

Deuteronomy 24 • Protecting a Moral Society

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Let's show you an outline of what we're going to be looking at here. We're in Deuteronomy chapter 24, by the way. I guess I didn't say that. Deuteronomy chapter 24. And these are the things that we're going to be looking at tonight. And again, we're talking about establishing a society. And when you're dealing with establishing a society, there's all these elements of protection that come into play.

Chapter outline:

- Protecting marriage (and women): 1-5
- Protecting a man's livelihood: 6
- Protecting the value of a human life: 8-9
- Protecting human dignity (loans): 10-13
- Protecting the poor: 14-15, 19-22
- Protecting justice: 16-18

For example: protecting marriage and we're going to see how the protection of women comes into that as well. He's going to talk about protecting a man's livelihood. In other words, his ability to earn wealth, feed his family, and so forth. He's going to talk about protecting the value of a human life in a single verse there.

In verses 8 and 9, he's going to deal with protecting the established authorities. And in this case, it's the divinely established authorities. In verses 10 through 13, he's going to talk about protecting human dignity. And particularly as it relates to the paying back of loans, interestingly enough. He's going to deal with protecting the poor in two different sections of this chapter, verses 14 and 15. And then again in verses 19 through 22, just talking about the poor.

And then he's going to deal with protecting justice. Because every society has to be careful to protect justice. If justice collapses in a society, all law collapses in that society and there's chaos.

Let's begin in the first five verses of the chapter where he deals with protecting marriage. And we'll touch on how it deals with women as well.

It says, *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, ² and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, ³ and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, ⁴ then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."* (ESV) All right, stop there for just a moment.

Now, as you can see, this passage concerns marriage and divorce. But in these verses, you'll notice the emphasis isn't on the reason for divorce. The reason, in fact, is given in a very vague sort of a way: if he finds some indecency. Well, obviously that's not adultery. Because you wouldn't just send her away. She would, literally, be killed for something like that. So, we don't know.

I mean, in fact, the Jews debated what some indecency meant for hundreds of years. Jesus had to come and shine some light onto that argument when He came along. But that's not the point of what God is saying here. The point is what's happening after divorce. And it basically is saying here that a man who divorces his wife, was not then able, or eligible, to remarry the woman after she had been married and divorced from another man.

In fact, Moses goes as far as to say, that is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. And by the way, if you're not totally clear on the definition of abomination, it means something that causes disgust or hatred. Now it may not cause disgust and hatred to you, but Moses is making it clear that it does to God. This issue of, and this very strong term, is used to describe this situation of being loathsome to the Lord, of a man taking a woman back who he had previously married. But who in the meantime, another man had married. And for whatever reason, let go of as well.

What's really interesting to me, is that the Jews had this passage, right here. Obviously, these are their Scriptures, first and foremost. They come to us by way of our relationship with Christ. And our understanding that they are divinely inspired. But these are the Jewish Scriptures. These are they, that

established their understanding of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and that sort of thing.

What's interesting about this is, that the Jews read this passage. And they determined after reading it, that Moses commanded them that, if they wanted to divorce their wives, that they were to hand her a letter, and put it in her hand in the presence of witnesses, and send her away. And that was all that was required for a divorce to take place back in those days.

But they saw it as a command. And when Jesus came along many years later, and started saying things like: if you divorce your wife for any reason other than adultery, you've sinned. And you've actually caused her to commit adultery when she marries another. Well, this caused the people who listened to Him to just be amazed. I mean they were incredulous. They're like, you're joking. Right?

Let me show you a passage here from Matthew chapter 19. Here's the response of the people. It says,

Matthew 19:7-8 (ESV)

They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" (Notice how they perceived the statement that Moses gave here in Deuteronomy 24. And) *He said to them,* (Listen guys, it was) *"Because of your hardness of heart* (and that) *Moses* (and look at the word there- it's not commanded, is it? He) *allowed you to divorce your wives, but* (look at this) *from the beginning,* (and that means from God's original intention of marriage) *it was not so."* In other words, God never intended marriage to be something that we throw away.

