



Servant's Corner

June 2011

Investigating Requests For Money

By Rich Henderson

I was a father to the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know. Job 29:16

You see him walking towards you. You avoid making eye contact and move to the other side of the sidewalk, hoping to walk by him without any interaction. It doesn't work. Before you can pass, he looks you in the eye and asks, "Hey Mister, could you help me out with a few bucks?"

What do you do? How can you be a good steward of the money God has entrusted to you in the 15 seconds you spend interacting with this stranger? The truth is you can't. In the verse above, Job said he investigated the case of needy people he did not know. It's impossible to be a good steward without such investigation.

If you don't have time to investigate, giving them referrals they can use to find help might be all you can do. If you have time to investigate, here are some good questions to ask: What's your story? What do you need the money for? Who could I call to verify your story? Other than me handing you money, is there any other way I can help you? For instance, could I buy you a meal, some groceries or gas for your car? Could I pay your bus fare to a homeless shelter? Could I call one of your friends or relatives who might be able to help you? (If the person keeps coming back to money as the only thing that will help them, consider that a big "red flag"). Getting answers to such questions takes time, but it is the only way I know of to be a good steward of God's money.

One way to help is to offer to pray for them. It's very rare for me to encounter someone who doesn't appreciate a heartfelt prayer for their need. It's not unusual to find people moved to tears as I pray. It's a way to let people know that they matter to God (and me). God loves the person and may answer your prayer to give them proof of this.



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