lending to God”*

Tithing vs. *“Weightier” matters* — Mt 23:23
- What about **preaching?**

Who should be our main target group?

Lk 4:18 ... *“anointed to preach to the poor*  
*... liberate the oppressed”*

When Peter, James & John gave send-off  
to Paul & Barnabas, the first missionaries —

Gal 2:9,10 ... *“Remember the poor!”*
- We talk so much about **Revival**.

And invariably we quote Nehemiah for practical lessons—

His ministry had two sides —

Spiritual Revival **and** Social Reformation

Chapters 3 & 4 speak of rebuilding the wall.

Chapter 5 speaks of the ways in which  
he helped the poor thro’ personal sacrifice.

This is what happened in the Revival of Pentecost also:

Acts 2 & 4 ... Outpouring and sharing

See 2:44,45; 4:32-37

This is why the Prophets of the OT, who called God's people to Repentance & Restoration, spoke mainly against social injustice & ill-treatment of the poor —

eg) Book of Amos

2:6,7; 4:1; 5:10-12; 6:1,8,12; 8:5

□ That brings us finally to the **Second Coming** —

Mt 25:34-46 ... *left* (goats) ... *right* (sheep)

Are you a “goat” or a “sheep?”

■ So we can conclude:

Christianity is Charity!

We don't say, Charity is Christianity;

but Christianity is Charity!

Definition for true religion —

Js 1:27 ... First charity, next chastity!

■ Yes, charity is not optional but obligatory!

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## How not to Help

### 2. Do not think you own anything.

- This truth is fundamental to develop in us  
a spirit of helping those in need.

This is foundational to the doctrine of Christian giving.

- The Bible abounds with texts which teach us that **God** is the “Owner” of everything and **we** are simply the “users” or trustees or stewards or tenants.

- Psa 50:12 ... *If I were hungry ... the world is Mine ...*  
In response **we** are to say —

Psa 89:11 ... *“It’s Yours!”*

Some more texts —

- Lev 25:23 ... *Land is Mine ... you are sojourners*
- Hagg 2:8 ... *Silver ... gold ... Mine*

It was this understanding that made the OT saints to testify as below —

- David: 1 Chr 29:14 ... *From Your hand we have received*
- God’s challenge: Job 41:11... *Who has “first” given to Me?*

This truth runs through the New Testament also —

- Rom 11:36 ... *OF Him ... THRO’ Him... TO Him...*
- Col 1:16,17 ... *All created thro’ and for Him ...*

- Whatever we have is because of God’s **generosity** —

Js 1:5 ... *He gives liberally ...*

Acts 17:25 ... *He gives all things ... needs nothing*  
(Paul to Athenians)

Rom 8:32 ... *freely gives us all things ...*



- This truth has been lost over the years;  
the Day of Pentecost was the beginning of the restoration  
of this truth —  
Voluntary act: Acts 2:44,45 ... *divided as anyone had need*  
4:32 ... **No one said**, *anything was his own!*  
This will bring a spiritual revolution in our Churches  
*“great power”* (v33)
- Because God owns everything,  
of His own sovereign will He gives **more** to some,  
and **less** to others —  
Prov 22:2 ... He created both rich and poor  
29:13 ... He only makes both of them to see...  
If we have more than what others have, it's not of our own —
- We brought nothing ... take back nothing  
Eccl 5:15 ... *naked we came ... naked we return*  
(Also Job 1:21)  
Endorsed in the NT —  
1 Tim 6:7 ... *brought nothing ...*  
*it's “certain” we carry nothing*  
There can be no highmindedness —  
1 Cor 4:7 ... *Who makes you to differ?*
- Even if it's earned through hard labour —  
Dt 8:17,18 ... *Don't say, my own hand ...*
- God blesses us only to bless others thro' us:  
— This is why God chose Abraham  
Gen 12:2,3 ... *through you all the families ...*

— If God has given us more than what we need,  
it's just in order to give to those in need.

This principle of “*equality*” is strongly stated by Paul —  
2 Cor 8:13,14 ... *Your abundance ... their lack ...*

God is against “rich becoming richer,  
and poor becoming poorer!”

— That's why God is against overaccumulation of wealth:

□ Isa 5:8 ... “*Woe ... house to house ... land over land ...*”  
The first of the 6 woes (vv 8,11,18,20,21,23)

□ Even a King is not supposed to accumulate wealth:  
Dt 17:17 ... “*not to multiply wives and wealth!*”  
See how serious!

That's why there's an excellent prayer in Proverbs:

Prov 30:8,9

i.e. no financial extremes —

just moderation

■ Suppose you are already quite rich,  
or God keeps on adding riches to you —

□ Like Zacchaeus,  
you can keep 50% for yourself  
and give away the other 50% to the poor.