And this was allowed - it was permitted - because of what? The hardness of man's heart. Okay, because of the hardness of our heart, it was permitted. And we see from this passage several different things. Again, it was never part of God's plan. It was permitted because of sin and so forth. What the Jews perceived as a command from God, Jesus cleared the air on that, that was not something Moses commanded you to do. It was something he permitted you to do. But that's only because you guys were hard-hearted sinners.

What this passage ends up doing for you and I, is also, in our understanding of it, it provides a much needed protection for women in the cases of divorce. And a woman, was very vulnerable in those days, especially, in such cases. She couldn't divorce her husband. And it was possible for a woman to be passed back and forth, from man-to-man without her desire. And this rule, essentially, establishes a means of protection for her - for the woman, so that she couldn't simply be passed back and forth.

What's interesting about this is, that had God not laid this down for us as an understanding of the moral law, how would we have necessarily felt about a woman who was married to a man, divorced from her husband, went and married another man. And then came back to her original husband and married him? What would you think about that? Well, without the moral law, I'm not really sure.

Some people might think, that's a little dicey. Other people might go, well, whatever makes you happy. But do you see how the moral law gives us an understanding? Without the moral law, we're left to our own opinions related to these things. But when the moral law is established here in the Scripture, it begins to create this bedrock foundation for our conscience, to be able to determine the right and wrong related to this sort of a situation.

Now, the next rule that's given here in verse 5, relates to protecting marriage itself. It says, *"When a (newly when a) man (rather) is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken."*

Now here, in this interesting verse, we see a protection of marriage. Not from divorce, but from anything that would interrupt the goal of marriage. I'm not sure that we always remember this very much. Marriage is supposed to make you happy. That might be a revelation to some people, but marriage is supposed to make you happy. It's supposed to be a good thing. Our sinful, human hearts often create a scenario where it is anything but. But that's not because God messed up. The institution of marriage is delightful.

And I've said this before, it is the only relationship between two people on earth that God calls, one flesh. The only one. I actually share more DNA with my brother than I do my wife. And yet my relationship with my brother is not called one flesh, even though we have the same father and the same mother. I don't share that with my wife and yet she and I are called one flesh. And you understand, and I don't have time to get into it. Because you know about the connection that marriage creates in our understanding of Christ and His bride -

the Church, and so on. However, this is a relationship of incredible intimacy. And it's meant to be one of incredible delight.

And here's an interesting passage where it establishes a sense of happiness and fulfillment, that is God's intention for the marriage union by protecting the newly married couple. Giving him, if you will, this one year exemption from public service, which included military service back in those days. A man was even free from military service, if he'd gotten marriage for one year, so that he could be with his wife, cultivate and strengthen that marriage bond. And start enlarging his family unit by having children, or at least getting started along those ways. God is protecting the institution of marriage.

And I think there's even something that's important for us to apply as it relates to this. Even in our own sort of a way of viewing newly married couples. It's like, just chill and don't push them too much. And when somebody just gets married, they ought to take time, just to bond, be together.

And we got to be careful, even as the Church, not to drag them into service too quickly. Although I'm sure I've made that mistake, no doubt, in the past. But I think that there's wisdom here about letting these two come together. Let their hearts simmer together, and mature, and bond, and so forth.

And I've even cautioned married couples in pre-marriage counseling, to be careful in the first year or so of their marriage. To well, to be cautious about how many invitations they receive from a nearby family. To be constantly involved in situations where they're not really spending time as a couple. Where they're really not bonding. Because they're just so busy doing this. And being pulled this way and that way because of this family thing. And this thing. And, oh, we got invited to that. And pretty soon we've been married for a year or two. And we've really never spent a whole lot of alone time because that bonding hasn't taken place. I think there's some wisdom here that we can pay attention to.

