MOSIAH 4:16-27

IMPARTING YOUR SUBSTANCE TO THE POOR -- CLARIFICATION & VERIFICATION OF PRINCIPLES

DOLE: 1. a small portion or share, as of money or food, given to a poor person. 2. the act of giving or distributing such portions. [Collins English Dictionary, 434.]

BEG – (vt.) 1. To ask for as a charity. 2. To ask earnestly for; ENTREAT 3a: EVADE, SIDE STEP … (vi.) 1: To ask for or live by asking for charity 2: to ask earnestly for something SYN: BEG. ENTREAT, BESEECH, IMPLORE, SUPPLICATE, ADJURE, IMPORTUNE mean to ask urgently. BEG suggests earnestness or insistence in asking for something to which one has no claim or right; ENTREAT implies an effort to overcome resistance or deflect from resolute purpose; BESEECH implies great eagerness or anxiety; IMPLORE adds to BESEECH a suggestion of greater urgency or anguished appeal; SUPPLICATE suggests a posture of humility; ADJURE implies enjoining as well as pleading and suggests the involving of something sacred; IMPORTUNE suggests an annoying persistence in trying to break down resistance to a request.

IDLE – [Old High German = worthless] 1. Lacking worth or basis; USELESS 2. Not occupied or employed … 3a. TRIFLING, LAZY … b. having no evident lawful means of support SYN: see INACTIVE, VAIN.

D&C 42:42.

“Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of [belonging to] the laborer.”

President Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, 123ff.; *Presidents of the Church* Institute manual, 187; emphasis added.

“Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthrone as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.”

*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 275.

“To give to the idler is as wicked as anything else. Never give anything to the idler.”

President Heber J. Grant, *Conference Report*, Oct 1936, 13; *Presidents of the Church* Institute manual, 187; emphasis added.

“There is nothing truer than Brigham Young’s statement, that we should give nothing to people, unless they are not able to work, without requiring them to do something for it…”

President Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, 123; *Presidents of the Church* Institute manual, 185; emphasis added.

“Let me promise you here today that if the Latter-day Saints will honestly and conscientiously from this day forth, as a people, keep the monthly fast and pay into the hands of their bishops the actual amount that they would have spent for food for the two meals from which they have refrained; and if in addition to that they will pay their honest tithing, it will solve all of the problems in connection with taking care of the Latter-day Saints. We would have all the money necessary to take care of all the idle and all the poor.”

President Heber J. Grant, *Conference Report*, Oct 1936, 6-7; *Presidents of the Church* Institute manual, 187; emphasis added.

“I desire to call attention to a statement by President Brigham Young:

My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give out and out, to man or woman, money, food, clothing, or anything else, if they are able-bodied and can work and earn what they need, when there is anything on earth for them to do. This is my principle and I try to act upon it. To pursue a contrary course would ruin any community in the world and make them idlers. [People trained in this way have no interest in working.] *[DBY*, 274.]

“And what would ruin a community would ruin a state, and I might incidentally remark, a nation also.”

President Harold B. Lee (Conference Reports, Oct 1972, 61-64)

*“If these words [D&C 68:31] are clearly understood, we have been told where the roots of all evil are to be found. Our children have not been properly taught by parents in the home. Our communities have adopted policies which encourage idleness instead of work for those who want to work for what they need, and have failed to adopt measures to see that idleness and unemployment are reduced to the absolute minimum.

“In our day a pioneer leader, President Brigham Young, spoke as a pioneer statesman about the importance of work. Said he: My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give out and out, to man or woman, money, food, clothing, or anything else, if they are able-bodied and can work and earn what they need, when there is anything on earth for them to do. This is my principle and I try to act upon it. To pursue a contrary course would ruin any community in the world and make them idlers. [People trained in this way have no interest in working.] *[DBY*, 274.]

“...Now a final word about one of the great dangers of some of the widely disseminated doctrines of the enemies of freedom, which in essence have been characterized by our beloved prophet-statesman, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., as but ‘a clumsy attempt of Satan to counterfeit the Lord’s plan of the United Order, as defined in the Holy Scriptures.’ Our present welfare plan could well be the ‘setting-up’ exercises to see how prepared this church is to live this plan, so that, as was the joyous realization of a people on this continent, as recorded in an ancient scripture we call the Book of Mormon, after they were all converted to the Lord, ‘there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all ... partakers of the heavenly gift’ and ‘surely there could not be a happier people’ on the face of the earth (4 Ne 1:3,16), by living fully the law of sacrifice and consecration.

“There are some well-intentioned persons within the Church who seem to have taken upon themselves to substitute for the great principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God what some have characterized as ‘cults’—the results of
which, no matter how sincere, have caused confusion by using other organized bodies than those of the priesthood of God to combat these dangers. In doing so they have set brothers against brothers in the Church and thus weakened the unity of the greatest weapon the Lord has already provided against these evils, through the priesthood organizations of the Church and kingdom of God. Some such groups, by adopting counterfeit measures and procedures, have been led away and have apostatized and been excommunicated from the Church.”

President Marion G. Romney, General Conference address, Conference Reports, 6 Apr 1974, 176-178. Emphasis added.

“‘It is more important to be reminded than it is to be taught.’ I never tire of teaching the truth... I would like to caution you bishops who have the responsibility to implement and administer the welfare program to be careful and wise in helping transients.... We don’t want to be harsh with our Lord’s children, neither do we want to be taken advantage of. Please take note of this matter....

“I know that we quote this scripture [D&C 38:27] in many senses, applying to many different circumstances, and rightly so; but when it was given, the Lord was talking about the economic equality that he wanted to prevail among his people....

