

# Caring For Others



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## Table of Contents

Forward	No Love Returned	3
Chapter 1	Caring for others	4
Chapter 2	Be kind to one another.	9
Chapter 3	Encourage one another.	12
Chapter 4	Care for Animals	15
Chapter 5	Cares of this world	18

## **No Love Returned.**

By Harold Bollinger

Of all the persons on this earth,  
There was a man who walked among those bond by law.  
They had no love for those without,  
Or fallen prey to robbers or to thieves.

He loved them still, through no love was returned.  
He taught to them the ways of God,  
God's plan to save them from demise.

How could he love those who had no love?  
How could he care for those who had no care?

He loved them with the love of God.  
For God loves all and offers hope to all.  
He loved them with this great love,  
For he is the Son of God.

His love extends to you.

His name is Jesus.

## Chapter 1



### Caring For Others

#### Philippians 2:4

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippi was a cosmopolitan city. The composition of the church reflected great diversity, with people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life. Acts 16 gives us some indication of the diverse makeup of this church.

The church included Lydia, a Jewish convert from Asia and a wealthy businesswoman (Acts 16:14); the slave girl (Acts 16:16-17), probably a native Greek; and the jailer serving this colony of the empire, probably a Roman (Acts 16:25-36).

With so many different backgrounds among the members, unity must have been difficult to maintain. Although there is no evidence of division in the church, its unity had to be safeguarded (Phil. 3:2; Phil. 4:2).

Paul encourages us to guard against any selfishness, prejudice, or jealousy that might lead to dissension. Showing genuine interest in others is a positive step forward in maintaining unity among believers.

## **Bear one another's burdens.**

### **Galatians 6:2**

**Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.**

No Christian should ever think that he or she is totally independent and doesn't need help from others, and no one should feel excused from the task of helping others.

The body of Christ—the church—functions only when the members work together for the common good. Do you know someone who needs help? Is there a Christian brother or sister who needs correction or encouragement? Humbly and gently reach out to that person (John 13:34-35).

## **Prefer one another.**

### **Romans 12:10**

**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;**

We can honor others in one of two ways. One involves ulterior motives. We honor our bosses so they will reward us, our employees so they will work harder, the wealthy so they will contribute to our cause, the powerful so they will use their power for us and not against us. God's other way involves love.

As Christians, we honor people because they have been created in God's image, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and because they have a unique contribution to make to Christ's church. Does God's way of honoring others sound too difficult for your competitive nature? Why not try to outdo one another in showing honor? Put others first!

## **Do good to all people.**

### **Galatians 6:10**

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

It is discouraging to continue to do right and receive no word of thanks or see no tangible results. But Paul challenged the Galatians and he challenges us to keep on doing good and to trust God for the results. In due time, we will reap a harvest of blessing.

## **Care for your own family.**

### **1 Timothy 5:8**

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Almost everyone has relatives, family of some kind. Family relationships are so important in God's eyes, Paul says, that a person who neglects his or her family responsibilities has denied the faith. Are you doing your part to meet the needs of those included in your family circle?

## **Listen to the cry of the poor**

### **Proverbs 21:13**

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

We should work to meet the needs of the poor and protect their rights—we may be in need of such services ourselves someday.

## **Remember the poor**

### **Galatians 2:10**

**They only asked us to remember the poor--the very thing I also was eager to do.**

The apostles were referring to the poor of Jerusalem. While many Gentile converts were financially comfortable, the Jerusalem church had suffered from the effects of a severe famine in Palestine (see Acts 11:28-30) and was struggling. So on his journeys, Paul had gathered funds for the Jewish Christians (Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25-29; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8).

The need for believers to care for the poor is a constant theme in Scripture. But often we do nothing, caught up in meeting our own needs and desires. Perhaps we don't see enough poverty to remember the needs of the poor. The world is filled with poor people, here and in other countries. What can you do to help?

## **Visit the orphans and widows.**

### **James 1:27**

**Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.**

In the first century, orphans and widows had very little means of economic support. Unless a family member was willing to care for them, they were reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or starving. By caring for these powerless people, the church put God's Word into practice. When we give with no hope of receiving in return, we show what it means to serve others.

