

What Exactly is “Benevolence”?

- A. *Benevolence* is the desire to do good to others; goodwill; an act of kindness; a charitable gift.
- B. What input can we find in God’s revelation concerning benevolence? What does God expect of us as individuals and as a congregation when it comes to the stewardship of our material blessings?

I. What Benevolence WASN’T in the Life of the Early Church

- A. Benevolence wasn’t the _____ of propagating Christianity; it was the “_____” of Christians (*John 15:5,8; 13:35; 15:16-17; Gal 5:22-23*).
- B. Benevolence wasn’t the point of Jesus’ mission; “_____” was (and is) the point (*John 6:1-15, 22-27, 35, 48-51, 54, 63-69; 18:36-37; Rom 14:17; 1 Tim 3:15*).

II. The Call for Every Disciple to be “of Christ” (*Mark 10:45; 1 Pet 2:21; Acts 10:34-38*)

- A. *1 Timothy 6:17-18* — “As for the _____ in this present age...”
- B. *Hebrews 13:16* — “...such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”
- C. *1 John 3:16-18* — “Let us not love in word or talk but in _____ and in truth.”
- D. *Matthew 25:31-46* — “As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”
- E. *2 Corinthians 5:10* — “For we must _____ appear before the judgment seat of Christ...”
- F. *Galatians 6:1-10* — “As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone...”
- G. *James 1:19-27* — “_____ that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this...”

III. The Call for Every Church to be “of Christ” (*Eph 1:22-23; Acts 10:38-43; Matt 28:18-20*)

- A. *1 Timothy 5:16* — “Let the church not be _____...”
- B. Historical examples of benevolence under the guidance of Spirit-led apostles:
 - 1. *Romans 15:25-26* — “I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the _____.”
 - 2. *1 Corinthians 16:1-3* — “Now concerning the collection for the _____...”
 - 3. *2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:1* — “...the favor of taking part in the relief of the _____.”
 - 4. *Acts 2:44-45* — “All who believed were together and had all things in common...”
- C. *1 Timothy 5:3-16* — “...care for those who are truly widows.”

IV. God-Breathed Perspective for Those Who are “of Christ” (*2 Cor 9:6-15*)

- A. “The point is this...” (*9:6-11*).
- B. The surpassing grace of God is glorified when we cheerfully submit to his will (*9:12-14*).
- C. “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!” (*9:15*)