

Why and how should you evaluate charities? (22:9)

He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.

THE TEXT (NASB)

He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. KJV - Proverbs 22:9

INTRODUCTION



True charity is an investment for our own benefit—it is not money lost.

Wise generosity energizes and transforms our assets, yielding many sorts of benefits, but not all charitable giving is truly charity.

It's important to research a charity before giving. Too much emphasis is placed on the tax benefits of donations, and too little on discerning the worthiness of the charity itself.



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COMMENTARY

Apparently, generous people need not give the poor “all” their food, just “some.” After all, if the generous give everything away, we’ll impoverish ourselves. Yet even if we do, we’ll not be forsaken by the loving, living God. He promises that whoever waters, will be watered (Proverbs 11:25). God is a giving God, with infinite resources. When we give, we are godly.

Translation: *poor, blessed*



The Hebrew word for “poor,” דָּל (dāl, pronounced “dahl”), can also be translated as thin, weak, or low. So this provides a clue to the biblical definition of poverty. The true poor, those who permit this blessing of the donor, do not need more clothing, housing, transportation, or entertainment. They need the most basic of all necessities: Food.

What does it mean to be blessed? The Hebrew word for “blessed,” בָּרַךְ (bā•rāk, pronounced “bah-rak”), is used 327 times in the Bible. It appears first in Genesis 1:22 where “God blessed the fish and the birds, telling them to be fruitful and multiply.” A blessing comes directly or indirectly from God. It may include fruitfulness, health, prosperity, and success in any endeavour. In contrast, a person may be rich and sick, or rich and miserable. So it’s much better to be blessed than to be rich. Riches are only one component of blessing. Study Proverbs 22:4 to discover the other two, even more important blessings.

True Charity

Contrast the gift of food to the desperately impoverished, with a charitable donation to the ballet or a special interest group. Both types of donations qualify for tax credits and public honour. However, there’s no blessing promised for gifts to those already well-off. And more, Proverbs 22:16 even speaks of trouble coming to those who give to the rich. That’s disturbing. Charitable donations are not all equal. You may receive a tax benefit when you give to an artistic co-op or a sports club, but the Bible suggests you will not get a blessing. You may even put yourself in the path of poverty. Find out more about dangerous benevolence by exploring this question: [What are the wrong ways to treat the rich and poor?](#)



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Screening Charities

American pastor and author Randy Alcorn has some excellent suggestions in his article, *Nineteen Questions to Ask Before You Give to Any Organization*. I've highlighted the seven that I think are most important:

1. Is this ministry doing something uniquely worth backing, versus many other groups?
2. **Have I fulfilled my primary responsibility to my own church, before giving elsewhere?**
3. The ministry's pamphlets aside, have I talked to any disinterested people who know it?
4. Have I considered a tour or trip, to see what this ministry is really doing on the ground?
5. **Does the ministry's staff show a servant-hearted concern for those whom they serve?**
6. **Do the organization's workers show a sense of unity, camaraderie and mutual respect?**
7. Have I talked directly to "workers on the shop floor," not just executives or PR people?
8. **Is this ministry biblically sound and Christ-centered?**
9. **What kind of character, integrity, purity, and humility do the ministry leaders have?**
10. What kind of accountability structures does the organization have?
11. If this is not a distinctly Christian effort, are there compelling reasons to support it?
12. Are the ministry's objectives, strategies and tactics both clear and effective?
13. Is the organization teachable and open to progress in becoming more strategic?
14. Have I gotten an objective view of this ministry, or simply the red carpet treatment?
15. What view of God and people is revealed by this organization's fundraising style?
16. What percentage of its donations is spent on overhead or fundraising, versus service to real people? (Administration can run 12-18 percent, though more in some situations.)
17. **Does this ministry have clear understanding of cultural factors and local conditions, and how the flow of money may affect and even harm them?**
18. **Does this organization speak well of other efforts and cooperate with them?**
19. Is this ministry pervaded by a clearly eternal perspective on life, ministry and resources?

Read more: [Eternal Perspective Ministries](#).



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

A wealthy young ruler asked Jesus for a new life, indestructible life. Despite his wealth, power, and health, the young man was dissatisfied with life. Jesus' shocking advice was to sell all that he owned and give it to the poor. Then, having his treasure in heaven, he should come and follow Jesus. The ruler could not stomach this prescription and sadly turned away.

Note that Jesus did not tell him to give the money to the local synagogue, the temple in Jerusalem, or even his own disciples. Jesus told him to sell everything and give it all to the poor. This way, he would convert earthly wealth into heavenly wealth. Money given to those in real need (lacking food or clothing, the biblical poverty line at 1 Timothy 6:8) is a great investment. The rich young ruler did not believe this. Do we?

Read two versions of the account in Luke 18:18-30 and Mark 10:17-31.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Get God's blessing by giving to the poor.
- Give to those who need it most for their need, not their greed.
- Review the charities you support. Make sure you are getting the most benefit from your charitable donations by giving it to those who really need it.

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



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KEY WORDS

better life (quality), blessed, charity, food, generosity, honor, investments, poor (dāl pronounced “dahl”), poverty, rich, stinginess, taxes, 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.”

