

put aside and save something for this collection, as he prospers. This would seem to limit his responsibility to give to the poor to his ability to contribute something, as God prospers his labor. Here we do not get the impression that Corinthian believers were responsible to contribute what they didn't have!

In Acts 11:29, we discover that a famine was predicted, and that some of the disciples in Antioch decided to sent to the relief of the believers in Judea. But we also read that they contributed "in the proportion that any of the disciples had means." This seems to imply that those who had means contributed; those who had little or none contributed little or nothing; those who had large means contributed largely, and those who had small means contributed accordingly. Their responsibility appears to have varied according to the proportion of their ability.

If we accept the principle that our responsibility to help others in need is somewhat conditioned upon our ability to meet those needs, then within that limitation we must further ask, "for what kinds of needs are we responsible?" What does Scripture say? Consider the following.

1 John 3:17 – "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

Galatians 6:2 – "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

Matthew 25:31, 34-40 – "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. . .

Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.'"

Mark 9:41 – "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."