

HAVING "NEEDS"

Not Having Things Which You Need to "USE"

This section focuses on what people "need to use." In some cases, the passage deals with something that we *do* have (or can have) - things that we ought to "use." In other instances, the passage deals with things people *don't* have - the issue of being "needy."

Of course, other Greek words can be translated "need," and other passages mention needs without using the word "need." So much more could be said than is mentioned below. But these verses are a place to start. Later, you may wish to further examine the issue of "what we need."

(As normal, look at the context of these verses.)

- **chreia** - a necessity, need (Matthew 6:8; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31; 10:42; Romans 12:13; 1 Corinthians 12:21, 24; Ephesians 4:28-29; Philippians 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; Titus 3:14; Hebrews 5:12; 10:36; 1 John 3:17; Rev. 3:17; and elsewhere)
 - **chre** - it is necessary (James 3:10, used with "not": it is not needed <it must not be needed>)
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1. ABOUT YOUR NEEDS

- **GOD KNOWS ABOUT THEM:** Matthew 6:8 - Your Father (God) knows what you need, even before you ask him; you do not need to "babble" like pagans, to get his attention!
- **GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM:** Philippians 4:19 - He will supply your needs. Of course, one of your main needs may be contentment! (See verse 11) Our definition of "need" does not always match God's definition!
- **DOING SOMETHING TO PROVIDE FOR THEM:** Titus 3:14 - We must learn to devote ourselves to doing what is good. Then we will be able to provide for life's necessities, and will not be unproductive in our lives. [NOTE: This verse parallels Ephesians 4:28 (below), and perhaps could be placed under the heading "When Others Have Needs." The passage doesn't specifically mention a focus on *our own* needs, but on "needs" in general!]

- HOW TO *NOT* BE IN NEED (ALSO, HOW TO GAIN RESPECT): 1 Thessalonians 4:12 - Lead a quiet life, mind your own business, and work with your own hands! (see verse 11)

2. SOME SPECIFIC THINGS YOU NEED

- PAYING ATTENTION TO JESUS: Luke 10:42 - There are few things you *really* need, and *ultimately just one*: paying attention to what Jesus has said. Avoid the distractions of life!
- WE (BEING SINNERS) NEED JESUS: Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31 - Illustrated by the saying: "It is not the healthy, but the sick, who need a physician." Application: Jesus came to save sinners, not righteous people. (Of course, there are no righteous people, apart from Jesus. But there are quite a few "self-righteous" ones!)
- OTHER PEOPLE: 1 Corinthians 12:21 - In the "body of Christ," we *all* need *each other*.
- ENDURANCE: Hebrews 10:36 - You need endurance, so you will do the will of God, and (ultimately) receive what God promises to those who follow him. Endurance and following God cannot be separated. (Some people try to... but none will succeed.)

3. THINGS YOU DO *NOT* NEED

- HOPEFULLY NOT - THE NEED TO GROW-UP SPIRITUALLY: Hebrews 5:12 - Hopefully, you are *not* dull of hearing and immature in the faith (needing to be re-taught the "basics"), but have grown to maturity. This is comparable to needing milk when you should be eating solid food. Don't be "spiritually retarded"! (This passage is applicable to those who *claim* to have turned to Christ, a long time ago, and have not grown in the faith. It definitely does *not* apply to those who have just been saved, who have not had time to grow!)
- DEFINITELY NOT - YOU HAVE NO "NEED" TO SPEAK BOTH GOOD AND EVIL: James 3:10 - This should never be!

4. BEING BLIND ABOUT ONE'S NEEDS

- CLAIMING TO BE WITHOUT SPIRITUAL NEED, WHEN THE OPPOSITE IS ACTUALLY TRUE: Revelation 3:17 - Pay attention to Jesus' advice, mentioned in v.18+.

5. WHEN OTHERS HAVE NEEDS

- **SHARE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS:** Romans 12:13 - Share with other Christians who are in need.
- **OTHER'S NEEDS... OUR ACTIONS:** Ephesians 4:28 - We must work (rather than steal), doing things which are beneficial, so that we can share with those who are in need. The idea is: If you can, you are to "give" rather than "take." (See also Titus 3:14, under the heading, "About Your Needs.")
- **OTHER'S NEEDS... OUR WORDS:** Ephesians 4:29 - What we say should benefit others. We should build them up, not tear them down. Their needs should influence our words.
- **THOSE UNWILLING TO SHARE DO NOT HAVE GOD'S LOVE IN THEM:** 1 John 3:17 (v. 18 - We must have a love that is based on actions and truth, not on empty words!)
- **A NEED OF "WEAKER MEMBERS" OF THE "BODY" (THOSE WHO ARE LESS "PROMINENT"):** 1 Corinthians 12:24 - They are just as important, in God's eyes, as the more prominent members. So we *need* to give them the additional honor they deserve - yet aren't getting. (See the context.)

