

FIRST FRUITS OF ZION ✦ WHITE PAPER

Corners of the Field

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Overview

The First Fruits of Zion *Corners of the Field* program provides free books, audio resources, *Torah Club* memberships, and seminar sponsorships to those that cannot afford them. The Torah teaches,

If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.
 (Deuteronomy 15:7–8)

Charity with Dignity

We are not farmers—we’re teachers, writers, and individuals driven by the passion to proclaim the good news of the Messiah in the context of living a life of obedience to the commandments of God. As a ministry we do labor in a field and our harvest is that of teaching resources.

Thus, we provide “charity with dignity” by making our resources available to those in need. This is a commandment found in Leviticus 19:9–10,

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:9–10)

Caring for the needy is a law of holiness. When reaping a field, the corners are to be left un-harvested, and the gleanings are to be left un-collected. In vineyards (and orchards by extension) the harvesters are to be careful to leave fruit for the poor; fallen grapes are not to be gathered. The concept is that the poor and the needy might harvest the gleanings and the corners for themselves. According to the traditional enumeration of the 613 commandments, eight are derived from the above passage in Leviticus:

- Leave the corner of your field for the poor.
- Do not reap the corner of your field.
- Leave the gleanings of your field for the poor.
- Do not gather fallen stalks of grain of your field.
- Leave a portion of your vineyard un-reaped.
- Do not completely reap your vineyard.
- Leave gleanings of your vineyard for the poor.
- Do not gather the gleanings of your vineyard.

By biblical law, these commandments apply specifically to agriculture in the land of Israel. However, the sages deemed these commandments applicable in all places, at all times. Beyond the wise words of the sages, the spirit of this commandment demands that we honor the principle it teaches. So, we feel that this commandment is applicable to the ministry of First Fruits of Zion.

As we rely on God to prosper and sustain us, we must not forget those that rely on this endeavor. The Mishnah notes that the commandment of leaving corners and gleanings is one of the commandments for which there is no prescribed measure.

These are things which have no prescribed, minimum measurement: the size of the corners of one's field, the amount of first fruits, the festival offering, acts of loving kindness and the study of Torah. (m.Peah 1:1)

In the world today, the law of leaving extra for the poor may seem contrary to good business practice. Yet, one who does business in a generous and caring manner will stand out as different. And one who honors God's Word despite what seems to be wise according to the world's standards, will stand out even more...and rightly so because that's holiness!

Making it Work...

Obviously we are called to be faithful stewards with the resources that the Father has given us. With this said we ask all recipients of this program to be mindful of the very next verse in the Leviticus 19 text. It demonstrates the order that is to be found within the Torah community. God tells us to give and make provision for the needy in Leviticus 19:9–10, and then immediately reminds us not to take advantage or steal from one another.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. (Leviticus 19:11)

If one takes something that he has the ability to pay for, he is stealing from someone that truly may be unable to afford it. Putting on the pretense that you are not able to pay for items being offered is lying. Taking advantage of gleaning just because it is available is dealing falsely. In order for the economy of the Torah to work, commandment-keepers must be faithful on both sides of the equation. We must give freely with an open hand; and we must not take advantage of those doing so.

God's Wisdom

God's wisdom is displayed powerfully in these passages. His mercy and care is demonstrated by all if we equally live in faithfulness to his Word. The "Corner's of the Field" program is possible because of the assistance and contributions of our *FFOZ Friends*. Each time First Fruits provides materials to those in need, every *FFOZ Friend* participates in the blessing of giving. We ask that you remember all the *FFOZ Friends* and this ministry daily in your prayers. Thank you for your consideration and contribution to this work.

[For more information on becoming an *FFOZ Friend*, read the white paper available on our web site entitled, "*FFOZ Friends* Program."]

How to "Glean" from Our Field:

First Fruits of Zion makes a portion of all materials available to those in need. Requests for materials need to be submitted in written form to feedback@ffoz.org, or by writing us at PO Box 649, Marshfield, MO 65706.

In the event that a particular resource is unavailable, a substitution will be given at the discretion of our staff.

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Proclaiming the Torah and its way of life,
fully centered on Messiah, to today's People of God

FIRST FRUITS OF
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