

**Caring for the Needs of Others**  
***Lesson 2 – The Priorities of Service***  
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***Introduction:*** A child of God seeks the will of God in every area of his life.

- A. When we consider the expression of our love, God comes first! **(Mt 22:37-39)**
  - 1. If we get the priorities wrong then we can end up fighting God.
  - 2. It is very easy to let our emotions shut our minds down.
- B. When we only follow our hearts and do not seek God's wisdom, we likely will discover the "law of unintended consequences!"
  - 1. Consider David's building a new ox cart to carry the Ark of the Covenant. **(2 Sam 6:3-8; 1 Chron 15:12-13)**
    - a. Your goals may have been reasonable.
    - b. Your motives may be good.
    - c. You may have been encouraged by others.
  - 2. Will you walk by faith or give in to the peer pressure of others?

***I. The spiritual is greater than the physical***

- A. Which is greater?
  - 1. The physical body or the eternal soul? **(Mt 10:28; Mt 11:4-5)**
  - 2. Temporary physical consequences or eternal consequences? **(2 Cor 4:16-18; Heb 11:24-26)**
  - 3. Physical food or spiritual food? **(Rom 1:16-17; John 6:26-27; 44-45)**
- B. How did the Lord equip His church? What is the primary mission of the church?
  - 1. He equipped the church according to the work He expected the church to do. **(Eph 4:11-12)**
  - 2. The work of a local church is limited to needy Christians.
  - 3. After taking every passage in the New Testament we can know what the church may do in this area. **(Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6; 11:27-30; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 9:12-14; Eph 4:11-12).**
  - 4. How may the local church carry out this work?
    - a. The church may provide a place, personnel, provisions, care, etc.
    - b. A local church can carefully plan and execute this work. **(Acts 6:1-6)**

***II. Take care of your own family first***

- A. God gives instructions concerning primary responsibilities.
  - 1. A man should take care of his own household before having others care for them. **(1 Tim 5:4, 16)**
  - 2. Before a church permanently takes care of a widow there are "qualifications." **(1 Tim 5:9-12)**
- B. It is a mistake to quickly help another without proper knowledge.
  - 1. You can actively destroy someone while meaning to do good. **(1 Tim 5:11)**
  - 2. In discussing the derivation of the word translated "wax wanton," Adam Clarke says that it is taken from two words which mean to remove the rein and that it is a "metaphor taken from a pampered horse, from whose mouth the rein has been removed, so that there is nothing to check or confine him"

### Questions

1. Why are knowing and living by God's priorities so important?
2. Why do we find "unintended consequences" when we act without God's wisdom?
3. Name at least 3 areas where God explains that the spiritual is greater than the physical?
4. What is the primary work of a local church? How is the local church limited in benevolence?
5. Who does God want to first help one in need?
6. What might be a consequence if we help someone God does not wish us to? Why?

### ***III. You should only help one in true need***

A. God's wisdom demands that we take the time to know what we are doing.

**(1 Tim 5:3-4)**

1. God has instructed men to work to support their families and others. **(Eph 4:28)**
2. How does God define being needy? **(1 Tim 6:6-8)**
3. How do unscrupulous people take advantage of those who do not investigate?
4. Before a church permanently takes care of a widow there are "qualifications."

**(1 Tim 5:9-12)**

B. We can commit sin by giving some people help!

1. We must not help those who can work but refuse to. **(2 Thess 3:6-12)**
2. We may well be helping some to buy drugs.
3. Some will seek help from multiple sources and not reveal what they have.
4. God does not wish for the one receiving help have it easy while the giver is bearing heavy burdens. **(2 Cor 8:13-15)**
5. What steps should one take to best gain this knowledge?

### ***IV. You are limited by your own ability***

A. Peter acknowledged his inability to help on a given occasion. **(Acts 3:2-6)**

1. When Christians were urged to give to help the needy saints in Jerusalem, Paul clearly pointed out the limits of what God expected. **(2 Cor 8:12)**
2. Jesus pointed out that there would never be a time in this age where all poor were cared for. **(Mt 26:9-11)**

B. We should take the proper time to get to know the one in need and to help within the realm God has blessed us! **(Eph 4:28)**

1. When we do this we are truly blessed and are a blessing! **(2 Cor 9:6-7)**
2. The time we spend in knowing and helping another will prove as helpful as the monetary assistance that is provided.

### Questions

1. What is a "widow indeed? What does it mean to be in need?
2. Why does God give qualifications concerning the widow to be "taken into the number" **(1 Tim 5:9)**?
3. Who should not receive help?
4. How does our ability affect what we can do?