To keep ourselves from being polluted by the world, we need to commit ourselves to Christ's ethical and moral system, not the world's. We are not to adapt to the world's value system, which is based on money, power, and pleasure. True faith means nothing if we are contaminated with such values.

**Lending to the poor is lending to the Lord.**

**Proverbs 19:17**

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.

Here God identifies with the poor as Jesus does in Matthew 25:31-46. As our Creator, God values all of us, whether we are poor or rich. When we help the poor, we honor both the Creator and his creation. God accepts our help as if we had offered it directly to him.

**God delivers the afflicted from the strong.**

**Psalm 35:10**

All my bones will say, "LORD, who is like You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, and the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?"

## Chapter 2



### Be kind to one another

#### Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

We can grieve the Holy Spirit by the way we live. Paul warns us against unwholesome language, bitterness, improper use of anger, brawling, slander, and bad attitudes toward others. Instead of acting that way, we should be forgiving, just as God has forgiven us.

Are you grieving or pleasing God with your attitudes and actions? Act in love toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, just as God acted in love by sending his Son to die for your sins.

The Holy Spirit within us is a seal or guarantee that we belong to God. For more on this thought, see the note on +Ephes. 1:13-14.

This is Christ's law of forgiveness as taught in the Gospels (Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25). We also see it in the Lord's Prayer—"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." God does not forgive us *because* we forgive others, but solely because of his great mercy. As we come to understand his mercy, however, we will want to be like him. Having received forgiveness, we will pass it on to others.

Those who are unwilling to forgive have not become one with Christ, who was willing to forgive even those who crucified him (Luke 23:34).

## **Love others as Christ has loved you.**

### **John 13:34-35**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus says that our Christlike love will show we are his disciples. Do people see petty bickering, jealousy, and division in your church? Or do they know you are Jesus’ followers by your love for one another?

Love is more than simply warm feelings; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it’s not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting energy to others’ welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of loving is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by a supernatural source. The Bible has another beautiful description of love in 1 Cor. 13.

## **Love not in word, but in love in deed.**

### **1 John 3:17-18**

But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but indeed and truth.

These verses give an example of how to lay down our lives for others—to help those in need. This is strikingly similar to James’s teaching (James 2:14-17). How clearly do your actions say you really love others? Are you as generous as you should be with your money, possessions, and time?

## **As you have done to others, you did to Christ.**

### **Matthew 25:40**

"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.'

There has been much discussion about the identity of the “brothers.” Some have said they are the Jews; others say they are all Christians; still others say they are suffering people everywhere. Such a debate is much like the lawyer’s earlier question to Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29).

The point of this parable is not the *who*, but the *what*—the importance of serving where service is needed. The focus of this parable is that we should love every person and serve anyone we can. Such love for others glorifies God by reflecting our love for him.

**He who gives to the poor will never want.**

**Proverbs 28:27**

**He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.**

God wants us to identify with the needy, not ignore them. The second part of this proverb could be restated positively: “those who open their eyes to poor people will be blessed.” If we help others when they are in trouble, they will do whatever they can to return the favor (see Proverbs 11:24-25). Paul promises that God will supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19); he usually does this through other people. What can you do today to help God supply someone’s need?

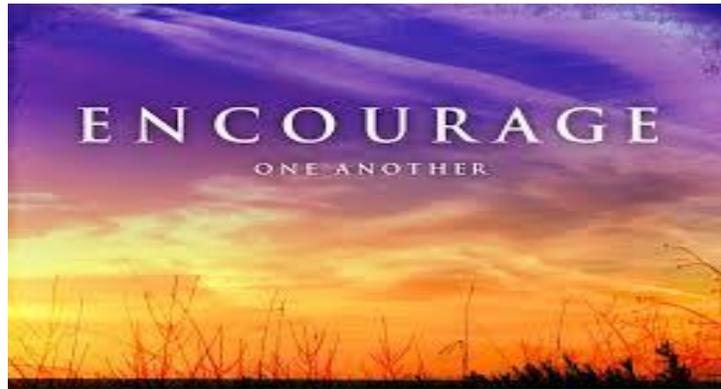
**In due time, you will reap.**

**Galatians 6:9-10**

**Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

It is discouraging to continue to do right and receive no word of thanks or see no tangible results. But Paul challenged the Galatians and he challenges us to keep on doing good and to trust God for the results. In due time, we will reap a harvest of blessing.

