

Work And Welfare

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I recently came across a news article suggesting that if one is in good health and they can afford to buy a variety of certainly not-essential-to-life items, that person should not be receiving welfare in the form of food stamps.

That article motivated me to do some research regarding the American population receiving food stamps. Information is easily available on the Internet. One website that I landed on contains 92 statistical charts on this same subject. This is just one website. Dollar-wise, it is a costly program.

In a campaign speech on July 21, 2016, Donald Trump stated that 43 million people are receiving welfare in the United States as of that particular date. However, as of June 9, 2017 (so the figures I received are right up to date), the figure is now 41 million total. So the total has dropped a bit, largely because the overall American economy has improved. That's still just under 15% of the total population. In round figures, it is costing American taxpayers about \$70 billion per year.

America has the highest numbers of people in the world on the dole, but not the highest percentage of the population. That honor belongs to the Sudan in northern Africa. In America, there are more whites than blacks receiving food stamps. However, the percentage of blacks, as measured against the total black population, is much higher among them. Surprisingly, the lowest figures regarding race—you might be surprised by this—belongs to the American Indians.

The article was written by a twenty three year old woman—one of those Snowflakes, maybe; I do not know. She seems they have her head pretty-well screwed on right. The luxury items that she had on her list—that she believes people on food stamps shouldn't be buying—included a smartphone, lottery tickets, new tattoos, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco (including cigarettes), new cars, cable TV, and Internet access. She had information that showed that people on the dole are buying these things. They are not needed for survival, and it was her argument that if one has the means to survive—like a place to live, clothing, food, water—then one doesn't need welfare. Welfare is intended for those who do not have the means to survive.

She added this thought. I'm not going to give you a direct quote from her because it was too convoluted. So I straightened it out. She concluded that if one is receiving welfare

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and then using welfare consistently as a way to pay for items that are luxuries and merely their desires, than those people have a character problem in which they are taking advantage of other people's generosity. In other words, without saying it directly, she's saying they are stealing.

She reported that a few states have passed laws in recent years that requires people to work for the food stamps that they receive. How about that—in the United States, they are actually requiring some people in some states. She wrote, "Do you know what happened in those states?" She reported that the number of people receiving government assistance has plummeted in those states. They do not want to work.

It seems to strongly indicate not that way too many people are cheating the system and receiving welfare when it is not even needed, and thus indicates that the real reason many aren't working is because of sheer laziness.

In terms of the expanse of time (since Creation) that the government assistance we are familiar with, it did not exist until about one hundred years ago. It began to slowly creep into various systems. For example, in England, about one hundred years ago, if a person was arrested and jailed for what might call a "petty crime" today, do you know what the common procedure was? The prisoner was not fed by the city, by the county, or by the state. There were no charities going to the prisoner's aid. The family of the jailed person had to travel to the jailhouse each and every day to feed him. Boy, that would cut down on crime, it would seem, in a hurry.

Biblically, there is no such government-operated system commanded by God as has been instituted in modern Israelitish countries. Now, if you think that this young woman was unfair to those that she was writing about, then let's listen to what God says by way of a command through the Apostle Paul. I think you're all familiar with this, and I repeat it to you.

II Thessalonians 3:10-15 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Do you know why this command exists? There is a simple reason: Because God doesn't want people to have an excuse the sin. Because God knows full well that idleness breeds sin, and one of the fruits of idleness is that idle people become inveterate talkers, stirring up trouble with their tongue. So God's cure, God's remedy, for gossip is hard work. That's simple, simple enough, direct and to the point.

II Thessalonians 3:6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

There the Bible has defined not working as being "disorderly."

Now let's look at God Himself. It's interesting the examples that He gives of Himself. The very first portrayal we receive of God in the Bible is in Genesis 1, and what's He doing? He's working. The very first look at our Creator is He's working. That is purposely done so that we realize that God, in this fantastic operation we call His plan of salvation, is not sitting around, merely watching what's going on. He is actively doing things. He is, first of all, cleaning up a mess others made, and I think that we grasp how much energy that requires when we clean up after our kids.

But let's look a little bit further. In John 5:17, Jesus answered a group this way:

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

That's blunt and to the point. He gives the impression They are always working.

I do not know when Jesus began His accounting that God has always been working. Did He mean from creation, or before creation? And I do not know all the activities He intended to convey as work by that comment. But personally, I believe that He meant far more than just standing around, healing people. I believe I know, at least in a generality, what Jesus intended to convey to us about what He meant by the work that He and the Father performed. It was everything They did in behalf of their services, performed in behalf of Their purpose and the carrying out of Their plan.

I do not know what all the specifics were and continue to be because the purpose and the plan are ongoing and will continue right on, even humanly for over a thousand years into the future. But understand this: They aren't just sitting around watching what is

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happening. They are Creators. They are in the business of making things happen. We are the reactors. They create; we react to what They do.

From the picture God provides us from the past, taking care of the indigent was a family responsibility. That is directly shown and stated in the Bible. It is a family responsibility. He shows no examples of a government body operating as a welfare department, and He also shows no assignment of taxes on His part to provide a welfare system. If there were no family members to supply the need that some indigent had, then the need was to be taken care of either through slavery, or voluntarily by the citizens of local villages. We have an example of that—that's what Jesus ancestor Boaz was doing when he invited Ruth to glean his fields. Even the Good Samaritan in Jesus' day—a non-Israelite—understood the principles of God system, and he took care of the person who was injured.