

POVERTY AND THE POOR

Lesson #25

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 96) Proverbs 6:10-11; 28:3-27

Introduction: Our Federal government does not require you to pay taxes if you are married and your family income is below \$11,550.00. Our State government will give you assistance if you are married, have two children, and make under \$28,000.00 a year. I heard one report that if you have shoes, a coat, one day's food and some kind of heat, that you are better off than 95% of those in the world. Solomon gives great insight into the poor and poverty in the book of Proverbs.

1. CONDITIONS OF POVERTY (What is poverty?)

Solomon uses several words to describe poverty and the poor.

A. Proverbs 10:4 "**poor**" (Hebrew "rush," "rish," "resh") meaning "**destitution.**"

Translated "poor" in Proverbs 13:7,8,23; 14:20; 17:5; 18:23; 19:1,22; 22:2,7; 29:3,27; 29:13; and "poverty" in Proverbs 6;11; 10:15; 13:18; 24:34; 28:19; 30:8; 31:7.

("rush" by William White in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 840)

B. Proverbs 10:15 "**poor**" (Hebrew "dal," "dalla") meaning "one who is low." This word represents those who **lack material wealth and goods** rather than the destitute. It refers to one of the lower classes. The idea of **physical (material) deprivation** predominates. Used 14xs in Proverbs, 14:21; 19:4; 21:13; 22:9,16,22; 28:36,8,11,15; 29:7.

("dal" by Leonard J. Coppes in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 190)

C. Proverbs 14:21 "**poor**" (Hebrew " 'ani," " 'oni") meaning "weak, afflicted, humbled."

This person **suffers from some kind of disability or distress**. We see that financially this person lives from day to day, and that socially he is defenseless and subject to oppression. It describes a man who has no property and who has to earn his bread by serving others. Many times these poor people would have been **wrongfully impoverished**. Also found in Proverbs 30:14.

(" 'ani" by Leonard J. Coppes in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 685)

D. Proverbs 14:31 "**poor**" (Hebrew " 'ebyon") meaning "to be needy." This word emphasizes the need. It is used in the sense of the material want of one who has **fallen on hard times**. They have **lost all material possessions including clothing and food**. They may have become slaves or resorted to borrowing.

(" 'ebyon" by Leonard J. Coppes in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 4)

E. Proverbs 20:13 "**poor**" (Hebrew "yarash") meaning "**take possessions off.**" It has the idea to dispossess or disinherit (i.e. no possession) thus coming into poverty or being made poor. Found also as "poverty" in Proverbs 23:21 and "poor" in Proverbs 30:9

("yarash" by John E. Hartley in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 409)

F. Proverbs 21:17 "**poor**" (Hebrew "haser," "heser," "mahsor") meaning "to want or lack, **to be without any thing.**" Translated "poverty" in Proverbs 11:24.

("haser" by Benjamin Davidson in The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, page 269)

Summary facts: Just because you do not have "X" amount of money does not mean you are poor, and just because you do not have what you want, you rent, or can't afford a car, does not mean you are poor. We should have the same prayer as Proverbs 30:8-9.

2. CAUSES OF POVERTY (What are some of the causes of poverty?)

- A. Proverbs 6:10-11 (20:13; 24:32-34) = Laziness
- B. Proverbs 10:4 = Dealing with a slack hand or working with a negligent hand
- C. Proverbs 11:24 = Withholding that which is right or justly due
- D. Proverbs 13:18 = Refusing instruction or ignoring discipline
- E. Proverbs 13:23 = Injustice
- F. Proverbs 20:13 (24:32-34) = The love of sleep
- G. Proverbs 21:17 = The love of pleasure
- H. Proverbs 21:20 = Foolish habits (devour or eat up what you have)
- I. Proverbs 22:16 = Oppressing the poor
- J. Proverbs 22:16 = Giving to the rich
- K. Proverbs 23:21 = Drunkenness
- L. Proverbs 23:21 = Gluttony
- M. Proverbs 28:19 = Empty pursuits, chases fantasies
- N. Proverbs 28:22 = Trying to get rich quick or chasing after money

3. COMFORT WITHIN POVERTY (What sources of comfort are there in poverty?)

- A. Proverbs 13:7 = There is more to life than the absence of riches.
- B. Proverbs 13:8 = There is not much to lose when poor.
- C. Proverbs 22:2 = There is equality before the Lord.
- D. Proverbs 22:22-23 = The Lord pleads the cause of the poor.
- E. Proverbs 28:27 (29:7) = There are those who will help the poor.
- F. Proverbs 29:13 = The Lord gives light or sight to the poor.
- G. Proverbs 31:9 = There are those who plead the cause of the poor

4. COPING WITH POVERTY (How should the poor handle poverty?)

- A. Proverbs 19:1 (19:22; 28:6) = Keep your integrity in tack
- B. Proverbs 28:11 = Use discernment concerning those who are rich.

C. Proverbs 28:19(10:4) = Be active in work or keep on laboring for your food.

D. Proverbs 30:8 = Trust in the Lord to give you what you can handle

5. COMPASSION ON THOSE IN POVERTY

A. Proverbs 14:31(19:17) = Be kind or gracious to the needy.

B. Proverbs 22:9 = Be generous to the poor.

C. Proverbs 22:22 = Do not rob or exploit the poor.

D. Proverbs 28:27 = Give to the poor

E. Proverbs 31:8-9 = Speak up and defend the rights of the poor and needy

6. CORRUPTION SURROUNDING POVERTY

A. Proverbs 14:20 = Hating those who are poor.

B. Proverbs 17:5 = Mocking people because they are poor.

C. Proverbs 19:4,7 = Friends and relatives separating from those who become poor.

D. Proverbs 21:13 = Shutting your ear to the cry of the poor.

E. Proverbs 22:22 = Exploiting or robbing the poor

F. Proverbs 28:3 = The poor oppressing others who are poor.

G. Proverbs 28:27 = Closing your eyes to the poor

H. Proverbs 30:9 = The poor resorting to stealing.

Conclusion: Proverbs has much to say about the poor and poverty. What should you do?