



# **God's Answers to Issues that Divide Us**

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## Issues That Divide Us

- **Attitudes toward Bible Authority**
- **The Social Gospel**
- **Religious Institutions**
- **The Sponsoring Church**
- **Benevolence**



**Our Focus  
Today**



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Is Local Church Benevolence

**Limited or Not?**

Benevolence:

## The Issue is Not...

- Should needy people receive care? – Jas. 1:27
- Are we to be concerned about the needy? – 1 Jn. 3:17; Jas. 2:15-16
- Do individual Christians and local churches have benevolent responsibilities? – Eph. 4:28; Jas. 1:27; 1 Tim. 5:16
- Are individual or congregational responsibilities being fulfilled? – Mt. 6:1-3

Benevolence

## The Issues Are...

- Who is the local church to assist?
- Who is the individual Christian to assist?

**God's Answer:**

# The **Individual** Nature of Christianity

# Christianity Begins with the Individual and Moves outward to the Local church

- Seen in influencing others for Christ – Matt. 5:13-16
- Seen in conflict resolution – Matt. 18:15-17
- Seen in benevolent responsibilities – 1 Tim. 5:3-4, 8, 16

# Church VS. Individual Responsibilities

## Church

- Worship/edify – Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-33; 1 Cor. 14
- Assure truth is preached with love/zeal – Rev. 2-3
- Preach the gospel at home and abroad – 1 Cor. 9:4-14; Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8
- Discipline members – 1 Cor. 5
- Help needy saints in local church – Acts 4:32f. 6:1-6
- Help needy saints in other places – 1 Cor. 16:1-4; Acts 11:27-30

## Individual Christian

- Live righteously – Tit. 2:11-12
- Obey/honor parents – Eph. 6:1-3
- Raise children in godly fashion – Eph. 6:4
- Be good spouses – Eph. 5:21ff; Tit. 2:3-5
- Be good workers – Tit. 2:9-10
- Do one's spiritual part – Eph. 4:16
- Watch words so as to edify – Eph. 4:29
- Watch one's example and teaching – 1 Tim. 4:16
- Confess sins – 1 Jn. 1:9; Js. 5:16
- Help all others – Mt. 5:43-48; Jas. 1:27
- Put others above self – Phil. 2:3-4
- Faithful until death – Rev. 2:10
- Not forsake worship – Heb. 10:24-25
- Study Bible – 2 Tim. 2:15
- Produce fruit – John 15:1-8
- Be honest – Eph. 5:25, 28
- Obey and honor rulers, pay taxes – Rom. 13:1-8
- Settle conflicts personally if possible – Mt. 18:15
- Face judgement – 2 Cor. 5:10
- Etc.

**God's Answer:**

# Biblical Distinctions in Benevolent Responsibilities

## Benevolence: Individual Vs Church

### Individual

- Help all deserving people – 2 Thess. 3:10
- Help/do good to **all men** – 1 Tim. 6:17-18; Heb. 13:16
- Help **enemies** – Rom. 12:17-21; Matt. 5:43-48

### Local Church

- Help deserving needy – 2 Thess. 3:10
- Help **needy saints in other places** – Acts 11:27-30
- Help its **own needy saints** – Acts 4:32, 34-35; Acts 6:1-6

## Who Received Benevolent Aid?

- **Acts 2:44-45:** “Now **all** who **believed** were together, and **had all things in common**, <sup>45</sup> and sold **their** possessions and goods, and divided them among **all**, as anyone had need.”
- The scope of “**all**” is always determined by its **context**.
- The context is addressing those who **believed** that **had all things in common**.
- Did they help **all** needy people of the **world**, or **all** needy of **Palestine**, or **all** needy of **Jerusalem**, or **all** needy **saints**?

## Who Received Benevolent Aid?

- **Rom. 15:25-27, 31** – “But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to **the saints**.<sup>26</sup> For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution** for **the poor among the saints** who are in Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> It pleased them indeed, and they are their **debtors**. For if the Gentiles have been **partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister to them in material things...<sup>31</sup> that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be **acceptable to the saints**”

## Who Received Benevolent Aid?

- **1 Cor. 16:1** – “Now concerning the collection for **the saints**, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also”
- **2 Cor. 8:4** – “imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the **fellowship** of the **ministering to the saints**.”

