

Deuteronomy 15:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

Analysis

But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. The emphatic Hebrew construction *patoakh tiftakh* (opening, you shall open) and *ha'avet ta'avitenu* (lending, you shall lend) intensifies the command—generosity toward the poor is not optional but obligatory. *Dei makhsoro* (sufficient for his need) indicates meeting actual necessity, not mere token assistance. The phrase *asher yekhsar lo* (what he lacks) personalizes aid—each person's need differs, requiring discernment, not formulaic charity.

This open-handed generosity contrasts with the closed-fisted stinginess warned against in 15:7, 9. The Sabbatical year debt release (15:1-3) might tempt creditors to refuse loans as the release year approached. God commands lending anyway, trusting Him to provide. Jesus echoes this principle: 'Give to him that asketh thee' (Matthew 5:42); 'from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.' The early church practiced radical generosity (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35), fulfilling the ideal that 'there be no poor among you' (Deuteronomy 15:4).

Historical Context

The Sabbatical year (every seventh year) released debts (Deuteronomy 15:1-3), redistributing wealth and preventing permanent poverty. Ancient Near Eastern societies had debt-slavery and land forfeiture, creating permanent underclasses.

Israel's system—with Sabbatical release, Jubilee restoration (Leviticus 25), and gleaning rights (Leviticus 19:9-10)—provided safety nets unknown in other cultures. This generosity demonstrated covenant community values, where each member's welfare mattered.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does your generosity reflect trust in God's provision versus fear of personal loss?
2. What 'need' in your community is God calling you to meet with an 'open hand' rather than token assistance?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תִּפְתָּח	תִּפְתָּח	אֶת	יָדְךָ	לֹא	תַעֲבִיטְנוּ
H3588	But thou shalt open	But thou shalt open	H853	thine hand	H0	lend
	H6605	H6605		H3027		H5670
תַעֲבִיטְנוּ	יָדְךָ	מִחֲסֹרֹוֹ	אֲשֶׁר	יָחֵס	לֹא	
lend	him sufficient	for his need	H834	in that which he wanteth	H0	
H5670	H1767	H4270		H2637		

Additional Cross-References

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

Luke 6:34 (Parallel theme): And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