## Chapter 3



**Encourage one another.**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

As you near the end of a long race, your legs ache, your throat burns, and your whole body cries out for you to stop. This is when friends and fans are most valuable. Their encouragement helps you push through the pain to the finish line. In the same way, Christians are to encourage one another. A word of encouragement offered at the right moment can be the difference between finishing well and collapsing along the way. Look around you. Be sensitive to others' need for encouragement, and offer supportive words or actions.

**Put on a heart of compassion.**

### **Colossians 3:12**

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

“When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” refers to the second coming of Christ when he will establish his eternal kingdom. At that time, Christ will gather all believers, those who have died and those who are alive, into one united family under his rule. All believers from all times, including these Thessalonians, will be with Christ in his kingdom.

If we are full of God's love, it will overflow to others. It's not enough merely to be courteous to others; we must actively and persistently show love to them. Our love should be growing continually. If your capacity to love has remained unchanged for some time, ask God to fill you again with his never-ending supply. Then look for opportunities to express his love.

**He will not allow your foot to slip.**

**Psalm 121:3**

**He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.**

Psalms 120-134 are called "Pilgrim Psalms" or "Songs of Ascent." They were sung by those who journeyed (and thus "ascended") to the temple for the annual feasts. Each psalm is a "step" along the journey.

Psalm 120 begins the journey in a distant land in hostile surroundings; Psalm 122 pictures the pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem; and the rest of the psalms move toward the temple, mentioning various characteristics of God.

**Take thought of man's needs.**

**Psalm 8:4**

**What is man that you take thought of him, and the son of man that you care for him?**

To respect God's majesty, we must compare ourselves to his greatness. When we look at creation, we often feel small by comparison. To feel small is a healthy way to get back to reality, but God does not want us to dwell on our smallness. Humility means proper respect for God, not self-depreciation.

**The shepherd will care for you.**

**Psalm 23:1**

**The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.**

In describing the Lord as a shepherd, David wrote out of his own experience because he had spent his early years caring for sheep (1 Samuel 16:10-11). Sheep are completely dependent on the shepherd for provision, guidance, and protection. The New Testament calls Jesus the good shepherd (John 10:11); the great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20); and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

As the Lord is the good shepherd, so we are his sheep—not frightened, passive animals, but obedient followers, wise enough to follow one who will lead us in the right places and in right ways.

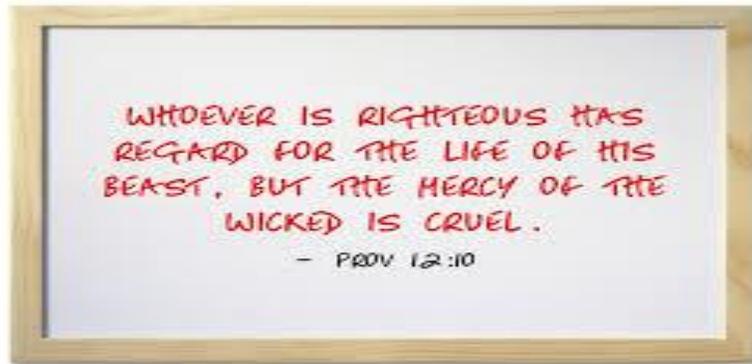
This psalm does not focus on the animal-like qualities of sheep, but on the discipleship qualities of those who follow. When you recognize the good shepherd, follow him.

**God prepares the earth for his people.**

**Psalm 65:9**

You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; you greatly enrich it; the stream of God is full of water; you prepare their grain, for thus you prepare the earth.

## Chapter 4



### Care For animals

#### Genesis 9:8-10

Then God told Noah and his sons, "I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals.

Noah stepped out of the ark onto an earth devoid of human life. But God gave him a reassuring promise. This covenant had three parts: (1) never again will a flood do such destruction; (2) as long as the earth remains, the seasons will always come as expected; (3) a rainbow will be visible when it rains as a sign to all that God will keep his promises.