This is in line with the teaching of John the Baptist,  
the greatest of all prophets (Lk 3:10,11).

Keep just a reasonable saving for your future.

□ Like Mr. William Colgate of America who founded the  
Colgate-Palmolive Company—

Started giving 10% ... then 20% ... 40% ... 100%  
to God and the poor

Maybe you brushed your teeth this morning with this paste!

- Don't leave everything for your children.  
The stewardship responsibility is on you.

Personal testimony:

To our daughter: one third of all my savings to her,  
two thirds for God and the poor.

- A challenge by Oswald J. Sanders (1902-1992)—  
The question is not how much of “our” money  
we should give to God and to others,  
but how much of “God’s” money we can keep for ourselves!

■ **Additional thoughts**

- Some people will have to work and earn all their lives  
to keep a reasonable saving for their future.  
Others do it in just 5 or 10 years' time. Such people must  
stop earning for themselves but earn whatever they can to  
give away totally to God and the poor (1 Tim 6:17-19).
- He who loves silver will not be satisfied with it (Eccl 5:10).
- 2 Cor 12:14 and Prov 19:14 do not speak of leaving  
“everything” for the children, but just making reasonable  
provisions for them to make a start.

**I recommend ...**

*Stewardship Study Bible (NIV)*

—a challenging Study Bible that traces  
the theme of stewardship throughout the Scriptures

## How not to Help

### 3. Do not be stingy.

- All through the Scriptures,  
God commands **generosity** in the matter of charity —
  - Dt 15:7,8 ... *no hardening of heart ...*  
*open hand wide ... willing ...*  
:11 ... “COMMAND” ... *open your hand wide*
  - Dt 24:19 ... *sheaf ... forgotten ... don't go back*  
:20 ... *olive ... no second plucking ...*  
:21 ... *grapes ... no second gleaning*  
:22 ... *You were a slave (of Satan) ...*  
*I COMMAND you!*  
i.e. **all** the profit is not for us!
  - Our forefathers were generous ...  
it was well with them  
Jer 22:15-17  
  
But “you” (the present generation) are greedy.  
Our forefathers earned so little, but gave so much;  
but we earn so much, and give so little!
  - Stinginess is viewed seriously by God:  
He calls it the “*sin of Sodom*” —  
Ezek 16:49
  - Prov 11:24-26 ... Blessing on generosity
- The problem with many spiritual Christians:  
they have no problem in giving to God’s work;

they are not that generous when it comes to charity.  
But the Bible invariably associates “tithing” with charity —

- Dt 14:28,29 ... *stranger ... fatherless ... widow ...*  
*that they may be “satisfied”*
- Mal 3:10 ... The most famous passage on tithing —  
The purpose: “*that there may be food*”  
Food is primarily for the foodless!
- There’s no teaching on “tithing” in all the Epistles  
of the NT.

The only passage which elaborately teaches “giving” is  
2 Cor 8 & 9

The context is **not** about giving to God’s work,  
but charity to the poor —

9:1,12 “*ministry to the poor saints*”

The most famous text is misused —  
“*God loves a cheerful giver*” (9:7)

This is about “giving to the poor” —  
See v9 ... *dispersed abroad ... given to the poor ...*  
(lavish giving)

This is a quote from Psa 112:9  
Read and meditate 2 Cor 8 & 9,  
and understand God’s heart for the poor.

If we don’t catch this truth,  
we will hang our heads in shame in eternity  
over the missed opportunities —

Mt 25:42 ... *I was hungry ... you fed Me not ...*

Giving to God is not giving to the poor;  
but giving to the poor means giving to God!

- The rich young ruler had no problem with living a moral life (by obeying the Commandments); but he got stuck when it came to the distribution of his wealth to the poor — Lk 18

In the very next chapter (Lk 19), we meet Zacchaeus who generously and voluntarily decided to give away 50% to the poor.

- Christ has commanded us not only to give “alms” to the poor, but also prepare “*feasts*” for them —

Lk 14:12-14

O how much we spend on dinners to be given to the rich!

- Nobody is too poor to be generous —

eg) The Macedonian Christians

2 Cor 8:1-4 ... *deep poverty but abounding liberality!*

First the “*desire*” should come,  
though there’s no means (v12)

Don’t keep saying —

“If I had lots of money, I would give liberally to the poor!”

The truth with such an excuse is:

When we had no money, we had a heart to give;  
now that we have money, we just don’t have the heart!

Richard Wumbrand (1909-2001) in “*Tortured for Christ*”—

Every 10th day he gave his **daily** ration of soup  
in the prison to a weaker brother;

Every 10th week he gave his **weekly** portion of bread  
in the prison to a weaker brother!

- If we keep on raising our standard of living,  
we cannot raise the standard of life of others!

Our luxuries will deprive others of their necessities (Js 5:4,5).

