

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Caring for the Poor

In the past 50 years Christians have allowed the government to take responsibility in caring for the poor, which is not in accordance with God's plan. We need to remember that God's law is supreme and does not need the intervention of the government. Christians have become "lazy" in their stewardship towards others by allowing the secular government to supply the needs of the poor. This is a role that God never intended for the government to have.

Let's consider the instruction that God's word gives us. Children are placed in the care of their parents, who are charged to make the freewill choices in "bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord," (Ephesians 6:4). When parents ignore and reject this responsibility, then the government fills this void. According to Scripture, government is charged to punish wrongdoing (Romans 13:3-4), but is not to "train" or "bring up" children. The Scripture tells us that "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," (1 Timothy 5:8).

Families, because of lost jobs or a disabling health issue, many times fall into financial hardship. Paul wrote that the church is obligated to aid "believers" who cannot provide for themselves (Romans 15:26-27). However, Paul reminded Christians that "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either, for we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all...Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread," (2 Thess. 3:10-12). The church is also charged in taking care of believing widows, but only if their immediate family cannot supply their needs, (1 Timothy 5:9-16). Paul also instructed individual Christians "as we have opportunity," are to "do good to all" and to "Instruct those who are rich in this present world...to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share," (Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19). One "must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he has something to share with one who has need," (Ephesians 4:28).

When men fail in following these commandments in God's word, then the government is so often left to bridge the gap. Unfortunately, the government's "safety net" may quickly become a "meal ticket," and programs born out of charitable intentions can evolve into tools of political manipulations. We must never surrender to the government the responsibility God has given to us as stewards to our families, church believers, or neighbors. Disobedience to God's commandments will cause detrimental consequences to this nation.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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