Verse 6. We're protecting something else now and you'll see what it is. *"No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for that would be taking a life in pledge."*

Now, a pledge is basically, if you will, collateral for a loan. If an individual ran out of money, for whatever reason. And he needed to go to someone else who had those kinds of resources to get a loan. The person who is loaning the money might say, what can you give me as collateral? What can you pledge toward the repayment of this loan?

And God is giving guidelines here - in a moral society - to say in essence, that there are rules here on what you can take in pledge. And there are rules about what you can't take in pledge. And to take a man's mill, which is his grain mill. Or, even the upper millstone itself, which is the key element of the mill that does the grinding of the grain. Is to essentially rob the man of his means of feeding his family. And it's essentially, to hold him captive, if you will, to the repayment of this loan or his family can't eat!

This rule covers fairness in business. And it provided a needed protection in a moral society, against those who might otherwise take advantage of others who were at their mercy because they needed money. Oh, we hate that we need money. But we do. And sometimes it causes us to do things that get ourselves in trouble.

But in this situation, God is establishing a principle. And that is, that for God's people, money is not the primary issue here. The most important thing is people. It's caring for people. I'm not suggesting that your bank is necessarily going to follow those rules. I'm saying though, in a moral society, when God establishes the guidelines... Because there weren't banks in that particular sense of the term. People went to other individuals for loans. They were privatized in that way. And God is establishing this moral understanding.

Now here, as we go on now in verse 7, look what happens when this idea of caring for people goes horribly wrong. Verse 7, *"If a man is found stealing one of his brothers of the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then (look at this) that thief shall die."*

Interesting, huh? Capital crime. Kidnapping, with the intent of either using that individual as a means of money making through slavery, or, the sale of that individual. Okay, once again remember, God's establishing a moral society. And in the context of that moral society, He says, that a callous disregard for the value of another person is an evil that cannot be tolerated. Now, I would hope that we feel the same way.

Isn't it interesting that this hasn't stopped? The slave trade continues to this day. And whether it's for slavery for work, or slavery for sex, these things are happening in our culture today. Kind of reminds you, we tend to think that we've grown out of some of these things that we read in the Old Testament. But, what we saw John MacArthur, or heard John MacArthur say in that short video clip is, ...that the heart of man hasn't changed one iota. Right. It's evil. It's desperately wicked. It's beyond cure. And the kinds of things that we see in the Old Testament are certainly going on today.

But notice what God says here at the end of verse 7 for His society - the moral society based and predicated upon a moral law. He says, *“So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”* And that's where justice comes in. Justice, within the context of a moral society, is there to purge evil.

Now, obviously you can't purge it from a human heart. That's something that only the Holy Spirit can do, through the restoration of our heart, through giving us a clean heart, a new heart. David cried out, said, create a clean heart in me. (Psalm 51:10) And that word create, interestingly enough, is the same word that speaks in Genesis chapter 1 of how God, created things out of nothing. In other words, David isn't asking for a clean heart to clean up his old heart. He's asking for a new heart. The new heart that we all need comes from God.

But society in a moral framework, is called upon to purge evil from that society so that people can live in peace. Once again though, the Gospel, is the only thing that can purge it from someone's heart.

Next, verses 8 and 9. *“Take care, in a case of leprous disease, to be very careful to do according to all that the Levitical priest shall direct you. As I commanded them, so (that) you shall be careful to do. 9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt.”*

Now stop there for a moment. This is a really interesting couple of verses. Because on the outset it just sounds like he's reminding them, hey, by the way, be careful about that whole leprosy thing. Because it's really dangerous and, it's very communicable. Whatever the Levites tell you to do, you do it. Alright? Okay, now we can go on and get on to some of these other... It sounds like that, doesn't it? Oh, there's so much more going on than just that.