■ **Additional thoughts**

- *Abundantly you have received; liberally give* (Mt 10:8)
- No help is too big; no help is too small!  
    *“a cup of water”* (Mt 10:42; Mk 9:41)
- The little boy’s generosity filled the multitudes (Jn 6:9)
- John Wesley:  
    Do all the good you can,  
    to all the people you can,  
    in all the places you can,  
    in all the ways you can.
- Lk 6:38 ... *pressed ... shaken ...*  
    Context: charity (vv 30a,36)

■ A hymn by Godfrey Thring (1823-1903):

*May each child of Thine be willing,  
Willing both in hand and heart,  
All the law of love fulfilling,  
Ever comfort to impart,  
Ever bringing offerings meet,  
Suppliant to Thy mercy-seat.*

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## How not to Help

### 4. Do not always wait for group action.

- The moment we talk about charity to the poor and helping the needy, we immediately think about —  
Missionary Organisations,  
or Relief Agencies,  
or Social Service Institutions.

This is **not** right.

This is one convenient way of evading “personal” responsibility.

The Bible teaches throughout that “personal” involvement should be the first and primary step in helping the needy and relieving the poor.

- Let’s look at some sample passages —
  - Psa 41:1-3 ... *Blessed is “he” who considers the poor*  
(singular is used throughout!)
  - Prov 21:13... *“He” who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor*
  - Job is a classic example for personal involvement —  
Job 29:12-17 ... ***I** delivered ... **I** caused ...  
***I** was eyes ... feet ...*  
31:16-22 ... *If **I** had not ...**
  - Suffering of the 1st century disciples due to famine —  
Acts 11:27-29 ... *“each one” determined to send relief according to “his” ability.*  
:30 ... sending of relief was thro’ a “team.”



Interestingly,

this was the **first** action after they were called

*“Christians” (v26)!*

- Apostle Paul stressed this personal involvement while giving instructions to the Churches for relief work —

1 Cor 16:1,2 ... *Each one ... he ...*

That was his personal example also —

Acts 20:34,35 ... *“I” have **shown** ...*

He also taught that the Church should not be burdened for what individuals can do —

eg) *widows* (1 Tim 5:16)

If every Christian family can adopt an orphan child,

there will not be a great need for orphanages!

- Apostle James challenges those who evade **individual** responsibility in relieving the poor —

Js 2:15,16 ... *“One of you” says ...*

It’s a dead religion (v17)

- Evading personal responsibility is called as *“hiding oneself”* — Isa 58:7

Why should “I” bother about it?

It’s “his” problem!

- While talking about “giving” and “loving,”

Jesus gave an overarching principle —

Lk 6:31 ... *Do to others what you expect others*

*to do to you*

(v30 ... giving; v32 ... loving)

eg) Suppose you are lying wounded in a road accident!

This is exactly what Jesus wanted to teach us  
thro' the story of the Good Samaritan.

It's full of "individual" action! (Lk 10:33-35)

The Priest and the Levite were institutionalised in their minds.  
They forgot their "personal" responsibility.

The Samaritan did what all he could:

First aid/admission in an inn (hospital)/staying with him/  
spending for him/follow-up ... "*when I return*"

Have you done any such thing in the recent past?

If you must help the needy as an individual,  
like the Good Samaritan,

you must be ready to spend "time, energy and money."

The moral given by Jesus: "*GO and DO likewise*" (v37)

Someone said,

There's no exercise better for the heart

than reaching down and lifting people up!

- When we always think of group action or institutional help,  
we ignore the Lazarus at our doorstep (Lk 16:19-31).

Don't be always thinking about distant lands.

Don't be satisfied with supporting relief agencies.

- Be a good neighbour to a needy person.

A good *neighbour* is better than

*a brother living far away* (Prov 27:10)

Sometimes, just being there with the sufferer  
is the greatest help!

A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle!

■ **Conclusion**

God will reward *“each man” according to his work* —  
Rev 22:12

■ **Additional thoughts**

- When you see violence anywhere,  
do whatever you can to help the weak and oppressed—  
eg) Moses (Ex 2:16,17)

He did not wait till the next Sabbath to mobilize  
the congregation!

- Open your mouth for the speechless —

Prov 31:8,9

We spend so much time on the passage that follows  
(vv 10-31) about the virtuous woman;  
but why have we left the two preceding verses?

- Priests and Levites were always concerned about the  
*“Temple ... Temple ... Temple,”* but no concern for  
*“the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow”* (Jer 7:1-7)

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## How not to Help

### **5. Do not be overcautious in choosing beneficiaries.**

- It is necessary to find out who really deserves help; but by being too cautious in finding out who deserves and who does not, we may neglect the one who truly deserves!