The earth's order and seasons are still preserved, and rainbows still remind us of God's faithfulness to his Word.

### God cares for animals.

#### Psalm 147:9

He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens which cry.

These last five psalms overflow with praise. Each begins and ends with "Praise the LORD." They show us where, why, and how to praise God. What does praise do? (1) Praise takes our minds off our problems and shortcomings, and focuses them on God. (2) Praise leads us from individual meditation to corporate worship. (3)

Praise causes us to consider and appreciate God's character. (4) Praise lifts our perspective from the earthly to the heavenly.

### **God cares for the alien, the orphan and the widow.**

#### **Deuteronomy 24:19**

"When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

God's people were instructed to leave some of their harvest in the fields so travelers and the poor could gather it. This second gathering, called gleaning, was a way for them to provide food for themselves.

Years later, Ruth obtained food for herself and Naomi by gleaning behind the reapers in Boaz's field, picking up the leftovers (Ruth 2:2). Because this law was being obeyed years after it was written, Ruth, a woman in Christ's lineage, was able to find food.

### **Care for Your Body**

#### **Ephesians 5:29**

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.

Paul devotes twice as many words to telling husbands to love their wives as to telling wives to submit to their husbands. How should a man love his wife? (1) He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her. (2) He should make her well-being of primary importance. (3) He should care for her as he cares for his own body. No wife needs to fear submitting to a man who treats her in this way.

## **Guard your steps.**

### **Ecclesiastes 5:1**

**Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.**

“Guard your steps” means “be careful.” When we enter the house of God, we should have the attitude of being open and ready to listen to God, not to dictate to him what we think he should do.

## **Love others as God has loved you.**

### **John 15:12**

**"This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.**

## **Worldly care**

Because of his unity with God, Jesus lived as God wanted him to live. Because of our identification with Jesus, we must honor him and live as he wants us to live. The questions “What would Jesus do?” and “What would Jesus have me do?” may help us make the right choices.

## **God want you to be free from concern.**

### **1 Corinthians 7:32**

**But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;**

Some single people feel tremendous pressure to be married. They think their lives can be complete only with a spouse. But Paul underlines one advantage of being single—the potential of a greater focus on Christ and his work. If you are unmarried, use your special opportunity to serve Christ wholeheartedly.

## Chapter 5



### Cares Of This World

#### Luke 8:5-15

"The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled underfoot and the birds of the air ate it up....

Why would a farmer allow precious seed to land on the path, on rocks, or among thorns? This is not an irresponsible farmer scattering seeds at random. He is using the acceptable method of hand-seeding a large field—tossing it by handfuls as he walks through the field.

His goal is to get as much seed as possible to take root in good soil, but there is inevitable waste as some falls or is blown into less productive areas.

That some of the seed produced no crop was not the fault of the faithful farmer or of the seed. The yield depended on the condition of the soil where the seed fell. It is our responsibility to spread the seed (God's message), but we should not give up when some of our efforts fail. Remember, not every seed falls on good soil.

## God's care in sickness

### Psalm 41:3

The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed; in his illness, you restore him to health.

The Bible often speaks of God's care for the weak, poor, and needy, and of his blessing on those who share this concern. God wants our generosity to reflect his own free giving. As he has blessed us, we should bless others.

## The Father's Loving Care

### Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The purpose of parental discipline is to help children grow, not to exasperate and provoke them to anger or discouragement (see also Col. 3:21). Parenting is not easy—it takes lots of patience to raise children in a loving, Christ-honoring manner. But frustration and anger should not be causes for discipline. Instead, parents should act in love, treating their children as Jesus treats the people he loves.

This is vital to children's development and to their understanding of what Christ is like.

“His horn will be lifted high in honor” means that God's dignity will be uplifted and those faithful to God will be honored. The horn was a symbol of power and dignity just as the horns of animals represent their strength.

## Care for the Poor saints

### Psalm 112:9

He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor.

**The Lord is knocking at your hearts door.**



**Rev. 3:20**

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print