

The Biblical Examiner

An Examination of the Biblical Principles Involved in Issues at Hand.

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From The Hog Pen

Exodus 22:25-27, gives us a basic requirement concerning proper action toward the poor.

As we read this law, on the surface it appears to say that all poor are to be helped at all times. Deuteronomy 15:9 & 10 would appear to say that it is wicked not to help any poor that would come to us. And if we do not, the Lord will be against us. We could base some very ungodly welfare programs on this misunderstanding.

The poor which the law requires help for is not referring to someone who has squandered away his money, misused people or is too lazy to work. The illustration which the Lord gave would be the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-32.

The boy demanded his share of the inheritance, which he got. He then *wasted his substance with riotous living*. Then *there arose a mighty famine in the land; and he began to be in want*. He had to take the most demeaning of jobs, feeding pigs. He was further reduced to eating what the pigs ate, *and no man gave unto him*. Then he was reminded of the goodness of his father, so he repented and went home. This gives us these points.

First, it is obvious that he was reduced to the lowest state of poverty because of his sin. He *wasted his substance with riotous living*. He was poverty stricken because of his rebellion and hardness.

Second, the Lord did not say that in his poverty he was to be helped. In fact, quite the opposite. In his poverty, *no man gave unto him*. His poverty was a result of evil on his part. His poverty forced him to come face to face with his sin, because no one would give unto him. He had no place to turn to for aid.

Third, the result of no man giving to him in the hog pen: *He came to himself*. He repented and made things right with God and man. The result was that he was restored to his father and his needs were met.

Our point is this: His poverty forced him to come to himself and face up to his sin. It forced him to make things right with his father.

Now, I'll have to admit that it is extremely difficult to watch someone reduced to the place that they must feed the hogs and eat what the hogs eat, even though it was their own wasting of their goods that put them in this place. We want to rush in and help them get something better to eat. But experience has proven over the years

that almost without fail, when someone's wasting of their substance, lack of discipline, rebellion, stubbornness and hardness (sin) reduces them to poverty, any help given to them only prolongs the day of reckoning. Whereas, if they were left in the hog pen the first time, they would have come to their senses and returned to the Father.

When it is known and intentional sin that has reduced them to the hog pen (poverty), any help given to them this side of *when he came to himself*, will only return them to the wasting of their substance and the sin that got them there in the first place. This gives us these conclusions:

First, today's welfare programs at all levels of government (civil, personal, family, church, & c.) are based on aiding the person on this side of *when he came to himself*. The result is that the person is financed so he can return to the sin that got him in the hog pen in the first place. It is because *no man will give unto him* that he will come *to himself*. It is foolish to think that the prodigal son would have come to himself if someone would have given to him before *he came to himself* in the hog pen.

Second, there is a key word, *gave unto him*. The owner of the hogs paid him for working at feeding the hogs. Thus, when the one in need is required to work for whatever they get, they are not being financed in their sin. They are being paid for their labour.

Third, when a person's poverty is not a result of their waste and intentional sin, all the commands of the word of God concerning the care of the poor are theirs.

As always, the Lord tells us in His word who is to be helped in their need, how and when, as well as gives all the details of this help. He also tells us who is not to be helped. When we allow our emotions to override the facts of God's word, only chaos can develop as people are further hardened in their sin.

How many people miss the message of God to repent

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and return to Him because good sincere people obey their emotions instead of the word of God?

