**Bible Query on Helping the Poor**

The Bible has a lot to say, but one can summarize 21 points with the three A's): our attitude of love, what we absolutely should not do, and our actions of love.

**Attitude of Love**

Do not despise the poor (Proverbs 14:21; 17:5). Remember, God made the rich, the poor, and their oppressors (Job 34:19; Proverbs 29:13). Know that God takes our giving to the poor very seriously as he did for Cornelius (Acts 10:2,4,31)

However, if someone is rich like Abraham, that does not automatically mean they are displeasing God by oppressing the poor as in Job 29:12. Abraham was an extremely wealthy man (Genesis 13:2-6), yet he would not have been called righteous in Romans 4:3 and James 3:21, if he oppressed the poor.

Some are poor because they are sluggards (Proverbs 6:9-11; 10:4; 12:24) or made rash financial commitments (Proverbs 22:26-27; 6:2-3), put up collateral for another (Proverbs 6:1,3; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 27:13), spent their money on pleasure (Proverbs 20:21; 29:3; James 5:5; Matthew 23:25; Amos 6:4-7), or neglect (Proverbs 27:23-24)

Others, such as Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:6; 2:2) are poor through no fault of their own, as were Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:24 + Leviticus 12:8). Jesus, John the Baptist, and Paul were poor.

Care about justice for the poor (Proverbs 29:7; 31:9).

Remember the poor (Galatians 2:10). Reduce poverty and see that helping the poor is as if you were helping Christ (Matthew 25:34-46).

Our ideal should be to eliminate poverty (Deuteronomy 15:4), yet we should realize that the poor will always be among us (Deuteronomy 15:11; Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8).

**Absolutely Do Not**

Do not oppress the poor (Proverbs 22:16; 28:3; Job 20:19; Ezekiel 18:12; 22:29; Amos 2:7; 4:1; 5:11).

Do not charge exorbitant interest (Proverbs 28:8).

Do not make unjust laws. (Isaiah 10:1-2). Do not use the courts to exploit those with less money (Proverbs 22:22-23; ~24:28; James 2:6; Amos 5:12).

Do not be apathetic toward the poor (Ezekiel 16:49; ~Luke 16:19-20) or ignore their cry (Proverbs 21:13).

Do not show partiality against the poor (Proverbs 29:14), partiality to the rich (Leviticus 19:15), partiality toward the poor (Exodus 23:3; Leviticus 19:15). The righteous care about justice for the poor (Proverbs 29:7).

Do not try to eliminate the poor from where you live (Amos 8:4; Psalm 109:16) or destroy the poor (Isaiah 32:7).

Do not preach helping the poor and not practice what you preach (James 2:15-17).

**Actions of Love**

Be generous to the poor (Proverbs 19:9-10; 22:9; Isaiah 58:7-8,10) and kind to them (Proverbs 28:8).

Give to the poor. (Isaiah 1:17; 58:6-10; Jeremiah 5:28; 22:16; Galatians 2:10; Psalms 41:1; 112:9; Proverbs 14:21; 24:11-2; 28:27; 29:7; 31:9,20; Ephesians 4:28; Acts 9:36; 1 Timothy 6:18-9; James 1:27) and rescue the poor (Job 29:12);Lv25:35-37. Even give to the poor in business (Exodus 23:11; ~Ruth 2:2,6,15).

We should especially help widows and orphans. (James 1:27; Deuteronomy 15:11; Psalm 68:5).

We should especially help other believers (1 John 3:17-19; Romans 15:26).

We should especially help the sick, hungry, naked, and imprisoned. (Matthew 25:34-46; Zechariah 7:9-10;Is58:10-11;Ps69:33).

Do not give food to someone who refuses to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Hunger can be a good incentive to not be lazy (Proverbs 16:26).

Do not help those who are doing wicked work (2 John 10-11) or would be foolish with the money (Proverbs 1:16). Realize that some falsely claim they are poor, or rich (Proverbs 13:7).

[www.biblequery.org](http://www.biblequery.org) by Steven M. Morrison, PhD.