First of all, look again with me in verse 8. And look very carefully at the words where he says, *“...be very careful (to do all or) to do (rather) according to all that the Levitical priests shall direct you.”*

That is the point of this message. Leprosy was part of what they were told to do. But the point that God is making to the people in a moral society here is, that they need to be careful to do all that those in authority have told them to do. Because the priests, as you know, we're given the authority by God, in cases of leprosy and the myriad of skin diseases that apparently afflicted the people back during those times, to look at those things and make determinations. “Can this person go back into society? Do they need to be sent out and stay away from society for a period of time. And if so, how long... and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah.

But what God is talking about here is, He's talking about respecting that authority. And you'll notice that to underscore His statement about respecting authority, He then says in verse 9, remember what God did to Miriam. Because when you look at this as only a reminder about leprosy, and then He says, remember what God did to Miriam, you're like, what does that have to do with being aware of the fact that leprosy is a dangerous thing?

You see, the point of this whole thing, to remember what God did to Miriam, is to remember what happened to her, as a result of what she did. And what she did was, she created a rebellion against her brother, Moses. This is Moses's sister, who along with Aaron, began to talk behind his back. And they were trying to figure, or find any reason they could to talk behind his back. And they were using the fact that he had taken an Ethiopian woman for his wife. But that really wasn't the main thing.

The main thing was they were just trying to create unrest. And they were trying to speak against their brother in such a way, that was going to make them look better and him look less. And God showed His displeasure. And apparently, Miriam was the ringleader of this thing. But God showed His displeasure toward it all by afflicting Miriam with leprosy.

Now, we know from the passage that she was eventually healed. But God revealed her heart in that. And what He revealed, specifically, was the issue related to rebellion, and the disrespect, and rejection of authority - God's authority.

Moses was a man, you guys know this. He didn't want to be in authority. He didn't want to be in charge. In fact, when God tried to recruit him to go to Egypt, he was like, I think You got the wrong guy. I am not... And he threw out these, all these reasons why he shouldn't go. Until the Lord finally got angry with him. He never really wanted to... And when the people rebelled, he would come to the Lord and say, what in the world, Your people..., and so forth.

But he was the man. He was the man God chose. And he was a humble man. And when people questioned his authority, he never stuck out his chest and said, hey, I'm the man that God chose. He was a man, if anybody challenged his authority, he would drop down on his face on the ground. He was an incredible man from that standpoint. But he was still the authority and God expected His people within the framework of a moral society to respect divine authority.

We see references to this in the Church. Paul makes statements about those who have authority in the Church and how people have to respect that. We see other

references in the New Testament about respecting the civil authorities. You say, “Well, yeah, but the civil authorities, they're not divinely appointed. They're elected or hired through some process of man's system of doing things.” Au contraire. Check out Romans 13:1 and 2,

Romans 13:1-2 (NIV)

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, (Look at what Paul says,) for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Just in case you didn't get it the first time he said it) Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”

That's a quote from the NIV, just because I like it better. It's a great passage. But it's a reminder to you and I, that even the governing authorities are divinely established by God. And within the framework of a moral society, we respect it. What happens when we stop respecting the authorities in our country? All manner of chaos. All manner of chaos.

And it's hard for us to sometimes respect the established authority. Especially, when we see in the news, that some of those authorities have become corrupted. We see things that happen that shouldn't happen. We see police groups, that have allowed things to happen. And they've even covered them up. And we look at them go, grrrr! And it can challenge us. And say, well, I don't know, maybe I shouldn't care what these people say anymore, because look what they're doing.

Do you see in the news here about the nurse down in Utah that was bodily arrested just for upholding the law? A detective came in and wanted to take a blood sample from an unconscious patient. And the U.S. Constitution says, that can't happen. If the man doesn't give consent, they cannot come in and take that blood sample. And the man wanted to get a blood sample. And the nurse stood her ground and said, no. You cannot do that. He arrested her, cuffed her, hoisted her out to the squad car, and threw her... Well, make no mistake about it, the guy's in deep trouble for doing that. It was against the law.

