

Proverbs on the Poor: How to recognize and deal with the Poor

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: This is the time of year when people are most generous慷慨 to the poor. Charities have learned to capitalize on this. You've probably received requests in the mail or on the phone for money to help the poor. Charities know that people feel emotional – even joyful, and so they become generous and want to share. But what happens in March is what we want to address today. How should you deal with the poor in March...or every month of the year...not just at Advent耶稣将临节.

You will hear about this from the Proverbs exclusively. You will remember that Solomon, who wrote the Proverbs, was one of the richest men to have ever lived. And he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak of this topic. So listen well.

Our headings are:

The Poor: A Reality

The Poor: A Requirement

The Poor: A Response

Our goals: That knowing the existence of the poor in Christ's covenant, that you learn how to interact with them and bring glory to Christ.

The Poor: A Reality

1. There are poor people in the world, but you must not conclude that a man is poor because he has weak faith. A man might be poor in his pocket but rich toward God.

Proverbs 19:1 Better is the poor who walks in his integrity完全 Than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Pentecostals and other "health and wealth Gospel" people cause *brutal* pain to God's people by telling them that they should expect financial prosperity富裕 and that that is a lack of faith if they aren't rich. Saying this is not only mean, it is wrong! It can undermine people's faith. Worldly wealth is not evidence of godliness. After all, the wicked seem to be more prosperous than the godly. Furthermore, the one who is poor might be there by Divine appointment – so he could empathize with the poor and have access to the poor. Wasn't the Lord Jesus born into a poor family? What about all the poor Christians in Africa, India, and China...do they lack faith? Surely not, but it suits God's purpose and for the ultimate good of the people, that they are poor. You can sum up God's teaching on this in this way:

Proverbs 22:2 The rich and the poor have this in common, **The LORD is the maker of them all.**

2. At the same time, there are some people who are poor because of their own fault.

a. They are poor because they are lazy. They don't feel the compulsion强制性 to work. They would rather have others pay their bills. One Christian man told me that his mother-in-law had an obligation to pay for his medicines because work was hard for him because of his weight. That is poverty from laziness. He is a destroyer of his family.

Proverbs 18:9 He who is slothful in his work工作懒惰的 Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

b. Some are poor because they are deceitful, not doing meaningful work.

Proverbs 10:4 He who has a slack hand游手好闲的 becomes poor...

The "slack hand" means a deceitful hand in the sense that it goes through the action, but there is no muscular contraction to accomplish anything. .

c. Some are poor because their love of pleasure controls them, like those addicted to video games, or addicted to Facebook and Twitter, or addicted to traveling around and doing nothing. So they end up poor.

Proverbs 21:17 He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

3. There is no glory in being a poor. The truth is, the poor are often ruled by others who have great wealth. The poor are told what to do. They lose some of their freedom to do things they might like to do...or ought to do.

Proverbs 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.

Treating poverty as a virtue is Roman Catholic, not Christian. RC's believe it is noble to take a vow of poverty.

But if you don't have wealth, how can you share with others...a direct command from God? How can you tithe and help advance God's kingdom? Is a vow of poverty based on the Bible! If you don't have, how can you enjoy the pleasures that God desires you to have. So do not boast about "what you don't own" as if it were noble. Poverty may be a sign of a lack of ambition, laziness, or indulgence放纵. Look at another verse on the same theme!

Proverbs 10:15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city; **The destruction of the poor is their poverty.**

4. It is also true that the poor have fewer worries if they have heavenly wealth. So if there is a choice between the poor with the hope of heaven, and the rich with condemnation to hell, it is better to be poor with hope.

Proverbs 13:7 There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; **And one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.** 8 The ransom of a man's life is his riches, **But the poor does not hear rebuke.**

Of course the poor cannot have some kind of esoteric 神秘 hope...but hope in Jesus Christ, the eternal sacrifice for sins. And by the way, who kidnaps a poor man?

The Poor: A Requirement

1. God requires that the poor be diligent, honest, and hard working. God promises to bless the labors of a hardworking man, giving him sweet sleep.

Proverbs 13:23 Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, And for lack of justice there is waste.

“Fallow 休耕” ground was ground that was left to rest to restore fertility, but old seeds grow from past crops. So the wise man teaches here that the poor man doesn't say: “Well, there is just a little grain in the fallow fields, it is not worth harvesting.” No, he works and gains much food. Look again.

Proverbs 27:18 - Whoever keeps the fig tree **will eat its fruit...**

Proverbs 28:19a - He who tills his land **will have plenty of bread**

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he **who gathers by labor will increase.**

In any society where they have dis-incentivized work, the society struggles to survive. Proper reward for work is instilled in us by the Lord. All welfare states, starting with the Roman Empire, are bound to implode 内爆. They create and support laziness. Don't let this laziness get into the hearts of covenant children. Teach them to work now...starting in your homes.

