

Beliefs Matter

Discovery Starters

Service

We are called to **contribute toward God's Kingdom purposes** in every sphere of life

[Deu 15:7-11](#); [Deu 24:17-22](#); [Psa 112:4-9](#); [Pro 11:10-11](#); [Zec 7:8-10](#);
[Mat 5:14-16](#); [2Th 3:13](#); [Tit 3:4-8](#); [Heb 13:15-16](#); [Jam 2:14-26](#)

Belief #6 – Service: When the City Rejoices

Biblical Foundation:

The whole city celebrates when the godly succeed; they shout for joy when the wicked die. Upright citizens are good for a city and make it prosper, but the talk of the wicked tears it apart (Pro 11:10-11).

Discovery Starter:

What a stunning statement! Why does the city celebrate when the godly succeed? Usually people rejoice only when they, or their team, succeeds. What is different here? The Hebrew word for "the godly" is *tsadikkim*. They are the ones "who are willing to disadvantage themselves for the community, while the wicked are those who put their own economic, social, and personal needs ahead of the needs of the community" (Timothy Keller, quoted in Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*).

Jesus said that the "entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based" on two commandments: to love God and to love neighbor (Mat 22:37-40). The two sins most frequently addressed in the Scriptures are idolatry (not loving God) and social injustice (not loving neighbor). In the law, the essence of loving neighbor is exemplified in this exhortation:

"True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to orphans, and you must never accept a widow's garment as security for her debt. Always remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God redeemed you from your slavery. That is why I have given you this command" (Deu 24:17-18).

The prophets continue this theme:

"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. Do not oppress widows, orphans,

foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other" (Zec 7:9-10).

Throughout the Scriptures, God expects his people to act kindly towards the most disadvantaged. The marginalized in our midst are often described as "widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor." God is described as a "Father to the fatherless, defender of widows" (Psa 68:5). Because God's people are to reflect his heart, "You must not exploit a widow or an orphan" or any other "at-risk" person (Exo 22:22-23). This imitation of God's goodness towards the "least of these" (Mat 25:31-46) must be part of our everyday lives. We are called to holistic service: an integrated, two-handed gospel proclaiming the truth of God and demonstrating the love of God to all those in need. When we do this the city will indeed rejoice!

Keep Going:

It is estimated that by 2030 over 3.2 billion people will be living in 700 cities of a million or more. Many "widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor" will occupy these needy urban landscapes. The following list of passages addresses the issue of these precious individuals who are most at risk in our society. These passages are a Biblical sampling of commands, proverbs, exhortations, and portrayals of God's heart for "the least" among us. This is a long list, because the Bible has much to say on this subject. Don't rush through these references. Pick a few. Read them slowly. Meditate on them deeply. Ask God to reveal his heart to you. In light of these passages, ask him how he wants you to respond. What is your heaven-sent assignment?

Listen, obey and don't give up.

- Exo 22:21-24; 23:3,6,9-11
- Lev 19:9-10,15,33-34; 23:22; 25:35-38
- Deu 10:17-19; 14:28-29; 15:7-11; 24:12-15,17-22; 26:12-13; 27:19
- Job 29:11-17; 31:16-23,31-32
- Psa 10:17-18; 12:5; 35:10; 68:5; 72:1-2,4,12; 82:3-4; 94:4-9; 107:41-43; 109:15-17; 113:5-9; 146:9
- Pro 14:21; 15:25; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9,16,22-23; 23:10-11; 28:8,27; 29:7; 31:8-9,20
- Isa 1:17,21-23; 10:1-2; 11:1-5; 25:4; 61:1
- Jer 5:26-29; 7:5-7; 22:3,15-17; 49:11
- Eze 16:49; 18:10-17; 22:6-12
- Dan 4:27
- Amo 2:6-7; 4:1-2; 5:10-12; 8:4-7
- Zec 7:10
- Mal 3:5
- Mat 19:21; 25:31-46
- Mar 10:21; 12:38-40

- Luk 3:11; 4:16-21; 6:20; 11:39-41; 14:12-14; 18:22; 19:8-10; 20:45-47
- Act 10:2-4,31
- Rom 15:26
- 1Co 13:3
- 2Co 9:9
- 1Ti 5:3-7
- Heb 13:2
- Jam 1:9-11,27; 2:1-7
- 3Jo 5.

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