It offends us, as well it should. When those who are given the task of upholding the law, offend the law, break the law. But we have a greater mandate from the Word of God, than what comes from the law itself. It comes from the eternal law giver. And He says, obey. Obey the laws of the government. There's no room for this hippie rebellion that some of us were raised with. And we thought was cool back in the sixties. There's no room for it.

We are to obey as Christians. We are called to obey the law. Why? Because we serve a Higher Authority. And that Higher Authority than the law - than man's law - says, obey man's law..., puts us in a challenging place. Like I said, particularly when we find examples of that law becoming corrupted. But it is what it is.

Verse 10. Now we're going to return to the business of loans and pledges for just a moment. It says, *"When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not go into his house to collect his pledge. (Or, in other words, the collateral.) 11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. 12 And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge. 13 You shall restore to him the pledge as the sun sets, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you. And it shall be righteousness for you before the LORD your God."*

Earlier, we saw a rule designed to protect a man's livelihood when loans and pledges came into play. Now we're dealing with the protecting of a man's dignity and particularly, a poor man, when it comes to a loan and the guarantee of that loan. And it says here, that if a man has put up collateral or promised a pledge for that loan, it is inappropriate for anyone to go into that man's home to take hold of that pledge. The dignity of the man must be protected. And he must be allowed to bring the pledge out of his own accord.

And through this instruction, again, remember what we're doing here. We're establishing a moral society. Through this instruction, we see here that God is conveying a principle that gives a higher priority to the dignity of a person, over the etiquette of business transactions. You hear what I said? Human dignity trumps business etiquette, or transaction etiquette. Human dignity trumps it. In God's economy, there is a higher level in that sort of an area.

And furthermore, if the pledge consisted of something like a cloak, and that happened when a man was very poor. If he had nothing to put down for collateral, except the clothes on his back, literally, he would take off his cloak as a gesture of goodwill. But the cloak was something back in those days, particularly poor people, they slept in. That was their blanket.

And God's Word says here, if the man extends that gesture of the cloak, as the means of pledge for that loan, you must give it back before sunset. And God says, "This will be righteousness for you."

Continuing some guidelines for business owners. Verse 14, *"You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners (or travelers) who are in your land within your towns. 15 You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin."*

Many, just like today, many poor people back in those days, had nothing to live on except the day's earnings. And God commanded, that if a man had earned wages for a day, he must be paid on that day. None of this, we'll pay you on Friday, or every two weeks. The poor man was counting on the money many times to feed his family. That's what he would use to feed his family. And God's Word said, make sure that he gets paid.

What's interesting here, that when we see culture or society as man establishes it, it's not the wealthy who need to be protected, not in man's society. It's the poor who is subject to oppression and they are vulnerable to being cheated and that sort of thing.

And it's interesting here as God establishes His society, He puts this emphasis, you'll notice here, on the poor, and taking care of the poor, and the rights of the poor, speaking to business owners, speaking to those who give loans to the poor, and so forth, so as to protect the poor. Isn't that interesting? Within the societal framework of God's moral culture, there's the element that is very pronounced, related to protecting the poor. I guess we would probably just distill that down to say, God cares for the poor. God cares for poor people. He cares.

And I think that probably, speaks to us about how we're obligated to care as well. And I'm not suggesting that we go out and make bad choices as it relates to helping the poor. I think that there can be inappropriate and unhelpful things that we can do for the poor. Especially, if they're abusing the money that they have. But I do think we do need to care, because God cares.

And then we come to the protection of justice. Verse 16, *"Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin."*

Now, we read this verse in modern 21st century America, and we're like, duh. This doesn't even make sense to us. And the reason it doesn't is because in America today, we live in a very privatized, a very individualized sort of society. Everything is all about the individual. We don't think in terms of family. We don't think in terms of community. But they did.

And it was not uncommon in those days, if one person in a city committed a crime, they would burn down the city and put the people to death. If one person in a family committed a heinous crime, many times the entire family would die. Because they thought in terms of "community." It's something we just don't think about. But He wants us to think about it, as it relates to justice.

