

Caring For the Poor

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. ⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:2-9

MAIN IDEA:

We must care deeply for the poor. This flows from our relationship with God, the example of Jesus, and a generous heart that seeks to love God and others well.

The Poor in the Old Testament:

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. Deuteronomy 10:18

If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need. Deuteronomy 15:7-8

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God. Proverbs 14:31

The Poor in the Gospels:

Looking at his disciples he said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.' Luke 6:20

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 for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed. Luke 4:18

The Poor in the New Testament:

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:13

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? James 2:5

How can we develop a "caring deeply" attitude?

1. Pursue a deep relationship with God.

And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. V. 5

2. Follow the example of Jesus.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. V.9

3. Begin with what God has entrusted to you.

Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. Vv. 11-12

4. Aim to live a generous life.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18

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