

How can you ensure your economic security? (28:27)

He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

THE TEXT (NASB)

He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
KJV - Proverbs 28:27

INTRODUCTION



It's a paradox.

We have enough while we carefully give to others. Our generosity builds our security. By giving regularly **to the poor** we improve our own financial health.

Our treatment of the poor sets or undermines our own happiness but there is also a warning.



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COMMENTARY

Translation

Note that the verb **gives**, נתן (nāṭan, pronounced “nah-tan”), is an active participle, “giving,” rather than the past tense, “gave.” This implies that past deeds of charity may have already been repaid. It’s best to give something to the poor continually.

The Hebrew word for the poor is רָשׁ (rāš, pronounced “roosh”).

It’s Not Logical



This seems contrary to human logic. God promises that by giving our resources to those in need we actually ensure that our own needs will be met. We need to be careful, though, the text does not say give to get but give to stabilize. It’s like insurance. The promise is not for an increase to our assets but for a securing of them, hence giving is a type of insurance, where premiums are charitable donations. There is a well known maxim: *What goes around comes around*.

Secure *and* Happy

God promises a double benefit to those who give to the poor: Security *and* happiness. Happiness comes to those who are gracious to the poor (Proverbs 14:21 NASB). This timeless truth is being “re-discovered” and popularized in the book *Happy Money: The Science of Spending* by Elizabeth Dunn (University of British Columbia) and Michael Norton (Harvard University). The key message of the book is this: Satisfaction and happiness do not come from overindulging but from underindulging and giving the unconsumed resources to someone else. To whom? The text sheds more light on the science of spending. It tells us to give to those who need it the most—not just anyone who asks. We become secure *and* happy by giving to the poor.

Doing Our Share?

How do we respond to a known need? God doesn’t want us to single-handedly fix all of the



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world's economic woes, but he does expect us to help once we become aware of the need. God watches our response to those in need and rewards us accordingly. When giving we need to be careful that we **don't** give to the rich. Find out the dangers of foolish giving. [What are the wrong ways to treat the rich and poor?](#)

Won't Look



Sometimes we avoid looking at the plight of the poor because of the obvious horrors. We are like the one who **shuts his eyes**. It hurts to see pictures of malnourished children or video clips of desperate conditions. With the advent of global mass media we see the plight of the poor around the globe. Turning away is easy. Both a priest and a temple assistant turned and walked on the other side of the road when they saw the half dead man, in the ditch (Luke 10:30-34). According to this text, they not only ignored human suffering, but they thereby invited suffering on themselves. Those who do not have compassion for the poor will hurt for it. In contrast, the good Samaritan also did (delayed) good to himself. We must keep our eyes peeled for opportunities to meet other's needs.

God Hates Selfishness

Many curses will come to those who deliberately ignore others in need. These curses may be pronounced by the poor themselves, by those who witness stinginess, or by God who hates selfishness. They may include problems with health, family relationships, accidents, loss of goods, and public disgrace to name a few. Hoarding will eventually hurt the hoarders.

Debt and Charitable Giving

Should you give to charity while you yourself are still in debt? After all, isn't your first obligation to the one who loaned you money? Shouldn't you acknowledge your creditor first?

No. Your first obligation is to the One who loaned you life. You should acknowledge your Creator ahead of your creditor. God Almighty has the prior claim. God gives you the power to earn wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), but more importantly, He gives you the power for your next breath (Job 33:4). While it is very important to honour our creditors, it is even more important to honour our God (Proverbs 3:9). God can easily give us the resources to pay off all our debts (Proverbs 3:10).



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Craig Ford's Advice

Author of *Transforming Your Financial Diet*, Craig Ford wrote in his blog/email on April 18, 2013 that Christians should continue to give charitably while paying off debt. He described his personal experience:

During my senior year of college, my wife and I were just married. I didn't have legal working status in the States for about 9 months after we were married. Those first nine months were hard. We were both full time students. Our only income was from work study programs offered through the school. (Legally that was the only way I could work.) We lived in an apartment that cost \$275 per month. We couldn't even control our own heat. Sometimes it would be blistering cold, and at other times, it was sweltering hot. We'd make homemade pizza (a tradition we've now had for almost 13 years). However, back in those days, we'd put corn on our pizza because we couldn't afford any meat. One day on a walk we found a piece of furniture someone put out for the dump. We took it home. We had food and clothing, so we were content with that. We always found a way to give.

Read more: <http://moneyhelpforchristians.com/4-reasons-to-give-while-paying-off-debt/#ixzz5bYuev9mZ>

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I especially appreciate Craig's insight about giving while still in debt. "Giving draws our focus to our blessings." It's like looking at the full portion of the cup rather than the empty portion. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than receive."



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

In a story to illustrate kindness, Jesus describes two men, a priest and a Levite, who noticed someone in need but deliberately walked on the other side of the road to avoid seeing or hearing any more. Their lack of benevolence contrasts vividly with the caring Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37).

Jesus' greatest gift to the poor was His own life so that those who are spiritually destitute, and even dead, could have eternal, indestructible life (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Again, it's a paradox. It's non-intuitive. It's a free gift but only to those who are poor (Matthew 5:3). Those who are rich and self-sufficient are actually in deep trouble (Luke 6:24, Revelation 3:17).

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Give something to the poor on a regular basis—daily, weekly or monthly.
- View generosity as an integral part of your financial stability, not as an optional add-on or as an unwelcome reduction of your financial resources.
- Who comes to mind as someone poor whom you can help now?

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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KEY WORDS

thrift, charity, curse, ignorance, generosity, happy, insurance, stinginess, more assets (quantity), scarcity, security, want, poor (rāš pronounced “rash”), bf sharing

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Generous Genevieve?



Generous Genevieve loves to give and has a big heart. Sometimes she chuckles to herself as she gives her gifts. Now here's a secret about her giving: She only gives to those who really need it—not just to anyone who asks for a handout. She gives because she thinks it's the right thing to do.

Strangely enough, the more she gave to those in genuine need, the more she got back. Some people give in order to get, but she considers that mere trading. Generous Genevieve gives for the sheer thrill of it. By giving she is keeping herself from emotional cancer. Emotional cancer, also known as greed, can take over one's heart and destroy their ability to enjoy even the simple things of life. Genevieve gives in order to increase her giving capacity.

Sometimes it hurts Genevieve to give. Sometimes she is short of cash because she has given to someone else, but that shortage doesn't last long.

Genevieve believes that there is always a reward for giving to those in need. She thinks that her generosity will come back to her benefit sooner or later. She coined the expression, “What goes



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around—comes around.”

