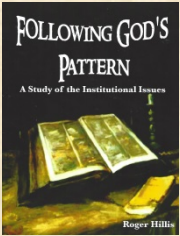


Lesson 10

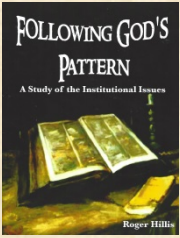
The Extent of Benevolence



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Introduction

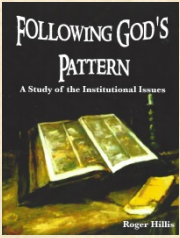
1. When discussing **benevolence**, *emotions* are always involved
2. Some **decisions** have to be made about:
 - *Who* needs help
 - *How much* should be given
 - *How long* should the help continue
 - Many of these issues are *matters of judgement*
3. It is an **advantage** to be in a church with elders and deacons, scripturally *chosen and appointed* by the **congregation** to deal with such matters.



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Introduction

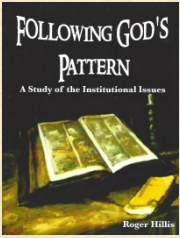
1. Is benevolence a “**primary**” or “**secondary**” work of the church?
2. Is it a “**work**” of the church at all?
3. The church is a “**spiritual**” organization having a “**spiritual**” work to perform. It’s **purpose** is to:
 - **Evangelize** – meaning to preach & teach
 - **Edify** - meaning to strengthen, build up, encourage its members
 - **Provide** limited benevolence (within a scriptural context)



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Introduction

1. Not only is **benevolence** a “*work*” of the church, it is a **commanded** work of the church.
2. On occasion some of the *saints* in a local church may experience financial difficulties.
3. They need some **assistance** – sometime a serious **immediate need** is made known.
4. What does the **Bible** teach about our *obligations* to help them?



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Scriptural Church Benevolence

1. One who is *lazy* and *will not work* does not **deserve** help from anyone – Note 2 Thess 3:10-15

2 Thess 3:10-15

10 For even when we were with you, we **commanded** you this: If anyone **will not work, neither** shall he **eat**.

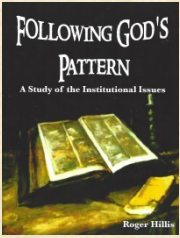
11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly manner, not working at all**, but are busybodies.

12 Now those who are such we **command** and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that **they work** in quietness and **eat** their **own bread**.

13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

14 And if anyone **does not obey our word** in this epistle, note that person and **do not keep company with him**, that he may be ashamed.

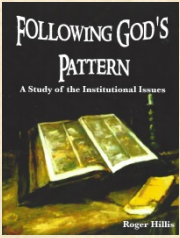
15 Yet **do not** count him as an **enemy**, but **admonish** him as a **brother**. NKJV



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Scriptural Church Benevolence

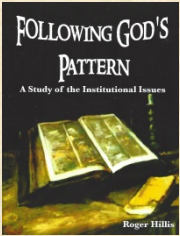
1. One who is **lazy** and **will not work** does not **deserve** help from anyone – Note 2 Thess 3:10-15
2. For those who **will not work** – God **says what?**
3. Some may be guilty of **poor stewardship** of their personal financial resources and **need** help:
 - Does the church have an **obligation** in this case?
 - What if it's an **emergency** situation?
 - What if it is judged the church is **not obligated?**
4. Can the church provide **financial** counseling?



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Scriptural Church Benevolence

5. There are certain circumstances *beyond* a person's control
 - Major illnesses, tornadoes, a car accident, bad economy, *no jobs available*
6. What is to be **done** then?
7. The Bible outlines a *3 Step Process* to deal with such situations.
 - *Family* has the first obligation
 - Then *individual* Christians
 - In the case of needy Christians, the *church*.



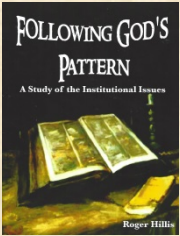
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Family

1. The **primary responsibility** of caring for people has been **placed** on the family.
2. Notice Paul's instructions to Timothy: [1 Tim 5:8](#)

*“But 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.” NAS*

3. The duty of caring for **one's own family** is placed on the **man of the house**.
 - Those duties extend **beyond** those living under his roof.
 - “**Those of his household**” implies other family members **not under his roof** must also be cared for by him.



