

Proverbs on Poverty

The vocabulary of poverty in the Proverbs:

רִישׁ - rush - **poor, poverty**

דָּל - dal - **poor**

עָנָו - 'ânâv - **poor, lowly**

מְחַסֵּר - mahsôr - **want, poverty, poor, penury, needy**

אֶבְיֹן - 'ebyôn - **poor, needy**

I. CAUSES OF POVERTY – how to not become poor

A. Slothful Sleepy Slack Sluggards

6:9-11 - How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? *Yet* “a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep”: So shall thy **poverty** come as one that travelleth, and thy **want** as an armed man.

10:4 - He becometh **poor** that dealeth *with* a slack hand:

13:4 - The soul of the sluggard desireth, and *hath* nothing:

19:15 - Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

20:4 - The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; *therefore* shall he beg in harvest, and *have* nothing.

20:13 - Love not sleep, lest thou come to **poverty**;

24:33-34 - *Yet* “a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep”: So shall thy **poverty** come *as* one that travelleth; and thy **want** as an armed man.

B. Greed

11:24 - There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet, but *it tendeth* to **poverty**.

13:7 - There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing: *there is* that maketh himself **poor**, yet *hath* great riches.

21:5 - The thoughts . . . of every one *that is* hasty [*tend*] only to **want**.

22:16 - He that oppresseth the **poor** to increase his *riches*, and he that giveth to the rich, *shall* surely *come* to **want**.

28:22 - He that hasteth to be rich *hath* an evil eye, and considereth not that **poverty** shall come upon him.

C. Loving Luxury

21:17 - He that loveth pleasure *shall be* a **poor** man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

23:20-21 - Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to **poverty**: and drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.

D. Refuses Instruction

13:18 - **Poverty** and shame *shall be to* him that refuseth instruction:

E. Talks without doing

14:23 - In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to **penury**.

F. Empty Distractions

28:19 - He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain *persons* shall have **poverty** enough.

II. DISADVANTAGES OF POVERTY – why not to become poor

A. Friendless

14:20 - The **poor** is hated even of his own neighbour:

19:4 - . . . the **poor** is separated from his neighbour.

19:7 - All the brethren of the **poor** do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth *them with* words, *yet they are* wanting to *him*.

B. Victimized/Destroyed

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

15:15 - All the days of the **afflicted** *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.

30:11-14 - *There is* a generation . . . whose teeth *are as* swords, and their jaw teeth *as* knives, to devour the **poor** from off the earth, and the **needy** from *among* men.

C. Powerless

18:23 - The **poor** useth intreaties;

22:7 - The rich ruleth over the **poor**, and the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

III. BETTER THAN SAYINGS – there are worse things than poverty

A. Treasure with Troubles/Strife/Wickedness

15:16 - Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

15:17 - Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

16:8 - Better *is* a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

16:19 - Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the **lowly**, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

17:1 - Better *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife.

B. Moral Perversity/Foolishness

19:1 - Better *is* the **poor** that walketh in his integrity, than *he that is* perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

19:22 - . . . a **poor** man *is* better than a liar.

28:6 - Better *is* the **poor** that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

IV. ADVANTAGES – the plus side of poverty

A. Their position before the Lord

3:34 - Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the **lowly**.

22:2 - The rich and **poor** meet together: the LORD *is* the maker of them all.

29:13 - The **poor** and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

B. Their advantages over the wealthy

13:8 - The ransom of a man's life *are* his riches: but the **poor** heareth not rebuke.

13:23 - Much food *is in* the tillage of the **poor**:

15:25 - The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

28:11 - The rich man *is* wise in his own conceit; but the **poor** that hath understanding searcheth him out.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Negatively – what not to do to the poor

1. Don't oppress/rob

14:31a - He that oppresseth the **poor** reproacheth his Maker:

22:22-23 - Rob not the **poor**, because he *is* **poor**: neither oppress the **afflicted** in the gate: For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

23:10-11 - Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their redeemer *is* mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.

28:3 - A **poor** man that oppresseth the **poor** *is like* a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

30:14 - *There is* a generation, whose teeth *are as* swords, and their jaw teeth *as* knives, to devour the **poor** from off the earth, and the **needy** from *among* men.

2. Don't Ignore

21:13 - Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the **poor**, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

28:27b - . . . he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

29:7b - . . . *but* the wicked regardeth not to know *it [the cause of the poor]*.

3. Don't mock

17:5 - Whoso mocketh the **poor** reproacheth his Maker: *and* he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

B. Positively – what to do for the poor - give

14:21 - . . . he that hath mercy on the **poor**, happy *is* he.

14:31b - . . . he that honoureth him [his Maker] hath mercy on the **poor**.

19:17 - He that hath pity upon the **poor** lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

22:9 - He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the **poor**.

28:8 - He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the **poor**.

28:27a - He that giveth unto the **poor** shall not **lack**:

29:7a - The righteous considereth the cause of the **poor**:

31:20 - She stretcheth out her hand to the **poor**; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the **needy**.

C. Responsibilities of Rulers to the Poor

28:15 - *As* a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; *so is* a wicked ruler over the **poor** people.

29:14 - The king that faithfully judgeth the **poor**, his throne shall be established for ever.

31:4-5 - *It is* not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the **afflicted**.

31:6-7 - Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his **poverty**, and remember his misery no more.

31:8-9 - Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the **poor** and **needy**.

VI. PRAYER

30:7-9 - Two *things* have I required of thee; deny me *them* not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither **poverty** nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be **poor**, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*.