



**DEVOTION:** February 26

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***Benevolence (Life Realities)***  
**ROBERT SIMMS**

*Ministry to people in need is God's expectation of you as a discipline in love and a demonstration of true worship.*

Because of the existence of many large, charitable organizations, many Americans have come to expect benevolence to be someone else's responsibility. Christians often want their churches to have benevolence ministries that relieve them of any personal action on their part, while churches sometimes act mostly as referral services for private charities or government-run programs. Passing the buck seems to be common when it comes to helping people in need.

Yet Scripture teaches individual people of God to accept responsibility for ministry to the poor, the troubled, and the neglected. While there is a need for organizations that can shoulder burdens greater than even the most compassionate individuals can bear, there is still a place for every Christian to respond to need.

Leviticus urges God's people to make provisions in their lifestyles and business affairs to include benevolence toward the poor. The Proverbs decry our being stingy and they especially chide us for pretending that we can't afford to help people when in fact we can. In the New Testament, James boldly says that Christ's really faithful disciples consider ministry to widows and orphans to be part and parcel of being Christians.

Many Christian financial counselors recommend that Christians who establish budgets for themselves or their families create a category for ministry, thus planning intentionally for benevolence. Then they should look for opportunities to do ministry and they will be able to respond to situations of need as they arise.

What often happens is that while we agree in principle that we should respond to need where we see it, we may have learned to avoid seeing it almost unconsciously, or to see it through the dim lens of cynicism or judgment when we are confronted with it.

We should pray to be sensitized to the needs of others and to see them as Jesus sees them: people made in God's image and needing His love, channeled through us.

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**SCRIPTURES**

Leviticus 19:9, Proverbs 3:28, James 1:27



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