- Jesus said, *“I was a stranger!”* (Mt 25:35,43)
- Biblical admonition: Heb 13:2

*Entertain “strangers.”*

Strangers mean we know nothing about them except that they are in need!

To them also we must show *“brotherly love”* (v1)

Heb 13:2 refers to Abraham who entertained strangers.

(Gen 18:1-22)

In the OT, Gen 18, **Angels** came as strangers.

In the NT, Mt 25, **Jesus** says He came as a stranger!

- We are called to do good to “ALL” —

- Gal 6:10 ... to *“all”* especially to believers
- 1 Thess 3:12 ... to *“one another”* (= believers)  
**and** to *“all”*

- In the broad sense,

God as the Creator is the Father and Saviour of “all” men—

1 Tim 4:10 ... *Saviour of “all,”* especially believers

This is the truth Jesus pointed out in —

Mt 5:45,48 ... *Father ... rain ... sunshine ...*

This is *“perfection”* (v48)

- The Bible specifically admonishes us to help even our enemies—
  - Ex 23:4,5 ... Even an *enemy* and even his *donkey!*
  - David exemplified in this virtue
    - eg) 2 Sam 9:3 ... *Anyone in the house of **Saul?***  
*... so I may show the “kindness of **God?**”*

Description about Mephibosheth —

(vv 3b,13) — *“crippled in both feet”*  
 i.e. absolutely helpless!

Mephibosheth’s own confession —

*“I’m like a dead dog”* (v8)

Any survivor of an earlier regime would have been  
 considered a lifelong threat!

- A truth emphasized both in the OT & NT —
  - Prov 25:21,22 ... *feed the enemy*
  - Rom 12:20 ... *feed the enemy*

It’s natural to confine to friends;  
 but supernatural to help enemies.

- The death of Christ is the supreme example  
 for loving and helping the enemies —
  - Rom 5:6 ... *when we were still without strength*
  - :7,8 ... *not good ... still sinners*
  - :10 ... *while being enemies*

Not only the death of Christ  
 but also His ascension was to bring us gifts —

Psa 68:18 (Eph 4:8) ... *gifts ... rebellious ...*

- A Jew will not even ask water from a Samaritan.  
But the Good Samaritan crossed the cultural barriers  
to help a Jew (Lk 10).

Yes, do not be prejudiced by caste or creed  
when it comes to charity!

eg) Hebrews vs. Greek widows (Acts 6)

- The only reason for helping the poor must be that  
he is a poor and needy man —

Dt 15:11 ... *“therefore”*

Acts of charity by Christians may attract non-Christians  
towards the Christian faith, but that must not be  
our primary motive in helping the poor and the needy.

Charity will otherwise become bribery and exploitation.  
Such acts will bring forth only Ishmaels and not Isaacs!

eg) Promising new dresses for baptismal candidates

God is interested in *“mercy”* and not religious *“sacrifices”*—

Mt 12:6,7 ... *“greater than the Temple”*

Everything need not have a religious colour.

- There’s nothing wrong in supporting secular relief  
organisations as long as their work is genuine  
and objectives are unquestionable.
- Did not God bless us before we became believers?  
Did we not receive help from believers  
before we became believers?

- A question:

What about giving a *“cup of water”* to someone  
*in the name of a “disciple” or a “prophet?”*

This was Jesus' specific statement relating to the 12 disciples,  
while He was sending them (Mt 10)

To emphasize "*rewards!*" (v42)

- We must not be overcautious in choosing the beneficiaries;  
at the same time, don't thrust help  
when it's not absolutely necessary or called for!  
Don't throw away helps recklessly.

The Bible warns us against pledging

for someone in haste (Prov 6:1-5)

Discernment, Prayer, Consultation with family & friends  
are all necessary.

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## How not to Help

### **6. Do not confine charity to special occasions.**

- Many of us confine charity to Christmas Season, Birthdays and Anniversaries. We call December a “Season” of Giving!
  - Beggars wonder why Christmas comes only once a year! They wonder what to do with so much of sweets & eatables collected on Christmas day!
  - Prisoners wonder why so many visitors to see them in December only!
  - The same is the lot of inmates in orphanages, old age homes, leprasoriums, etc.

This type of occasional charity is not Biblical.

The Biblical teaching to the NT Church:

1 Cor 16:1,2 ... *First day of each week*

Why did the Apostle specify “*first day?*”

Following the Resurrection of Jesus, which was on the first day of the week (Jn 20:1), early Christians started gathering on the “first day”

eg) Acts 20:7

This has become the common practice today.

We call our Church gathering on this day as

“Sunday Service!” or “Sunday Worship.”

Following the Sunday Worship,

why don’t we have Sunday Charity?

This is in line with Heb 13:15,16



Yes, Charity should not be occasional or seasonal,  
but regular!

