

## What do riches attract like a magnet? (14:20)

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### THE TEXT (NASB)

The poor is hated even by his neighbor, but those who love the rich are many.

### CLASSIC KJV TEXT

The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends. Classic KJV - Proverbs 14:20

### INTRODUCTION



Riches attract friends. Riches promote popularity. Money talks.

Everything else being equal, according to the text, **the poor** are shunned and **the rich** are popular.

So what?

### COMMENTARY

#### [Classic KJV - Proverbs 14:20](#)

The text is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It describes existing social conditions without offering direct advice about riches. It merely states some of the consequences of having wealth. It illuminates our natural tendencies to greed and selfishness. By nature we love having *things* and hate losing things. We tend to choose companions that will enable us to have more things. Here we see the social benefits of wealth; it makes us popular.

#### Translation: *Neighbor*

The Hebrew word for **neighbour**, רֵעַ (r?a?, pronounced “rey-a”), may also be translated as *companion* or *associate*. This truth is valid for any person. One would think that an associate, or someone as close as a neighbour, would overlook a person’s financial status and still be

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friendly. No! A lack of money tends to mean a lack of friends. Loyalty often lasts as long as the cash flows.

### Loving People or Loving Their Wealth



People tend to like the rich because they are more likely to get something from them. In contrast, the poor not only have nothing to give us, but may even ask us for favours. We may soon have less assets if we are surrounded by the poor. People tend to hate the poor because they are a perceived drain on their resources. Many who are rich see the poor as a nuisance rather than as an opportunity to extend generosity.

Not all rich people have many friends. Some who are wealthy deliberately hide their wealth because they do not want so called “friends.” This is often seen when someone wins a big lottery. They conceal their good fortune to avoid attracting unwanted companions. A rich person who loses his money will soon find out who his true friends are. How many friends would you lose if all or most of your assets suddenly disappeared?

## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus was an advocate for the poor. God’s love for a person is not affected by his or her net-worth. God told the rich to be generous in order to gain friendships. We read in Luke 14:12-14:

When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

How’s that for personal financial planning? Wealthy kings in the past such as the Egyptian pharaohs were buried with much gold with the hopes that they could access it in the after-life. Jesus had a different strategy. He said that *our rewards in the next world are determined by our treatment of the poor in this world.*

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- It takes more love to be a friend to the poor than to the rich. Befriend someone who is poor.
- Consider how your attitude to the poor affects your relationship with everyone’s Creator.

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- Make sure you are not responsible for your own poverty through your own laziness.

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

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### KEY WORDS

better life (quality), financial status, friend, hate, loneliness, lottery, love, loyalty, neighbor, human resources, poor (raš pronounced “rash”), popularity, rich

### ILLUSTRATION

#### Who is Self-Centered Sam?



Self-Centered Sam looks out for number one. Who's that? It's Sam, of course! Sam doesn't consider himself to be self-centered. One of his favourite books is [“The Richest Man in Babylon.”](#)

What does Sam do with his income? The cream, the very best goes to his own long-term growth fund. His motto is ‘pay yourself first.’ Some call him Stingy Sam. But he's not stingy; he's just making careful preparation for his own future, comfort, and well-being. He is part of the “me” generation. He typifies the Maslow's hierarchy of needs with self-actualization as apex of all values. Sam is a dedicated humanist. He doesn't recognize any higher power than himself. He's a tough negotiator.

Sam doesn't ignore charity. But how could he possibly help anyone one else unless there was something in it for him? Therefore any and all charitable donations must have full and public credit given to the donor. The more people are aware of his generosity the better. After all, a little bit of advertising is good for business. When his corporation gives a gift it comes as a percentage of profits, not revenues.

His financial hero is the multi-millionaire, whose assets once exceeded the entire US treasury: The great Railroad and Steamship Baron [Cornelius Vanderbilt](#).