

## 週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA  
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### AVOIDING THE DEPENDENCY TRAP By Ken Korkow

It is very sad – and damaging – when parents, businesses and even government institutions fail – or refuse – follow sound, time-tested biblical principles.

Parents continue to support their children well into adulthood, either because the young people have fallen hopelessly into debt or simply lack the motivation to move out and discover the challenges, frustrations – and rewards – of learning to live independently.

Some businesses, perhaps in the name of compassion or sympathy, continue to carry unproductive and unmotivated employees for fear that firing them might cause distress and make it difficult for them to meet their financial obligations and provide for their families.

Recently I found it necessary to fire a man who had been given a contract to do much-needed construction work at our ranch for disabled and battle-scarred military veterans. The job was not a small one – it would cost more than \$70,000 to complete – but three times the man did not show up to do the work he had promised. We hired another company, and the job has since been completed. Even though this contractor later explained some of the problems he had been struggling with, I still had work that needed to be done – and he had failed to honor his commitment.

Governments are notorious for creating dependency among the people they govern. Just one example: the Food Stamp Program in the United States, administered by the Department of Agriculture, is proud of distributing the greatest total of free meals and food stamps ever – to more than 46 million people.

Meanwhile, the National Park Service, directed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, makes this request to visitors of the national parks: "Please Do Not Feed the Animals." Their stated reason for the policy is because "the animals will grow dependent on handouts and will not learn to take care of themselves."

I am all in favor of helping people when they have legitimate needs, and the Bible affirms the importance of doing that. Ezekiel 16:49, for example, makes a surprising observation: *"Now this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy."*

We are called to assist those we encounter who are in need, but the Scriptures also warn against helping people in such a way that it creates permanent dependence. The apostle Paul, addressing a problem of idleness among people who were a part of the ancient church in Thessalonica, gave this admonition: *"For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat'"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

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It is interesting that a similar prohibition was presented by Russian leader Vladimir Lenin as a necessary principle under socialism. It was included in the Russian Constitution of 1918. Lenin's goal was not to advance Christianity and trust in the Bible, but even he recognized the validity of this economic precept.

As business and professional leaders, we should be sensitive and considerate of the needs of the people who work for and with us. But we do them an injustice by allowing them to do less than acceptable work. As Proverbs 16:26 observes, *"The laborer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on."*

*Ken Korkow lives in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A., where he serves as an area director for CBMC. This is adapted from his "Fax of Life" column. Used with permission.*

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. In society today, have you observed an increase in the attitude of dependency among people who should be working toward personal and professional independence? If so, what do you think has been the result?
2. Do you think the U.S. Park Service's warning, "Do not feed the animals," is relevant for how we perceive and respond to the financial and physical needs of people around us? Explain your answer.
3. Sodom and Gomorrah were known in Old Testament times as cities of depravity and perverse living, and yet their "guilt" – or greatest sin – was failure to care for people who were poor and in need. What do you think this is saying? How does this line up with not encouraging feelings of dependency?
4. Someone has said, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." How can we reasonably and effectively address legitimate needs of people, and at the same time focus on helping them to learn how to help themselves?

#### NOTE:

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Proverbs 3:27-28, 11:24-25, 19:17; Mark 12:31; Acts 20:35; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:17

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