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

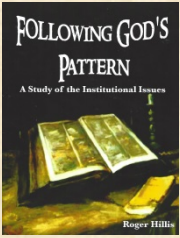
The Family

1. Paul's **instructions** to Timothy in the first 16 verses of 1 Timothy 5 teaches that **family** must take care of their own.
2. Only a special, **select group of women** who met certain **qualifications** could be cared for by the church on a **regular** basis.
3. They are referred to as **“widows indeed”** and their earthly family had the **first obligation** for their care.

Notice 1 Tim 5:16

*If any woman who is a believer **has dependent widows**, let her **assist them**, and let not the church be burdened, so that **it may assist** those who are widows indeed.* NAS

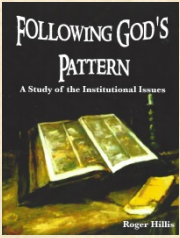
4. But those who were **totally alone** could be **cared for** by the church.



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Family

1. When the **local church** receives a *benevolent* request from an *individual*
2. What are the *initial questions* that should be asked?
 - What about your **family**?
 - Have you **talked** with them?
 - Will they **help** you?
3. And if their family *cannot* or *will not* help, **then** what?



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Individual Christian

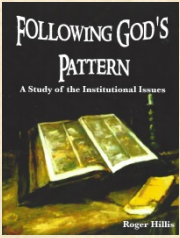
1. If one's family **cannot or will not** help, it becomes the **duty** of individual Christians to help.
2. Such help would include **Christians** & **non-Christians** alike.

James 1:27

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To **visit the fatherless and widows** in their **affliction**, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* KJV

James 2:15-16

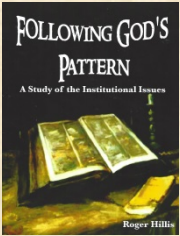
*15 If a **brother or sister** is **naked** and **destitute** of daily food,
16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but **you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?** NKJV*



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Individual Christian

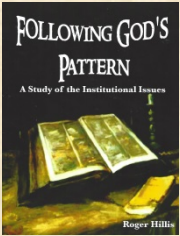
1. Jesus taught that ***we all must*** have a heart of **compassion**.
2. He further taught that those ***who do not*** will be **rejected by Him** in the final judgement (Matt 25:31-46).
3. As in all areas of service to God, our responsibilities are limited by our ***opportunities and our abilities***.
4. But we must **not be guilty** of ***shunning our responsibility*** to help those in need with thoughts like ***“sorry, I gave at the office”!***



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

1. When **family and individuals** have done what they can, then the church has an ***obligation*** to help.
2. But every example of this in the Bible mentions only helping **needy Christians**. ***Not non-Christians.***
3. There are **3 methods** of ***“church benevolence”*** mentioned in the New Testament.
 - A ***congregation*** may take care of **its own** members.
 - ***Other churches*** may send to **one church** that is **unable to take care** of its own members.
 - ***One church*** may send to **many churches** if those churches have ***saints who are in need.***



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

A **congregation** may take care of its own members.

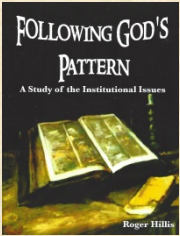
Acts 4:34-37

34 Nor was there **anyone among them who lacked**; for all who were possessors of lands or houses **sold them**, and **brought the proceeds** of the things that were sold,

35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they **distributed to each as anyone had need**.

36 And Joses, who was **also named Barnabas** by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,

37 **having land, sold it**, and **brought the money** and laid it at the apostles' feet. NKJV



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

Other churches may send to **one church** that is unable to take care of its own members.

Rom 15:25-26

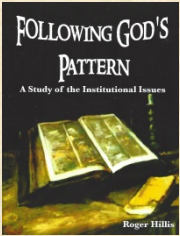
25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem **serving** the saints.

