

or without heat, they need assistance in the form of food, clothing, fuel, or money. If they are trying to live lives of Christian principle and morality in a wicked and godless environment, they need prayer, encouragement, and support in whatever form such help can be provided. If they are without parents, they need persons who will assume that role for them.

What kinds of help can we provide for their needs?

At this point, there is a tendency on the part of some to say, "Oh, but I can't even think of helping any of these people with their needs. I have enough problems of my own, without concerning myself with someone else's!"

Or some may say, "I realize these people have problems, but I don't have the means with which to alleviate their needs. I am just about making ends meet myself."

Or some may say, "It would be nice to help these people, but I really can't afford to. It would cost too much" (and here we may insert the phrases "too much money," "too much time," "too much energy," "too much inconvenience," "too great a sacrifice on my own immediate or long-range goals and objectives," or "too great an expenditure of myself.")

Or some may say, "I know I ought to help, but I really don't know how to go about it."

Now some of these responses merely represent attempts to evade the issue. Other responses express legitimate excuses. Let us analyze them.

First, let us consider the person who says, "My own problems crowd out all thought of other people's problems." That person needs to come to terms with his or her problems, and to seek sound, sensible, workable biblical solutions. He or she may benefit from assistance by a trained Christian counselor or a Christian psychologist.

Second, let us consider the person who says, "I don't have the means to help." That person may not be able to help by sending money or that which costs money, but may be able to help in non-material ways.

For instance, they can tell someone who is lost about Christ's salvation. They can try to encourage other Christians by kind, edifying words, communicated orally or by letter or note, or by sending free Christian literature (such as leaflets or booklets appropriate to the recipient's need). They can visit those who have incurable diseases and chat with them, read to them, or simply sit with them in silent support; or they can relieve those taking care of them, so that they can shop or go out or simply have a break. They