## Who Received Benevolent Aid?

- **2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13** – “For it is superfluous for me to write to you about **this ministry to the saints**...<sup>12</sup> For the administration of this service not only **supplies the needs of the saints**, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, <sup>13</sup><sup>13</sup> Because of the proof given by this ministry, **they** will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your **contribution** to **them** and to **all**”

## Who Received Benevolent Aid?

- ▶ **1 Tim. 5:3, 5, 16** – “Honor widows who are **really widows**....<sup>5</sup> Now she who is really a widow, and **left alone, trusts in God** and continues in supplications and prayers night and day...<sup>16</sup> If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, **that it may relieve those who are really widows.**”

## Who Is Commanded To Do Good?

- **Gal. 6:10** – “Therefore, as **we** have opportunity, let **us** do good to **all**, especially to **those who are of the household of faith.**”
- **Argument:** Paul is commanding “we churches” and “us churches” to do this work, seeing Paul wrote to the “churches of Galatia” – Gal. 1:2

## Who Is Commanded to Do Good?

**Gal. 6:1-5** – “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, **you** who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering **yourself** lest **you** also be tempted.  
<sup>2</sup>Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.  
<sup>3</sup>For if **anyone** thinks **himself** to be something, when **he** is nothing, **he** deceives **himself**. <sup>4</sup>But let **each one** examine **his** own work, and then **he** will have rejoicing in **himself alone**, and not in another. <sup>5</sup>For **each one** shall bear **his** own load.

# Who Is Commanded to Do Good?

**Gal. 6:6-10** – “Let **him** who is taught the word share in all good things with **him** who teaches. <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever **a man** sows, that **he** will also reap. <sup>8</sup>For **he** who sows to **his** flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but **he** who sows to **the Spirit** will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. <sup>9</sup>And let **us** not grow weary while doing good, for in due season **we** shall reap if **we** do not lose heart. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, as **we** have opportunity, let **us** do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

**2 Cor. 5:10**

# Singing

- Mt. 26:30
- Mk. 14:26
- Acts 16:25
- Rom. 15:9
- 1 Cor. 14:15
- Eph. 5:19
- Col. 3:16
- Heb. 2:12
- Jas. 5:13

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# Saints

- Acts 2:44-45
- Acts 4:32-35
- Acts 6:1-6
- Acts 11:27-30
- Rom. 15:25-26
- 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- 2 Cor. 8:1-4
- 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13
- 1 Tim. 5:16

## Baptism

- Acts 2:38
- Acts 8:12
- Acts 8:38
- Acts 10:43, 48
- Acts 16:14
- Acts 16:33
- Acts 18:8
- Acts 19:5
- Acts 22:16

## B E L I E V E R S

## Benevolence

- Acts 2:44-45
- Acts 4:32-35
- Acts 6:1-6
- Acts 11:27-30
- Rom. 15:25-26
- 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- 2 Cor. 8:1-4
- 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13
- 1 Tim. 5:16

The defense for

# Unlimited Benevolence

## Church vs. Individual:

# No Separate Duties

- ▶ **V. E. Howard:** “The church is composed of Christians; what the church does, Christians do; what Christians do, the church does, generally speaking. We cannot separate the Christian’s work from the work of the church...Actually we may say that whatever is the duty of a Christian is the duty of a congregation of Christians.” (*Institutionalism, Orphan Homes and Church Cooperation*, pp. 6, 7)

# Individual Christians Are Not the Local Church: Matthew 18:15-17

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- <sup>15</sup>“Moreover if your brother sins against **you**, go and tell him his fault between **you and him alone**. If he hears **you**, you have gained your brother.
- <sup>16</sup>But if he will not hear, take with you **one** or **two** more, that ‘by the mouth of **two** or **three witnesses** every word may be established.’
- <sup>17</sup>And if he refuses to hear **them**, tell it to **the church**. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.



## Church vs. Individual: Different Treasuries

- ▶ **Acts 5:3-4:** “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? <sup>4</sup> While it remained, **was it not your own?** And after it was sold, **was it not in your own control?** Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”
- ▶ Is money put in the local church’s treasury still my own and still under my control? NO!

# Church vs. Individual: Different Responsibilities

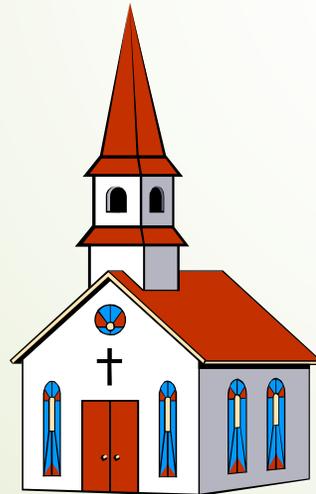
## 1 Timothy 5:16



Relieve Them



Do Not Burden



Relieve Widows  
Indeed