26 For **Macedonia and Achaia** have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor **among the saints** in Jerusalem. NAS

- The Jerusalem church also **received a contribution** from the churches of **Galatia** and **Corinth**

1 Cor 16:1-2

1 Now concerning the **collection for the saints**, as I directed **the churches of Galatia**, so **do you also**. NAS



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

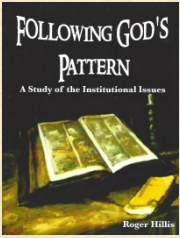
One church may send to **many churches** if those churches have **saints who are in need.**

1. The church in Antioch sent to the churches in Judea – note **Acts 11:28-30**

28 “. . . . Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be **a great famine all over the world.** And this took place in the reign of Claudius.

29 And in the **proportion** that any of the **disciples had means**, each of them determined to **send a contribution for the relief** of the **brethren living in Judea.**

30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul **to the elders.**” NAS



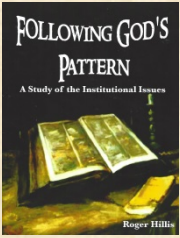
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

One church may send to **many churches** if those churches have **saints who are in need.**

2. The relief was **not sent to Jerusalem** as the “sponsoring church” for the whole arrangement.
3. But it was sent to **each church in Judea** for distribution
4. Some of the towns in Judea which **likely had churches** would include Jerusalem, Joppa, Lydda, Emmaus and Bethany.
5. The **“churches in Judea”** are mentioned in 1 Thess 2:14

*“For you, brethren, became imitators of the **churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea**, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews” NAS*



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

What about 2 Cor 9:12-13?

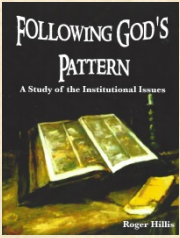
1. We need to take a special look at this passage in its context.

2 Cor 9:12-13

*12 For the ministry of this service is not only **fully supplying the needs of the saints**, but is also overflowing through **many thanksgivings** to God.*

*13 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, NAS*

2. Some believe this verse 13 refers to **benevolent help** from the church in Corinth to both **saint and non-saint**.



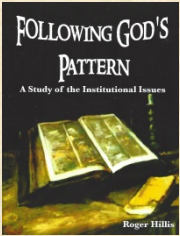
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

What about 2 Cor 9:12-13?

3. Two *important questions* need to be asked to help us understand the meaning of these passages:

- **Why** was the money collected?
- **How** was the money used?

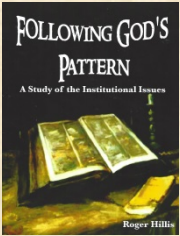


Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

Question #1 - Why was the money collected

1. Every **verse in the NT** that deals with the collection of these funds specifies that **SAINTS (Christians)** would be **those who received** help. A few are:
 - **1 Cor 16:1** - *“Now concerning the collection **for the saints**”*
 - **Rom 15:25-26** - *“Now I am going to Jerusalem to minister **to the saints**” “For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for **the poor among the saints** in Jerusalem”*
3. The money collected was for **needy Christians**.
4. Did Paul represent it as that and then have it distributed to **anyone and everyone** who asked?
5. Did he collect the funds for **one purpose** and then use them for **another?** If so, where is the **contextual evidence?**

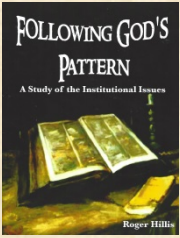


Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

Question #2 – How was the money used?

1. This question is **clearly answered** by reading 2 Cor 8 & 9.
2. Here are four selections from those two chapters
 - **2 Cor 8:4** – “imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the **fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**” NKJV
 - **2 Cor 8:14** – “but by an equality, that now at this time **your abundance may supply their lack**, that their abundance also may supply your lack -- that there **may be equality.**” NKJV
 - **2 Cor 9:1** – “Now concerning the **ministering to the saints**, it is superfluous for me to write to you; NKJV
 - **2 Cor 9:12** – “For the **administration** of this service not only **supplies the needs of the saints**, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,” NKJV



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Church

Concluding Thoughts

1. The Bible *clearly teaches* that **needy people** deserve **to be helped** and that *faithful Christians* will help them.
2. But we must **be careful** to *do God's work in God's way*.
3. And we must **make certain** that we are *fulfilling our duties* both individually and collectively according to *God's divine pattern*.