



CHARITY TO THE POOR AND NEEDY
11:24-26; 14:31; 17:5; 19:17; 22:9, 16, 22-23; 28:27;
29:7

These **proverbs** deal with the subject of **charity** and **uncharitableness** toward the poor and needy. The subject of being charitable to the poor is taught throughout the Word of God. Old Testament law gave consideration to the poor [Deuteronomy 15:7-11]. **Neglect** and **oppression** of the poor is warned against [Psalm 10:2; 109:16; Proverbs 30:14], and in Hebrews 13:15-16 there is a reminder not to forget to share.

The Bible teaches that there are some contributing causes to poverty, such as **sloth** [Proverbs 6:10-11; II Thessalonians 3:7-13], **love of pleasure** [Proverbs 21:17], and **drunkenness** [Proverbs 23:21]. Not all who are poor or needy are guilty of these things, but because of these things, "**wisdom**" must be exercised in sharing with the poor and needy. Sharing with the poor should in no wise encourage or enable one to live or to continue to live a lifestyle that leads to poverty.

"There is he that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet (fitting or necessary), but it tendeth (is disposed), to poverty. The liberal (generous, unselfish, and ungrudging) soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it" [11:24-26].

The one who "**scattereth**" the "**liberal soul**" the one that "**watereth**" and the one who "**selleth**" all has reference to the individual who shares his blessings. Just as the farmer scatters his seed plentifully over his field and expects a proportionate increase, the one who plentifully shares his blessings for the honor and glory of the Lord will have increase. The one who "**withholdeth**" has reference to the selfish individual who refuses to share, and such lacks the love of God [I John 3:17].

"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor" [14:31].

To oppress the poor is "*to ill-treat, to attempt to suppress, and to keep down in order to rule over*" To do such is a "**reproach**" (a disgrace and shame). On the other hand, the one who honors God (has reverence and adoration for God in his heart) **hath mercy** (kindness, sympathy, and generosity) **on the poor**" This **proverb** reveals that being selfish or unselfish is a matter of one's heart condition toward God.

“Whosoever mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished” [17:5].

The word “*mocketh*” is “*an act of ridicule, to treat with contempt*” here it has reference to those who ridicule the poverty of the poor, and those who take advantage of the poor. The phrase “*he that is glad at calamities*” has reference to those who take some sort of pleasure over the misfortunes of others [Proverbs 24:17], and such an individual will experience their own calamities.

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” [19:17].

The word “*pity*” here is inclusive of both compassion and liberality toward the poor and needy, and the *Macedonian* churches serve as an example of such [II Corinthians 8:1-5]. To show compassion and liberality unto the needy for the right motives, is the same as doing unto the Lord Himself [Matthew 25:35-40], and God will richly bless such!

“He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor” [22:9].

The phrase “*He that hath a bountiful eye*” has reference to the individual who looks upon the needs and miseries of others with the intent of being generous, unselfish, and benevolent. They look for opportunities and ways to show generosity, and such an individual will be blessed of God [Psalm 41:1-3; Ecclesiastes 11:1; Isaiah 58:10; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:7-8].

“He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want” [22:16].

The one oppresses the poor and needy in order “*to increase his riches*” the other gives to the rich hoping for some gain in return. SELFISHNESS IS AT THE CENTER OF BOTH! PERSONAL GAIN IS THE MOTIVE OF BOTH! This proverb serves as a warning against selfishness, and such always has wrong motives [Isaiah 56:11; Philippians 2:21].

“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” [22:22-23].

This is simply a strong warning against taking advantage of the needy.

“He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse” [28:27].

This proverb contains a promise—“*He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack*” TRUE GENEROSITY IS REWARDED [Deuteronomy 15:10]. This proverb also contains a warning to the one who neglects and ignores the needs of the poor and needy.

“The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it” [29:7].

This **proverb** speaks of both the considerate **regard** and the inconsiderate **disregard** of the poor and needy. The matter of showing **regard** or **disregard**, the matter of **caring** or being **uncaring**, the matter of wanting to be **helpful** is a matter of spirituality. It is the *“righteous”* that *“considereth* (thinks about, reflects upon, and is mindful of) *the cause of the poor”* and it is the *“wicked”* that refuses to give consideration to the needs of others. There is a warning to those who **disregard** and **neglect** the needy [**Proverbs 21:13**].

The *“wisdom that is from above”* [**James 3:17**] will cause one to be **unselfish** and **benevolent**, **compassionate** and **concerned** for the needs of others, and such is exemplified in the parable of *“The Good Samaritan”* [**Luke 10:33-37**].