

own, but they shared everything they had. . . . There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Acts 4:32,34-35

- Notes -

March 6, 2005

Isaiah

Relationships over Ritual

"No worship—no preaching, no singing, no praying, no fasting, however intense and beautiful—that leaves us harsh with our workers on Monday or contentious with our spouses at home, or self-indulgent in other areas of our lives, or angry enough to hit somebody, is true God-pleasing worship. . . . How you treat people Monday is the test of the authenticity of your fasting on Sunday."

- Piper, *Hungry for God*, p. 135

"Why did God institute the forms of religion? As ends in themselves? No, but as symbols of an attitude of submission, surrender and trust that will manifest itself in changed behavior. Without that attitude as evidence by behavior, the forms are sources not of divine pleasure but of divine disgust."

- Oswalt, *Isaiah*, vol. 2 p. 495

Defend the Oppressed

Do not take advantage of the widow or orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children orphans. Exodus 22:22-24

This is what the LORD Almighty says: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one

another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other. Zechariah 7:9-10

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

Provide for the Needy

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought, "The seventh year for canceling debts is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and the toward the poor an needy in the land. Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Family First

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. . . . If anyone does provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Timothy 5:4,8

Caring for the Family of God

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? James 2:14-16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and see his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:16-18

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Acts 2:44

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his