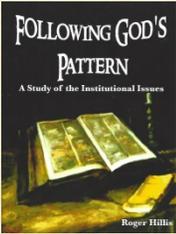


Lesson 10

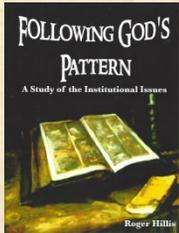
The Extent of Benevolence



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Introduction

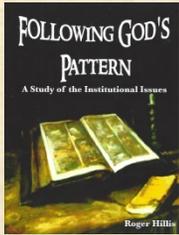
1. When discussing **benevolence**, *emotions* are always involved
2. Some **decisions** have to be made about:
 - *Who* needs help
 - *How much* should be given
 - *How long* should the help continue
 - Many of these issues are *matters of judgement*
3. It is an **advantage** to be in a church with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



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Introduction

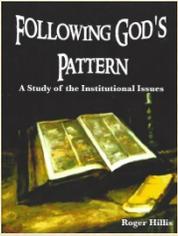
1. Is benevolence a **“primary”** or **“secondary”** work of the church?
2. Is it a **“work”** of the church at all?
3. The church is a **“spiritual”** organization having a **“spiritual”** work to perform. It’s **purpose** is to:
 - **Evangelize** – meaning to preach & teach
 - **Edify** - meaning to 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**.

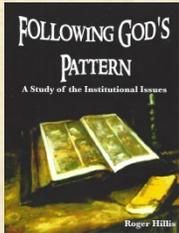
11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies**.

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.

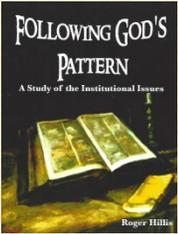
15 Yet **do not** count him as an **enemy**, but **admonish** him as a **brother**. NKJV



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

Scriptural Church Benevolence

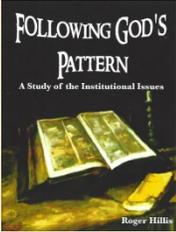
1. One who is *lazy* and *will not work* does not **deserve** help from anyone – Note 2 Thess 3:10-15
2. For those who *will not work* – God *says what?*
3. Some may be guilty of *poor stewardship* of their personal financial resources and **need** help:
 - Does the church have an *obligation* in this 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*.



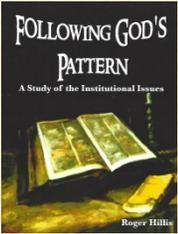
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

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

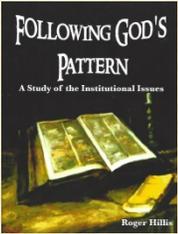
The Family

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*

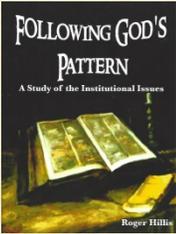
4. But those who were **totally alone** could be **cared for** by the church.



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

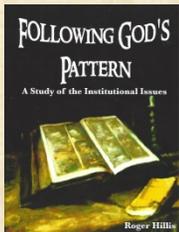
1. If one's family **cannot or will not** help, it becomes the **duty** of individual Christians to help.
2. Such help would include **Christians** & **non-Christians** alike.

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

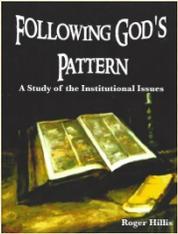
*15 If a **brother or sister** is **naked** and **destitute** of daily food,
16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but **you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? NKJV***



Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

The Individual Christian

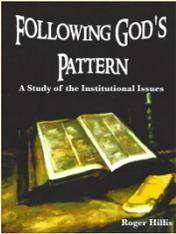
1. Jesus taught that ***we all must*** have a heart of **compassion**.
2. He further taught that those ***who do not*** will be **rejected by Him** in the final judgement (Matt 25:31-46).
3. As in all areas of service to God, our responsibilities are limited by our ***opportunities and our abilities***.
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.

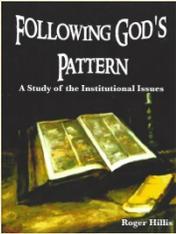
Acts 4:34-37

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

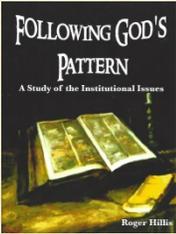
25 *but now, I am going to Jerusalem **serving** the saints.*

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

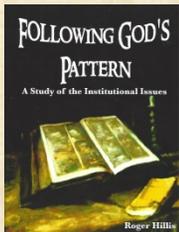
One church may send to many churches if those churches have saints who are in need.

1. The church in Antioch sent to the churches in Judea – note Acts11:28-30

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



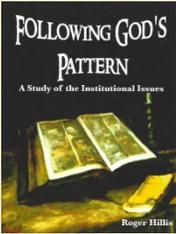
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

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?

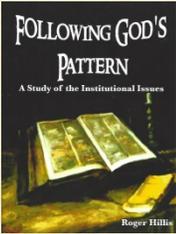
1. We need to take a special look at this passage in its context.

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**.



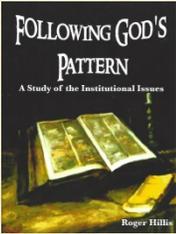
Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

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?

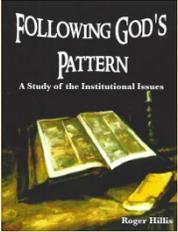


Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

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?**

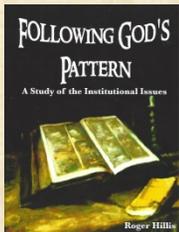


Lesson 10 - The Extent of Benevolence

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*.