

# What is shared by both poor and rich? (29:13)

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

**The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.**

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

## INTRODUCTION



The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

Both the poor and the rich and share the most basic of all blessings—life itself.

Wealth is great, but health trumps wealth. Everyone is dependent upon the LORD for his health, and indeed, simply for staying alive!

So what?



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## COMMENTARY

Wealth does not generate or sustain life. So this proverb gives us a very important message, a message often repeated: See Proverbs 22:2 and 14:31a and 17:5a. The point is this: an abundance of life—the light of the LORD—is much more important than an abundance of assets.

### Staying Alive

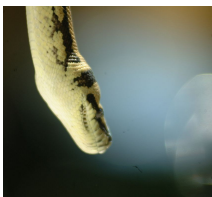


The phrase, “the LORD gives light to the eyes of both,” is a figure of speech, not describing physical eyesight as such, but the incalculable gift of life. It’s not sunlight that gives us light; it’s the LORD who gives us life. Death or disease aren’t simply accidents. In the LORD’s Providence, He is good to all. He treats everyone with kindness and justice, and without favoritism (Acts 10:34 NLT). He does not deny the oppressor the blessing of life, even when the oppressor denies it to others. Theologians refer to this ubiquitous goodness of God as “common grace.” Good health and mindfulness are God-given gifts, beyond all the benefits of wealth.

### All Encompassing

The text covers both ends of the social spectrum and, of course, everyone in between. Usually two such opposite types tend to avoid each other, but, before the Face of God, money and power mean absolutely nothing. How can they meet? All men and women are equally dependent upon their Creator and Judge. This proverb rejects the esteem most people give to those of wealth and influence.

### Translation: *poor, oppressor*



The Hebrew word for poor, רָשׁ (r?š, pronounced “rash”), is usually used in the



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literal sense of financially deprived. Contrast this word with other words for “poor” by checking the Keywords section of this website.

The Hebrew word for oppressor, **תִּכְכִּים** (te??•?im, pronounced “te-kah-keem”), is difficult to translate. Renderings include: Deceitful man (KJV), man of frauds (YLT), injurious man (LITV), fraudulent man (tanakh - Jewish Publication Society 1985), and usurer (K&D, Gill, Clarke commentaries). All these words describe someone who gathers wealth at other’s expense. So the text refers to those oppressors who get rich by abusing others.

## Types of Poverty

There are many types of poverty. Unfortunately the single English word, “poor,” hides some subtleties in the Hebrew, where three terms are available. All three Hebrew words appear in Psalm 82:3 NASB. “Vindicate the weak (dal) and the fatherless. Do justice to the afflicted (ani) and the destitute (ras).”

In his book *How Long O LORD?*<sup>1</sup> author D. A. Carson lists six kinds of poverty, not all of which are worthy of our concern:

- The Unfortunate Poor - poor from unhappy circumstances.
- The Oppressed Poor - poor from the thoughtless or malicious exploitation of others.
- The Lazy Poor - poor because of their own idleness.
- The Punished Poor - poor from being unintended victims.
- The Voluntary Poor – poor from their own choice.
- The Poor in Spirit – a non-financial or personal virtue, not discussed here.

## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus said that God the Father is kind to both good and evil, sending both rain and sun on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:45).

God is not impressed, not in the least, with human wealth, not even with billions of dollars. All the nations are like a drop in the bucket or like dust on the scales (Isaiah 40:15).

Like His Father, Jesus deferred to no one, but spoke the truth consistently (Matthew 22:16), enlightening anyone with “the ears to hear.”

## APPLICATION



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- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Thank God that you are alive and able to do things—including reading these words!
- Don't give wealth more importance than it really has. Don't be intimidated by another's wealth or puffed-up with your own. Remember the one who keeps everyone alive and active. Don't try to win friends and influence people; it's better to engage the assistance of God Almighty since He has more power than everyone on earth, combined.
- Don't think that by losing money you will lose your life and don't think that by gaining more money you will gain more life. Money doesn't bring or take life: That's God's doing.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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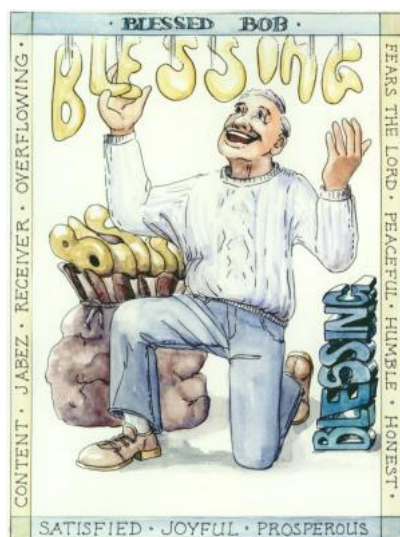
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## KEY WORDS

better life (quality), death, understanding, health, life, LORD, poor (rāš pronounced “rash”), sickness, bf sharing

## ILLUSTRATION

[Who is Blessed Bob?](#)



Blessed Bob is very fortunate. He recognizes that good things come from God! God is shunned by many, but not by Bob. Bob loves God. He wants to receive all the good things that God has for him. He's not too proud to ask God for help. In fact, Bob prays often. Some think that he prays without ceasing. But he is not without fault. Blessed Bob makes many mistakes, and when he does, he admits his errors. He corrects them and presses on.

Bob gets so many blessings he feels overwhelmed. His cup overflows. But he doesn't hoard his blessings. Like Generous Genevieve, Blessed Bob likes to give to others. He is truly prosperous, even though there are many who are financially richer than he is.

We see examples of Blessed Bob in the Bible in the lives of Job and Joseph. Job went through some very good times (Job 29:2-25) and some very bad times (Job 2:7-8). Joseph had similar financial cycles (Genesis 39:2,21). Both men kept their focus on God, not on their financial condition (Job 1:21, Genesis 50:19-21).

More recently we have examples of those who have lived with the same life focus. R. G. LeTourneau was the inventor of the largest earth moving machines in the 1930's and 1940's. He credited God for his tremendous success. He gave away much of his wealth while he was



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still living saying that, "When I shovel money out to God's interests, God shovels money back to me, but God's shovel is bigger than mine." He was called the mover of men and mountains because of his great work and influence. On his gravestone, R. G. LeTourneau left all visitors with these words, SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU MATTHEW 6:33.

Blessed Bob is full of joy. He is satisfied with life!



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### FOOTNOTES

1. p. 51-57 *How Long O LORD?* D. A. Carson, Published by Baker Academics, 2006, ISBN 10:0-8010-3125-7, ISBN 987-0-8010-3125

