

## The Bible Speaks on Hunger

Few topics are addressed more often in Scripture than the poor and the way God's people are to minister to them. Ministry to the poor and needy is clearly part of a godly lifestyle.

### God Cares Greatly About the Poor and Hungry As Shown in Both the Old and New Testaments.

- Isaiah 58:6-7 - "Isn't the fast I choose: To break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and to not ignore your own flesh [and blood]?"
- Luke 6:20-21 - "Then looking up at His disciples, He said: Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled..."
- Luke 4:18 - "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed..."
- James 2:5 - "Listen, my dear brothers: Didn't God choose the poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him?"  
While Recognizing the Persistence of the Problem, God Works Through His People Through the Discipline of Regular Gleaning to Provide for Those in Need.
- Deuteronomy 24:19-21 - "When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you knock down the fruit from your olive tree, you must not go over the branches again. What remains will be for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you must not glean what is left. What remains will be for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow."
- Leviticus 19:9-10 - "When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You must not strip your vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the foreign resident; I am the Lord your God."
- Deuteronomy 15:11 - "For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, 'You must willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.'"  
When Jesus paraphrased this verse, He was speaking of the propriety of putting Himself first while He was here in the flesh. He was defending the actions of one who was criticized for anointing Jesus with precious oil. Sadly, some use our Lord's own words in attempting to justify their complacency towards those in need.
- Matthew 26:11 - "You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me."

### God Calls His People to Be Actively Involved in Ministry to Those in Need.

- Luke 3:11 - "He replied to them, 'The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same.'"
- Galatians 2:10 - "[They asked] only that we would remember the poor, which I made every effort to do."

### **Ministry to the Poor Is a Service to God.**

- Matthew 25:35-40 - "'For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or without clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'"

### **Ministry to the Poor Yields Great Joy.**

- Proverbs 14:21 - "The one who despises his neighbor sins, but whoever shows kindness to the poor will be happy."

### **Turning a Deaf Ear to Those in Need Stifles the Spiritual Life.**

- Proverbs 21:13 - "The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will himself also call out and not be answered."

### **Mistreatment and Neglect of the Poor**

- Jeremiah 5:28-29 - "They have become fat and sleek. They have also excelled in evil matters. They have not taken up cases, such as the case of orphans, so they might prosper, and they have not defended the rights of the needy. Should I not punish them for these things? [This is] the Lord's declaration. Should I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?"
- Matthew 25:41-46 - "Then He will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you didn't take Me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe Me, sick and in prison and you didn't take care of Me'... Then He will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me either.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

### **All Material Resources Belong to God.**

- Deuteronomy 10:14 - "The heavens, indeed the highest heavens, belong to the Lord your God, as does the earth and everything in it."
- Psalm 24:1 - "The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord."
- Psalm 50:10 - "...for every animal of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills."

## **If We Know the Lord, He Is Our Priority Far and Beyond Fretting over Material Things.**

- Matthew 6:31-33 - "So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."
- Luke 12:15-21 - "He then told them, 'Watch out and be on guard against all greed because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions.' Then He told them a parable: 'A rich man's land was very productive. He thought to himself, "What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops? I will do this," he said. "I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods there. Then I'll say to myself, 'You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.'" But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared-whose will they be?" That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.'"
- Matthew 6:24 - "No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves of God and of money."

## **Caring for the Poor Leads to a Change in the Life of the Giver.**

- Isaiah 58:10-11 - "...and if you offer yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted one, then your light will shine in the darkness, and your night will be like noonday. The Lord will always lead you, satisfy you in a parched land, and strengthen your bones. You will be like a watered garden and like a spring whose waters never run dry."  
Ministry to Those in Need Demonstrates the Reality of Being a Follower of Jesus Christ.
- James 2:15-17 - "If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself."
- 1 John 3:17-18 - "If anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother in need but shuts off his compassion from him-how can God's love reside in him? Little children, we must not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth."  
We Must Be Cognizant of How We Treat Others and Always Treat Them As We Would Personally Want to Be Treated.
- Matthew 7:12 - "Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them-this is the Law and the Prophets."

## **Conclusion**

God's Word is clear that we are to minister to the poor and needy as part of our Christian lifestyle. Gleaning is a spiritual discipline that will lead to a greater sensitivity for those in need and ultimately a greater sensitivity to God. Caring for those in need is an opportunity and a privilege as well as an obligation. We must not view it in any other way.

Find more materials at [www.kybaptist.org/hunger](http://www.kybaptist.org/hunger)