OT: Dt 15:11 ... *The poor **never** cease to be ... therefore*

NT: Jesus: Jn 12:8 ... *The poor are **always** with you!*

Are you always with the poor?

Don't we pray for our "*daily*" bread?

Are we not to give "*daily*" food to the poor? (Js 2:15,16)

A recent statistics in *The Hindu* newspaper, 11 Jan 2012—  
"42% of Indian children are underweight due to malnutrition."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has called it  
a "national shame!"

A Tamil Proverb: "If you sumptuously feed someone's child,  
your child will grow prosperously!"

"ஊரார் பிள்ளையை ஊட்டி வளர்த்தால் தன் பிள்ளை தானாக வளரும்!"

- The Bible calls us to "*maintain*" good works —

Tit 3:8,14

v8 ... *affirm* "*constantly*"

- We are called to "*remember*" the poor (Gal 2:10)

We are admonished *not to* "*forget*" to share (Heb 13:16)

These two verses mean that

the poor should have a constant place in our **mind**.

- The very first purpose of appointing "deacons" was  
to take care of the poor widows in the Church (Acts 6:3)

Even though they were not called "deacons" in Acts 6,  
the words "*table-servers*" are rooted in the same Greek word  
translated as "deacons."

This was to be an “ongoing” thing —

That’s why later Paul gave qualifications for deacons

(1 Tim 3:8-11)

For Cornelius, both “prayers” and “almsgiving”

were “**regular**” exercises (Acts 10:1,2)

This is the only way

to befriend the poor (Prov 14:20; 19:7) and

to associate with the humble (Rom 12:16)

v13 ... “*distributing*” to the needs

■ Do not postpone charity —

Prov 3:27,28 ... What you can do **today**...

He who gives quickly gives **twice!**

— Don’t be waiting for moving appeals!

— Do not wait to be asked!

Keep your eyes open; God will lead you to the needy.

Go where the poor are!

■ Do not limit helps to conventional ways —

Carry sarees and dhoties while travelling in cars

to give away to the poor on highways.

Help the poor to avail relief schemes of the Government.

Adopt poor children and pay all their expenses.

Arrange periodic dinners for the poor.

Write a will for relief organisations.

Don’t keep the old clothes of the first child for the next child.

Don’t use clothes and footwear till they wear out.

Give away one dress everytime you get a new one.

Arrange to donate your organs after death.

## How not to Help

### 7. Do not publicize charity.

- The very first spiritual exercise Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount was “almsgiving” — and the very first lesson on “almsgiving” was:

Do not publicize charity! (Mt 6:1-4)

We call this the “Discipline of Secrecy.”

Charity in secret is the secret of Charity!

Jesus mentions two places of publicity —

a) *“In the synagogues”*

— helping the poor in the Church

b) *“In the streets”*

— helping the poor in the society

Then what’s the meaning of Mt 5:16?

*“Let your light so shine ... men see your good works”*

This refers to our exemplary lifestyle —

*“saltiness”* (v13)

*“brightness”* (vv 14,15)

Don’t do *“as the hypocrites do”* (6:2)

hypocrisy = heartlessness

i.e. lack of genuineness in attitude

i.e. heartless charity

■ Any act of charity must be born out of love —

□ Good Samaritan

It began with “*compassion*” (Lk 10:33)

Then followed action!

□ Wherever Jesus helped people,

it was primarily out of “*compassion*” —

Mt 14:14 ... healing the sick in the multitude

Mt 20:30 ... two blind men: “*Have mercy on us*”

Mk 1:40,41 ... healing of a leper

Mk 5:19 ... *Legion* ... *Go home and tell how the Lord  
had “compassion” on you.*

Lk 7:13 ... Widow of Nain’s son ...

*compassion on her ...*

In Mark’s Gospel alone,

Jesus said 7 times, “*Tell no man!*”

□ Heartless giving is “*useless*” giving —

1 Cor 13:3 ... *though I give “all” my goods to the poor*

Is it possible?

Yes, you cannot love without giving;

but you can give without loving!

□ There are only two reasons for charity —

a) Obedience to God Dt 15:11 ... *I command you ...*

24:19-22 ... *I command you ...*

b) Compassion on people

(eg) Prison ministry (Heb 13:3)... *as if chained with them*

If we don’t have these motives,

we will be primarily interested in publicity.

Pray: *“Lord, let that which breaks Your heart break mine too!”*

— Bob Pierce, World Vision

Ours is the God of the *Poor, the Fatherless and the Widows!*

His very name: *“Father of MERCIES”* (2 Cor 1:3)

■ What’s the meaning of —

*“Left hand not knowing what the right hand does?”* (Mt 6:3)

— Don’t keep on thinking about what you have given or done.

— He who has shown kindness should be silent;

he who has received it should speak of it!

eg) Dorcas (Acts 9:36-39)

*... the widows ... weeping ... showing ...*

— See how quietly our internal organs are functioning!