God uses this verse, this single verse - verse 16 - to restrict the punishment that ought to go to the guilty party, to just the guilty party. Family members are exempt from punishment. (Pastor Paul makes an audible sigh) Little sigh of relief there. Well, it wasn't a problem. We weren't worried about it in the first place.

But what we see here is a principle that God wants you and I, to understand. Right? Even though we may not be able to inflict judicial punishment on a family. If somebody in a particular family does something to hurt us, we're just as likely as they were to look down on a family - on the whole family - sometimes because of it. We got to be careful. That's unjust, too.

He goes on saying in verse 17, *"You shall not pervert justice due to the sojourner (who's the traveler) or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge, ¹⁸ but you shall remember (important word) that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this."*

In the society of Israel, there were three individuals who were the lowest on the social scale. And they were the traveler, the fatherless, and the widow. And these people have less rights, and more vulnerability, than any other people in society.

And therefore, God commanded His people to protect them from any miscarriage of justice. Because if there was going to be a miscarriage of justice, it would probably happen to them. Because they have no one to speak on their behalf. And no one really cares. Because they're on that lower scale of society.

And God is saying, I want you to care about the people who are on the lower scale of society. The people who society puts on that lower scale. God doesn't

put them on the lower scale. We do. We create things like, caste systems or societal systems. But it was not only justice that God wanted for these individuals. It was concern for their well-being. The care for their ongoing needs. And that's what He finishes out here.

Verse 19, *“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the (traveler) sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. 22 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt: therefore I command you to do this.”*

Did you notice twice in the last two passages, God said, remember that you were once a slave, and I redeemed you. In other words, what is God saying, “I had mercy. I showed you mercy. Now, go and do likewise. Show mercy to others.”

And God could say the same thing for you and I, because we were in slavery to sin, now, show mercy.” Do you know that's one of the reasons why we're called upon. And there's a great responsibility upon our lives, particularly us, to forgive others. You've been forgiven. You have been washed of all of your sin. Now, you're going to hold something over somebody else's head?

Do you understand how dangerous that is? For you and I to have been the recipients of such an amazing mercy of God, and then to refuse to extend it towards someone else.

Do you see how heinous that is in the sight of God? Very, very serious matter. God repeats on two different occasions, remember, you were a slave. Remember that. Don't forget that. Don't ever forget that you were a slave and I showed you mercy. Now show mercy.

And here's an interesting passage, where farmers are actually told to leave a portion of their field, or vineyard unharvested. Or, trees if it was a fig tree. Leave it unharvested. Leave it. Leave some behind. Today we'd probably look at that and call that inefficient farming. Hey, you left some of your crop. What are you doing? You took a big wide turn there with your harvest and you missed a whole row over there.

Hey, that was what they were supposed to do. That way the poor and the downtrodden could come back and pick what was left for their own needs. And this was called gleaning. And it was a way for poor people to maintain their dignity by working rather than begging. And it was a great system. It was a great system.

I'd love to see Christians come up with systems, where people who don't have the ability, or haven't found a job, to be able to work without having to beg. Because we take people's dignity away from them when we give them a handout.

And that's the thing we forgot. We thought we were being compassionate as a country, we're just going to give people free money. They don't ever have to pay it back. And they don't have to work for it. We thought, that's the compassionate thing to do. Well, it's misguided compassion because you end up robbing them of their dignity.

We've talked about it before. That's why Paul said in the New Testament, if a man doesn't work, he doesn't eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10) We're not going to play into this thing where we're going to rob him of that ability.

For that understanding of what it means to have self-worth. And to fulfill his godly calling to be occupational. And to feel good about the things that he does, the work with his hands and so forth. We're not going to strip that from him. But we are going to still be compassionate while maintaining dignity.

And that's what we see throughout these verses, don't we? There's so many references here about dignity. Maintaining dignity, people's dignity. Even the poor, even the downtrodden, even the traveler who's just passing through. The transient, we might say, to use a little bit more of a negative term. Well, we're going to stop there.