

Who cares about human rights? (29:7)

“The righteous are concerned for the rights of the poor. The wicked do not understand such concern.”

THE TEXT (NASB)

“The righteous are concerned for the rights of the poor. The wicked do not understand such concern.”

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it. KJV - Proverbs 29:7

INTRODUCTION



Who cares about human rights? Not everyone!

Everyone is not **concerned**. Some people couldn't care less, especially not **for the rights of the poor**.

What does your attitude toward the poor reveal about you?



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COMMENTARY

It is noble to care for the poor and disadvantaged, but don't be surprised if others don't care. It's the ancient battle between good and evil. Treatment of the poor is a quick way to discern someone's character.

Self-Centered Perspectives



The **wicked** don't lack wealth or intelligence; they lack something else: Concern for the poor. They also fail to **understand** why anyone else would care about the poor. Why is that? It's simple: The wicked do not care about the poor. They are merely looking out for number one—themselves. During the start of the 21st century much has been made about sexual promiscuity and perversions, especially about sodomy, but the root cause is identified in Ezekiel 16:49, selfishness, while the poor are ignored (Ezekiel 16:49 NLT).

Sometimes Wealth Justifies Selfishness

The wicked seem to think that wealth sanitizes or justifies evil. Let me explain. In the text, the wicked and the **righteous** are considering the poor. Both the righteous and the wicked, themselves, are not poor. The righteous want to help the poor. The wicked don't care about the poor. They think, “All's well when I'm well.” The poor themselves are at fault and their rights would all be resolved if they were rich. The wicked see poverty as a problem to be solved simply with wealth. They think that the possession of wealth itself compensates for injustices.

Translation: *poor, wicked (nouns)*



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The Hebrew word for poor, **דָּל** (dāl, pronounced “dahl”), appears often in Proverbs. It refers to those who are weak and frail. [Study the keyword poor, dahl](#) to learn more about this word and the other words translated “poor,” but with slightly different meanings.

The Hebrew word for wicked, **רָשָׁע** (rāšāʿ, pronounced “rah-sha”), is used about 250 times in the Bible. **רָשָׁע** appears first in Genesis 18:23 when Abraham spoke with God about the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; about how God would not treat the righteous and the wicked the same in judgment. According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) the word describes people who were...

“...guilty of violations of the social rights of others for they were violent, oppressive, greedy, engaged in plotting and trapping poor people, and quite willing to murder to gain their ends. In a word, they threatened the community. They were dishonest in business and in the courtroom... Both God and man saw acts of salvation as the best way to act with a wicked person....The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 55:7) exhorted people to forsake the wicked life and turn to him [God].”

Public Policy



According to the text, gaining consensus on the proper treatment of the poor is not easy. Not everyone views the problem of poverty the same way. Poverty comes for various reasons. It can be self-induced, a result of external forces, or a combination of both. Before the problem of poverty can be properly addressed it must be properly diagnosed, but there's another problem. Some people don't care to know. I believe that political position is irrelevant. Whether we are right or left, Conservative or Liberal, Republicans or Democrats matters not. Our treatment of the poor is the key indicator of our own political staying power.

See [Proverbs 29:14 – What is the financial secret for stable government?](#)



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus had great concern for the poor.

Jesus Himself was financially poor on earth, except for a brief period when, as a baby, He was given three very expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts sustained his family while in Egypt. Jesus' emphasis on caring for the poor was taught to and practiced by His disciples.

After His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, Jesus' disciples continued to aid the poor (Galatians 2:10).

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- If you care for the poor, some will think you're weird. You can't please everyone. Don't waste your time in an intellectual debate with those who ignore the poor. It's not a lack of intelligence—it's a moral choice.
- Examine your motives for charitable giving. Do you give to poor *people* or do you just support other causes not directly linked to human suffering—such as animal rights, environmental concerns, or the arts? The righteous hug *people*, not trees.
- Ask people about helping the poor and their response will speak volumes about their character.
- Which of these, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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KEY WORDS

apathy, compassion, justice, less assets (quantity), poor (dāl pronounced “dahl”), righteous, understanding, wicked, bf sharing

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Generous Genevieve?



Generous Genevieve loves to give and has a big heart. Sometimes she chuckles to herself as she gives her gifts. Now here's a secret about her giving: She only gives to those who really need it—not just to anyone who asks for a handout. She gives because she thinks it's the right thing to do.

Strangely enough, the more she gave to those in genuine need, the more she got back. Some people give in order to get, but she considers that mere trading. Generous Genevieve gives for the sheer thrill of it. By giving she is keeping herself from emotional cancer. Emotional cancer, also known as greed, can take over one's heart and destroy their ability to enjoy even the simple things of life. Genevieve gives in order to increase her giving capacity.

Sometimes it hurts Genevieve to give. Sometimes she is short of cash because she has given to someone else, but that shortage doesn't last long.

Genevieve believes that there is always a reward for giving to those in need. She thinks that her generosity will come back to her benefit sooner or later. She coined the expression, “What goes



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around—comes around.”