Proverbs 11:24 **There is one who scatters, yet increases more;** And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty.

2. A poor man is not to oppress 压迫 another poor man. He shouldn't oppress anyone, especially because he knows how much poverty can hurt.

Proverbs 28:3 A poor **man who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain** which leaves no food.

Sadly, this is a reality.

Proverbs 19:7 All the brothers of the poor hate him; **How much more do his friends go far from him!** He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him.

3. The poor man doesn't have an excuse to sin because he is poor. He must plead for help from those who can help him. He must speak wisely so others can recognize his abilities. The rich might not care how he talks, but the poor man must.

Proverbs 18:23 **The poor man uses entreaties 穷人乞恩哀求**, But the rich answers roughly.

None of the rights to decent food, housing, cell phones, and internet are based on any laws that God made. These are man-made laws to justify stealing from the rich to give to the poor. There is never justification for stealing.

The Poor: A Response

1. If the poor is truly poor on account of God's providence and not self-inflicted 自作自受, you are obligated to help the poor. But there are some important principles. **Helping the poor is not just by giving them money.** It might mean providing proper conditions in society (for the state) or even advice (personal). So don't think the solution is to throw money at the poor; this surely hasn't helped Africa. This is the major error in dealing with social issues in Western society today. You might hear President Obama often speaking of making everyone pay his fair share. That is often code for taking away from the rich and giving to the poor. He needs to go back to the Bible to understand God's Words properly. So, some principles!

a. The rich and the poor are under God's eyes, so the king must judge each with equity, showing no favoritism – no to the rich or to the poor.

Proverbs 29:13 The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both. **14 The king who judges the poor with truth,** His throne will be established forever.

b. You must not take advantage of a person by virtue of his poverty. It might be legal to do so, but it is not moral. Many of these multi-national companies are prone to this and poorly pay nationals in foreign countries because they can! But hear God's warning!

Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, **But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.**

c. God calls on you to be generous with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9 He who has a **generous eye will be blessed**, For he gives of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 31:20 She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.

d. God calls on you to be merciful with the poor.

Proverbs 14:20 The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, But the rich has many friends. 21

He who despises his neighbor sins; **But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.**

Proverbs 19:17 He who has pity on the **poor lends to the LORD**, And He will pay back what he has given.

e. God calls on you to consider and speak up for the needs of the poor, the disenfranchised.

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous **considers the cause of the poor**...

Proverbs 31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And **plead the cause of the poor and needy.**

2. Unkindness to the poor will hinder your prayers and increase your judgment.

Proverbs 21:13 Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor **Will also cry himself and not be heard.**

Proverbs 22:16 He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, And he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty. 22 Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; 23 **For the LORD will plead their cause**, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them

因为耶稣基督必为他们伸冤，抢夺他们的，耶稣基督也必夺取那人的性命。

God promises that he will take from those who abuse the poor and give it to others – since all wealth belongs to him.

Proverbs 28:8 One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion Gathers it for him who will pity the poor.

There are times you must not help the poor. Sometimes, for instance, if they are poor from laziness, then you must let them starve. **That is showing love to the poor.** Sometimes it is more difficult however. How do you deal with the children who are suffering from the laziness of their parent? Do you let them starve so that their parents might wake up? Or do you feed them so they don't go hungry? The answer is not always that easy.

3. Don't avoid the poor because they don't happen to be in your class or your circle of friends.

Proverbs 19:4 Wealth makes many friends, But the poor is separated from his friend.

How many poor friends do you have? Do you realize that they were bought with the blood of the Lamb of God?

4. If you help the poor you will be blessed by God. You see, the poor are children of God and they were made in his image.

Proverbs 28:27 **He who gives to the poor will not lack**, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

Proverbs 17:5 He who **mocks the poor reproaches his Maker**; He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

Conclusion:

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

From the point of view of the poor, you are obligated to work hard to give to God, to provide for your family, and to share with the truly poor. This is your covenant duty given to you by your Covenant Keeper. You belong to him. He purchased your freedom on the cross, so you are obligated to live for him. Your laziness is a scourge upon your Savior.

From the point of view of the rich, you are obligated to help the truly poor so that they can praise and serve God better. This means you might help them to find a job. You might give them advice. You might help them prepare for a job interview. You might give suggestions as to what they might study. In doing this, you are working for the dominion of God's people and you show that you understand what Christ has done for you on the cross and you want to fulfill完成 your role in serving him.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you have the worst poverty of all: You have poverty of soul. But Jesus can fix your problem and make you rich. He paid the full price for your healing when he died on the cross. Call on him today for help.