

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 3/2/11 Wednesday Evening<sup>1</sup>  
"The Poor in Proverbs"--part 2

Stats on Poverty in our area...

Review: The word "poor" occurs 205 times in the Bible (KJV). In Proverbs alone, the word appears 35 times.

Our Goal: We want to spend a couple of weeks investigating what Proverbs has to say to us about ministering to the poor.

**1. Proverbs addresses how a person may become *poor*.**

*(Prov 10:4) He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

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

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

**2. Proverbs addresses the difficult plight of the *poor*.**

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

*(Prov 13:23) Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.*

*(Prov 14:20) The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.*

*(Prov 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.*

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

**3. Proverbs addresses how to treat the *poor*.**

*(Prov 14:21 KJV) He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.*

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

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

New Material: Part Two...

The following verses demonstrate in practical ways how to show kindness to the poor...

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

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<sup>1</sup> This message comes from teaching done at WBC initially on 9/1/99.

God commends generosity. What happens to a generous person according to verse 9? He will be "blessed." Prov 11:25 elaborates, "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."

Q: According to verse 9, what is one very practical way to express generosity?  
By sharing your food with the poor.

What's true of food? It's a need, not a want. If a person doesn't have food, in time he won't have life. You need food to live. And if we see someone who doesn't have his basic necessities, we who do can show generosity by sharing.

Discuss: What can we do in practical terms to meet the needs of the poor around us? Be thinking about that. We'll discuss it momentarily after looking at a few other texts...

(Prov 28:27 KJV) He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Q: What does God's Word say is true of the person who gives?

Q: What's true of the person who ignores the needs of others?

(Prov 29:7 KJV) The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

Q: What is a mark of a righteous person? As the NIV puts it, "The righteous care about justice for the poor."

Like Job did as he shares in Job 29:11-17... What type of things did Job do to show that he truly was a righteous person?

Problem: In our country, Christians too often are known for what they are *against* rather than what they are *for*. We're against abortion, against divorce, against substance abuse, etc. And we ought to be against whatever God's Word prohibits. *But...*we ought also to have the reputation of being a hospital for broken and hurting people. We not only do surgery to get rid of the cancer, but we mend their wounds, too.

The woman who's had an abortion, the man who's feeling the pain of divorce, the individual who's hooked by life destroying substances...ought to find hope right here! I believe God's Word has real answers for these problems. My desire is to see this church become known in this community as a place to go for biblical help.

"If you need help and you want to go somewhere to find out what God's Word has to say about your problems, you can go to WBC..."

Discuss: What will it cost us if we're serious about "getting in the trenches" and doing this type of ministry?

(Prov 29:14 KJV) The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

A "king" is a person in control. He's the authority. He is supposed to use his authority and power not to oppress, not to suppress people, but to help the poor?

Q: In what specific way does this verse say he is to help?

Q: We're not kings, but this applies to us. How so? We're to use our lot in life, our position whatever it may be, to insure the poor receive justice. The next verse elaborates...

(Prov 31:9 KJV) Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

In this section King Lemuel relates the counsel his mother gave him. It's what a good king does. He doesn't waste his strength on inappropriate relationships with women (2-3), nor on strong drink (4-5).

Q: On the other hand, what will a good king do (8-9)?

(Prov 31:20 KJV) She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Q: What does the virtuous woman do?

So to summarize, God calls us to be kind to the needy. Sharing food (22:9), lending money (28:8), and defending rights (31:9) are ways we can show kindness.

Discuss: Now, in practical terms, what can we do to meet the needs of the poor around us (first as individuals, then as a church)?

#### **4. Proverbs confronts those who take advantage of the poor.**

What's true of those who do so...?

(Prov 17:5 KJV) Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Q: What does it mean to "mock" the poor?

(Prov 18:23 KJV) The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

In general terms, this verse tells the way things are *typically*. What's often true of the poor person and of the rich person?

(Prov 22:16 KJV) He that oppreseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Q: Why would someone oppress the poor--since there's not much to get anyway? Because he can't defend himself.

Q: Why would someone give to the rich--since he doesn't need it anyway?

The following verse continues this theme...

(Prov 22:22 KJV) Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

Q: Why not exploit the poor? See verse 23

(Prov 28:3 KJV) A poor man [NIV "a ruler"] that oppreseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

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

Q: What's true of the person who makes his money by use of high interest?

(Prov 28:15 KJV) As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

Q: What's it like to be a poor person under a wicked ruler? Why so?

### **5. Proverbs shows that there are worse things than being *poor*.**

Like what?

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

The NIV puts it, "A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat." What's one advantage then of not having material riches? When was the last time you heard of a street person being held for ransom?

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

Q: What's more important than having money according to this verse?

*(Prov 19:22 KJV) The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.*

Q: What's worse than being poor? Being a liar. What are some reasons this is worse? God hates a lying tongue and someone who devises wicked schemes (6:17-18).

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

Q: When is it better to be poor according to this verse?

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

This verse contrasts the rich and poor person. What's the tendency of the rich person? To be "wise in his own eyes." What does a person not need money to be able to do, according to the end of the verse? See through the folly of a self-absorbed rich person.

Let's summarize what we've learned with some lessons. Proverbs teaches us...

1. We must remember that there are different ways people can become poor.
2. We must not allow ourselves to become desensitized to the needs of people.
3. We must seek to be known as people who are generous.
4. We must use our resources to help the needy.
5. We must use whatever means we possess to achieve justice for those who can't defend themselves.