TO THINK ABOUT:

Does God know what your real needs are? Do you? How do you distinguish between genuine "needs" and "wants"? God has promised to take care of your needs, but he has no obligation to meet your every whim and desire. He is not your servant. (That would be backwards!)

How does contentment fit into the picture? Look at the context around Philippians 4:19. Paul claims that God supplies our needs. In what types of circumstances is this true? In just pleasant circumstances, or also in unpleasant ones? Do unpleasant circumstances nullify God's promise to take care of us? Do they "prove" that God has "failed"?

This issue (God meeting our needs) is related to the issue of prayer. In many passages, we are told that God will answer our prayers - that he will do what we ask for. Yet there are circumstances in which we do not get the answer we asked for. Why? Some people would accuse God of breaking his promise! Yet Scripture gives us many reasons why things might not happen the way we want. A few passages include: 1 John 5:14-15 (we need to ask "according to his will"); James 4:3 (our motives must be godly); Luke 18:7-8 (it may be temporarily delayed - though "quick," or "right on time," from God's perspective); 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (God may be displaying his strength through your weakness. Implication: our attitudes in the whole matter may need to change!); Romans 8:26 (Sometimes we don't know how we really ought to pray!). Ultimately, the question is: When things don't go your way, do you still trust God, or not? (Such

circumstances test whether your faith is genuine or fake! 1 Peter 1:6-7) How does endurance fit into the picture?

What are our *real*, ultimate needs - the ones that will remain after everything else is gone? Do you focus on these needs, or on those which are temporary and will pass away? Do you need to reflect on your attitude and values? [If "yes," then *do it!*] How will your attitude in this matter impact your perspective on the issues mentioned in the questions above?

The "sluggard" (Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:26; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13-16) has lots of needs. He could do something about it, but he is too lazy to do so. (Of course, he always has a "reason" - he can blame circumstances or other people.) Scripture requires us not only to attempt to take care of our own needs, but to also provide for the needs of others. By implication, there *are* genuine instances in which a person is unable to take care of his own needs, but it seems that laziness is also a problem. How is taking care of one's own needs an expression of love? How is reliance on others, when you have the ability to take care of yourself, like stealing? What does Scripture say about that?

There will always be truly needy people. What are our obligations toward them? (Note that , though the needs of "outsiders" is not excluded, our primary obligation is toward those who are part of the body of Christ, the members of our own "family" - Romans 12:13, Galatians 6:10, etc.) How is our attitude toward the needy a reflection of our attitude toward God? (Consider 1 John 4:20-21; James 2:14-17; Matthew 25:31-46, etc.)

How important are other members of the body of Christ, to you? How do you treat them? In what ways do you honor the "nobodies"? (How does Jesus treat "nobodies"?) This week, deal with your own attitudes (if necessary), then make an attempt to better appreciate others who are part of your family. Maybe you can focus on "building them up" with kindness! (Our focus is on the "family of believers," but if you need to work on your relationship with your *physical* family, do that, too!)

The section entitled, "Things you do not need," mentions two things that require self-examination. Both of these issues impact on our ability to express love and kindness to others. First, what is your tongue like? Do you need to repent? (Remember that those who have "unrestrained tongues" have a *worthless* "religion" - James 1:26.) Second, what is your attitude toward the Word of God? How much attention do you give to it - learning what it says, and paying attention to it (James 1:22-25)? Are you growing in the faith?

Finally, Revelation 3:17 warns us about the seriousness of an accurate self-evaluation. Often people tend to think of themselves as "OK," even when they have serious problems. This is especially true when spiritual issues are involved! (The book of 1 Corinthians describes a church that had all sorts of problems. Yet they were boastful and arrogant about themselves!) What can you learn from this passage, that will benefit you? You might not be "Laodicean" in your outlook, but you can probably still learn from their example... and (in doing so) prevent yourself from falling into the same trap! Be kind to *yourself* and learn from the wrongs of others!