

Deuteronomy 15:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Analysis

Moses states: 'For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.' The realistic acknowledgment that poverty won't be eradicated doesn't excuse indifference but intensifies obligation—ongoing need requires ongoing generosity. The command to 'open thine hand wide' suggests generous, unstinting giving, not grudging minimum. Jesus quotes this verse (Matthew 26:11), often misunderstood as justifying neglect of the poor. The point is the opposite—perpetual poverty demands perpetual charity.

Historical Context

Despite Israel's unique laws protecting the poor, economic inequality persisted. The prophets repeatedly condemned exploitation of the poor (Amos 5:11-12; Isaiah 10:1-2; Micah 2:1-2). The New Testament church practiced radical generosity (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35), reflecting this command. Jesus' statement about perpetual poverty wasn't resignation but recognition—as long as human sin and the curse remain, poverty will exist, requiring continuous compassion.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that poverty won't end prevent cynicism while inspiring ongoing generosity?
2. What does 'opening your hand wide' look like practically in your economic life?

Interlinear Text

א	בָּאָרֶץ	מִקְּרָב	וְלֹא־בָּיִת	לֹא	כ
H3588	H3808	shall never cease	For the poor	out of	in thy land
		H2308	H34	H7130	H776
אָנֹכִ	מִצְרָיִם	רְאִמָּה	לְאָמֵן	תִּפְנַת	תִּפְנַת
H595	therefore I command	thee saying	Thou shalt open	Thou shalt open	H853
	H6680	H559	H6605	H6605	
יְדֶךָ	לְאָחִיךְ	בְּעֵדֶךָ	וְלֹא־בָּיִת	בָּאָרֶץ	
thine hand	unto thy brother	to thy poor	For the poor	in thy land	
H3027	H251	H6041	H34	H776	

Additional Cross-References

Mark 14:7 (Parallel theme): For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

Matthew 26:11 (Parallel theme): For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

John 12:8 (Parallel theme): For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Deuteronomy 15:8 (Parallel theme): But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

Proverbs 22:2 (Parallel theme): The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

Luke 12:33 (Parallel theme): Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Acts 2:45 (Parallel theme): And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Matthew 5:42 (Parallel theme): Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

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