(heart, lungs, liver, brain, kidneys, etc.)

No glamour or show-off!

Until they fail, we don’t even recognize their presence!

— A basic rule:

Never boast of what you do; let another praise you.

(Prov 27:2)

■ What about Periodicals and Calendars

which publish photographs of acts of charity?

This must be kept to the minimum.

Legitimate sharing of information is

different from perverse publicity.

There’s too much of commercialisation in the name of charity.

God abhors it.

Ask the question: If I were in that position of receiving alms,

will I like my photograph to be published?

Help the beneficiary maintain his dignity.

A question: Then why is Barnabas named as a donor?

Acts 4:36,37

It's to stress that though he was a "*Levite*"  
he gave away his possessions!

In Palestine, the Levites were not supposed to own  
any land. This was perhaps not applicable  
in other countries like "*Cyprus!*"  
May be this was his family property.

□ Beware of appeals promising "Name Plates!"

The question is always: God's rewards or Man's applause?  
(Mt 6:1,4b)

■ Beware of doing charity just to evade tax!

Giving to the poor means lending to God —  
Will God accept black money?

■ Earlier we made a reference to Organ Donation.

After finishing with the formalities of registration,  
quietly tell your family people what to do  
in the event of your death.

■ Follow up secret "giving" by secret "praying" for the poor —

The principle laid out in 2 Cor 1:11

Pray that God might bless your help to the recipient.  
May God add His blessings to that help.  
Pray for God's peace & comfort to overshadow him.  
Suppose what you have given would not meet  
his entire need, pray that God would open up  
other channels for him.

## How not to Help

### **8. Do not bring the recipients under obligation.**

- The first thing we expect from a recipient of help is gratitude.

Though this is right and legitimate,  
this endtime world is known for ungratefulness (1 Tim 3:1,2c)

Even for Jesus, only 10% were grateful —

Lk 17:17 ... *Where are the nine?* (vv 11-19)

Jesus did not expect an expression of gratitude  
to gratify Himself, but simply to “*glorify God*” (vv 18,19).

Accept thanks gracefully,  
but don't hold grudge if there's a failure.

Don't show it next time the person comes for help.

- Don't bring people under an obligation to do  
whatever is pleasing to you —

This is not God's character —

Acts 14:16,17 ... *letting us live as we like ...*  
yet not stopping *rain* or *sunshine*

That's why He's called as the One who gives

“*without reproach*” — Js 1:5

i.e. no grudging  
no faultfinding  
no displeasure  
no bitterness  
without making them feel guilty

- God does not desire anyone live under obligation to another person —

That's why the admonition:

*"Owe no man anything but love"* (Rom 13:8)

Reason: *"Love your neighbour as yourself"* (v9c)

i.e. we ourselves will not like to come under any obligation,  
isn't it?

A Tamil proverb:

The borrower is a slave to the lender.

கடன் வாங்கியவன் கடன் கொடுத்தவனுக்கு அடிமை.

But God urges us to free all men from any obligation —

That's why the Lord's prayer:

Mt 6:12, *"Forgive us our **debts** ... **debtors**"*

Lk 11:4, *"Forgive us our **sins** ... **debtors**"*

But we have conveniently changed these words into *"trespasses"* and *"trespassers!"*

Though *"trespasses"* or *"offences"* are implied in this passage, primarily it's *"debts!"* (Mt 6:14)

- The Biblical teaching is that we must help the needy without any hope of return —
  - A selfless attitude interested in others' welfare  
1 Cor 10:24 ... *other's wellbeing*
  - Paul's exemplary life  
2 Cor 12:15 ... *the more I love you ...*  
*... spend ... be spent ...*
  - The bad example of the Scribes & Pharisees  
Mt 23:14 ... Praying for widows with an eye  
on their purses!



- Never take advantage of anyone’s weakness  
and manipulate that person.  
i.e. *“showing mercy with cheerfulness without hypocrisy”*  
Rom 12:8c,9a
- Never ever speak roughly to the poor man whom you help.  
Prov 18:23
- Never remind anyone of the help rendered to him in the past.

- God’s command is that even a **slave** is to be let go free  
with lot of goodies — Dt 15:12-15,18  
*“It shall not seem **hard** to you!”* (v18)  
See the heart of God!
- Not only in the matter of material help but also in spiritual  
matters we must not bring anyone under obligation  
or whip that person —  
Help the backslider to get up;  
don’t broadcast his sins.  
Js 5:19,20 ... *turn ... cover ... multitude of sins*

A call for gentleness and kindness—

Psa 141:5 ... *rebuke ...oil for head*

Gal 6:1 ... *spirit of gentleness*

Don’t use as a whip against him whatever confidential  
information he shared with you about himself —

Never threaten him as to what you can do with secrets.