“...And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; [Then he explained how the contributions were to be handled. (Parenthetical expression is in the original.)] and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church and his counselors ...’ [D&C 42:31] ...

“As above cited, the Lord has told us how he intends to take care of the poor. As I have already quoted, the scripture says that the means for taking care of the poor are to be put in the hands of the bishop. In the 104th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us that we are to get the means by humbling the rich, and that we are to distribute them in such a manner as to exalt the poor....

“Everything that you have and I have and that every other person in the world has, we hold as stewards. All things belong to the Lord and he is telling us how he expects us to use them. [D&C 104:15-17 quoted.]

“We need not listen to the false doctrine that we must limit the population of this earth. The earth was made by the Lord and he made plenty for all. What we, his children, need is to follow his direction in using it...

“We talked about how the rich are made low. They are made humble and submissive and obedient to the commandments of the Lord by giving of their means liberally—by giving to the bishop for the care of the poor. How do you exalt the poor as they receive? Well, there is only one way to do that and that is to make them self-sustaining. No man has self-respect when he is the recipient of a dole. If there is anything that he can do, he wants to do it. This program was set up not merely to feed and house and clothe people, it was set up to build people into self-respecting Latter-day Saints. The First Presidency said at that time, Our primary purpose [This they said back in 1936, referring to the Welfare Program.] was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership. (Welfare Plan Handbook of Instructions, 1952.)

“How the nations in the world have receded from that position! Get it for nothing if you can is widely accepted in the world, but in The Church of Jesus Christ the responsibility is upon every man, under God’s mandate, to sustain himself and his family to the full extent of his capability. The accomplishment of this objective is the most pressing task that we have in our Welfare Program....

Our objective, I repeat, is to build people and to meet that purpose for which the program was set up. To provide for people who are able to work, without providing them the opportunity to work is a bad practice. On this matter I call your attention to these words of President Brigham Young.

My experience has taught me ... and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give out and out, to man or woman, money, food, clothing, or anything else, if they are able-bodied and can work and earn what they need, when there is anything on earth for them to do. This is my principle and I try to act upon it. To pursue a contrary course would ruin any community in the world and make them idlers. (Discourses of Brigham Young, 1954 ed., 274.)

“And upon another occasion he said, ‘To give to the idler is as wicked as anything else. Never give anything to the idler.’ (Ibid., 275.)

“That is the man who won’t work when he has the opportunity.”

Discourses of Brigham Young, 274.

“Suppose that in this community there are ten beggars who beg from door to door for something to eat, and that nine of them are imposters who beg to escape work, and with an evil heart practice imposition upon the generous and sympathetic, and that only one of the ten who visit your doors is worthy of your bounty; which is best, to give food to the ten, to make sure of helping the truly needy one, or to repulse the ten because you do not know which one is the worthy one? You will all say, administer charitable gifts to the ten rather than turn away the only truly worthy and truly needy person among them. If you do this, it will make no difference in your blessings, whether you administer to worthy or unworthy persons, inasmuch as you give alms with a single eye to assist the truly needy.”

... I say these things unto those who are rich as pertaining to the things of this world.” (King Benjamin, Mosiah 4:23.)

President Marion G. Romney, General Conference address, Ensign, November 1977, 80.

“We do not bless anybody when we do for them what they can do for themselves.”

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 18; (see also President Spencer W. Kimball, Ensign, May 1978, 79-81).

“The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always flow from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise.”


“The Church was two years old when the Lord revealed that, ‘the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways.’ (D&C 75:29.) President Marion G. Romney in our last conference explained this principle with his characteristic simple directness: ‘The obligation to sustain one’s self was divinely imposed upon the human race at its beginning. In the
sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the
ground.’ (Gen 3:19.)

“The welfare handbook instructs, ‘We must) earnestly teach
and urge members to be self-sustaining to the fullest extent of
their power. No Latter-day Saint will ... voluntarily shift from
himself the burden of his own support. So long as he can, under
the inspiration of the Almighty and with his own labors, he will
supply himself with the necessities of life.’ (1952, 2.) ...

“We have counseled bishops and stake presidents to be very
careful to avoid abuses in the welfare program. When people are
able but are unwilling to take care of themselves, we are
responsible to employ the dictum of the Lord, that the idler shall
not eat the bread of the laborer. The simple rule has been, to the
fullest extent possible, to take care of one’s self.”

Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1898, 46-48; Gospel
Doctrine, 234-235.

“There is such a thing as encouraging idleness and fostering
pauperism among men. Men and women ought not to be willing
to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep
them from suffering. Every man and woman ought to possess the
spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would
prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, ‘I am willing to
give my labor in exchange for that which you give me.’ No man
ought to be satisfied to receive, and to do nothing for it. After a
man is brought down to poverty and is under the necessity of
receiving aid, and his friends give it to him, he should feel that it
is an obligation under which he is placed, and when the Lord
should open his way he would return the gift. That is the feeling
we should cultivate in our hearts, to make us a free and
independent people. The cultivation of any other feeling or spirit
than this is calculated to make paupers, to degrade and bring
mankind down to beggary, which is a most wretched condition
for men to be in. It is a bad thing for men to think the world owes
them a living and all they have to do is to beg or steal to get it....
there is no great need in this world [to give assistance] for men
and women who are able to work and will not work.”

Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1899, 42; Gospel
Doctrine, 236.

“Idlers have no place in Zion. There should be no idlers in Zion.
Even the poor who have to be assisted should be willing to do all
in their power to earn their own living. Not one man or woman
should be content to sit down and be fed, clothed, or housed
without any exertion on his or her part to compensate for these
privileges.