- When others who worked against you come to you for help,  
don’t make them feel guilty —  
eg) Joseph — Gen 45:4,5,8  
*“Do **not** get angry over yourselves ... it’s GOD!”*

■ Another point:

**Involve** in the sufferings of others;  
but never interfere in their affairs! (especially families)  
This is another manipulation.

■ **Concluding thoughts:**

- We should not expect anything in return  
from the poor and needy whom we help;  
at the same time,  
don't be too egoistic to accept any help from them!  
  
Accept it politely — they will be pleased.  
Did not Jesus use others' donkey, boat or upper room?  
  
God at times uses poor people to save us in a crisis:  
Eccl 9:14-16  
*little city ... great king .... a poor man  
delivered ... no one remembered*
- Free your beneficiaries to accept help from anyone.  
Don't expect to know all the details  
of the benefactor and the benefits.

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## How not to Help

### 9. Do not encourage laziness.

- It's right to extend help;  
but it's wrong to encourage laziness.  
We must not paralyse our beneficiaries.
- There's a strong Biblical teaching:  
2 Thess 3:10 ... *commanded ... work ... eat*  
— The Apostles had lots of needs —  
eg) "*hunger ... thirst ... cold ... insufficient clothing*"  
(2 Cor 11:27)  
But they endeavoured to set an example —  
2 Thess 3:7-9 .... *not to be a burden ...*
- The Bible talks about two types of burden —  
Gal 6:5 ... *Bear your own "load."*  
:2 ... *Bear one another's "burden."*  
  
We have no right to expect help from others  
until we have done all that's possible to help ourselves —  
Wise sayings: Help yourself and Heaven will help you.  
God helps those who help themselves.
- The poor must remove the causes of poverty if they can —  
Book of Proverbs, 19:17 ... *He who pities the poor... lends ...*  
This very Book points out some common causes of poverty:  
Prov 13:18 ... lack of discipline  
20:13 ... laziness/oversleep

21:17 ... pleasure-seeking, overspending

23:21 ... drunkenness, gluttony

- There are still others who will not work  
unless the working conditions are ideal and conducive —

Prov 20:4 ... *no ploughing in winter ... begging*

They would always seek white-collar jobs —

Though they would be literally “starving,”

they would not like to be underemployed.

Such folks must be taught the dignity of labour:

No work is inferior or superior to the other.

- What the poor need is not only “relief”  
but also “rehabilitation” —

If you give fish, it’s only for one day’s hunger;

but if you teach fishing, it’s for lifetime.

Meet with the staff of Relief Agencies to learn  
some basics of rehabilitation measures and techniques.

Offer some jobs in your own capacity —

eg) You can ask a beggar to sweep your frontyard  
and then feed him with a full meal;  
or clean your twowheeler or fourwheeler.

This principle is beautifully illustrated in the story of Ruth—

The widow Naomi went with her two daughters-in-law,  
Orpah & Ruth, from Moab to Judah in search of bread.

When providentially Ruth went to the field of Boaz,  
see what he did —

Ruth 2:15,16,17

Morning till evening Ruth gleaned “one” ephah of barley.  
(harvest in summer heat!)

Only the next day,  
Boaz gave her “six” ephahs! (3:15)  
“One” plus “six” became seven “ephahs!”

- There are those who have resorted to stealing  
because of poverty —

Such a possibility is stated in the Bible:

Prov 30:8,9 ... *poor ... steal ... profane God's Name*

It's likely that Paul had such a situation in mind  
when he wrote —

Eph 4:28 ... *steal no longer ... labour ... give ...*

- However, begging is not totally condemned in the Bible.  
Though it's not a desirable practice,  
many are driven to it —

It's so at least in India —

The Indian situation is portrayed in

Job 24:1-12 (words of Job)

:4 ... *pushed off the road*

:10 ... *cause the poor to go naked*

:12 ... *the dying groan in the city*

Do not despise the beggars.

Do not show face or treat them with contempt.

Be kind to them —

- Jesus to blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46)

People “warned” him to be quiet;

*but Jesus stood still (vv 47-49)*

- The story of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar (Lk 16).  
The rich man's name is not given!  
Do we know the names of the beggars  
  who regularly come to us?
- The first healing miracle of the early Church was  
on a beggar (Acts 3)  
  
Take beggars with disabilities to healing crusades —  
  *“no one helped me!”* (Jn 5:1-15) Bethesda  
  
Just like the four men who took a paralytic to Jesus  
amidst a huge crowd (Mk 2:3-5)  
  Arrange for medical help.
- Apostle James speaks of the possibility of some believers  
more or less like beggars —  
  *“a brother ... a sister ... no clothing ... no food”*  
  Don't chase them: *“Depart” in peace!* (Js 2:15,16)
- Be specially kind to the disabled —  
Now with dignity they are called, “differently abled.”  
  
Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear,  
  and the blind can see!
- Make the poor to ultimately look to God as “the” source —  
eg) A great famine in Samaria  
  2 Ki 6:25-27 ... *If the **Lord** does not help you ...*  
  *threshing floor or winepress?*  
  
Lead all of them to the “God of the Poor”  
who is the “God of **Salvation!**” (Lk 1:47,53)

## How not to Help

### 10. Do not grow tired of charity.

- Growing tired or losing heart is common  
in any Christian devotional discipline —  
eg) Jesus: *Pray always; don't lose heart* (Lk 18:1)  
  
Charity is no exception —  
Gal 6:9,10 ... *weary ... doing good ... lose heart ... opportunity*  
How long? As long as there's "*opportunity!*" (v10)  
i.e. as long as there's need!  
  
How long will there be need to help the poor?  
OT: Dt 15:11 ... *the poor never cease from the land!*  
NT: Jn 12:8 ... *the poor always with you!*  
  
People may not be grateful ...  
There may be no appreciation for what we do ...  
But "God" will not forget our acts of love —  
Heb 6:10 ... *not unjust to forget ...*  
*"have" ministered ... "do" minister*  
Therefore, *show the same diligence "till the end"* (v11)
- No one hesitates to talk about growing in general virtues;  
but we are apprehensive in talking about charity to the poor—  
but Paul: 2 Cor 8:7 ... *this "grace" also*  
  
What is this grace? "Uplifting the poor" —  
v9 ... just like Jesus!  
*Jesus became "poor" to make us rich!*

Though the example of Jesus here refers to how He emptied Himself of His “spiritual” glory, the context is charity.

i.e. keep on giving until it affects (pinches) you!

eg) In Lk 11:41 ... Jesus spoke about giving  
out of what we “have”  
but in 12:33 ... He spoke about “selling” what we have  
to give to others!

i.e. He wants us to keep on growing in charity.

- Levels of giving in the School of Charity:
  - Kindergarten: Not giving at all
  - Elementary: Impulsive giving
  - Secondary School: Legalistic giving
  - Graduate level: Sacrificial givingWhere are you?
- Keep on imagining and inventing new ways of giving; not new ways of saving!  
Isa 32:8 ... *generous man devises generous things*
- Never give place to the thought:
  - “I have already done so much to help people” —
  - Eccl 11:1,2 ... *bread ... to seven ... eight ...*
  - In the previous Chapter: Laziness:  
2 Thess 3:10,13 ... BUT don't stop!
- Another thought we must not entertain:
  - “Can I help the entire world and uplift everyone?”
  - Mother Teresa's answer: “I will help one at a time!”
  - Yes, you may not be able to help everyone in the world;  
but you can definitely ...



- feed Lazarus at **your** doorstep
- bandage the wounded man on **your** roadside
- support the poor in **your** assembly
- uphold the weak in **your** workspot

- The greatest motivator for charity is “eternal” rewards. We may or may not be blessed/rewarded here on earth for charity; but it’s certain in eternity —

- Lk 6:35 ... reward: *Sons of the **Highest***
- Lk 12:33 ... Savings in the Bank of Heaven  
“*thief ... moth*” — Even Swiss Banks may fail!

When we give more and more to the poor,  
we will become more and more heavenly minded —

v34 ... *treasure ... heart ...*

- Lk 16:9 ... friends in Heaven!  
What a welcome!  
This is not an isolated text.
- Lk 18:22 ... *sell ... distribute ... treasure in Heaven*  
Following this saying,  
Jesus gave the camel-needle illustration (v25)

The lesson: (The slogan in the Indian trains)

Less luggage,  
more comfort,  
Make travel a pleasure!

குறைந்த சாமான்,  
நிறைந்த வசதி,  
பயணத்தை இனிதாக்குக!

See, so many references in Luke’s Gospel —

Yes, as a medical doctor, he was very humane!

The story of the rich man & Lazarus also in Luke (Ch 16)

■ Paul's teaching:

- 1 Tim 6:18,19 ... *rich in good works ...*  
*good foundation for future*
- 2 Cor 9:6 ... *reaping* (in future)  
This is a chapter on charity.  
:9 ... *dispersed abroad... poor... righteousness*  
*"forever!"* (A quote from OT Psa 112:9)

■ John Wesley:

"I value all things only by the price  
they will bring in eternity!"

■ Inscription on an old gravestone:

What I spent I had;  
What I saved I lost;  
What I gave I have!

■ **Conclusion**

*"Their works shall follow them!"* (Rev 14:13c)  
Nothing else will come with us!

Let's decide today whether on the last day  
we will be sent to the right or to the left! (Mt 25)

(See also Pages 34-37, 248-250, 423-425, 560-562)

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