

Doctrine of the Poor

1. Under the Mosaic Law the poor were protected by not allowing interest to be charged when money was borrowed.
 - *Exodus 22:25 If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.*

2. Favoritism was not to be shown to the poor in a lawsuit. Class warfare was not to be exploited nor were the rich to be robbed to give to the poor through a misguided principle of monetary redistribution of the wealth.
 - *Exodus 23:3 Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.*

3. Poor people are not to be denied justice in their lawsuits. The rich and powerful are not to be allowed to take advantage of their positions.
 - *Exodus 23:6 Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.*

4. In grace God provided for the poor of Israel. Every seventh year the land was to be allowed to rest. Any produce that came up naturally was to be gathered by the poor without protest. Because this concept of grace was violated for 490 years the Lord judged the nation and redeemed the time owed Him while teaching the Hebrews that those who do not show grace will one day be in need of grace.
 - *Exodus 23:11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.*
 - *2 Chron 36:21 [The people of Israel were carried to Babylon] To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

5. In paying redemption money, and in the giving of the sacrifices, poor were instructed to give a just portion. A principle is established. Even the poor can and must give to the work of the Lord trusting Him to honor their attitude. The sacrificial giving of the widow reflects this concept.
 - *Redemption money. Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.*
 - *Sacrifice money. Leviticus 14:21 And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil;*

- Sacrificial giving. *Mark 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*
6. In order to instill an attitude of gratitude in the heart of the wealthy, and in order to teach the principle of thoughtfulness toward others, some produce was to be left on the vine for the poor and strangers.
 - *Leviticus 19:10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.*
 7. Society shall always have poor people in its midst for a variety of reasons.
 - *Deuteronomy 15:11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.*
 - *Mark 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.*
 8. Hardship and poverty are pitiful excuses not to serve the Lord. When used by Gideon they were dismissed.
 - *Judges 6:15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*
 9. It is the Lord who ordains the economic level of individuals in life.
 - *1 Samuel 2:7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.*
 - *Proverbs 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.*
 10. God is capable of lifting up the poor and making them to rule as princes.
 - *1 Samuel 2:8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.*
 11. The prophet Nathan used the story of a poor man to illustrate a spiritual truth, teach a moral lesson and bring King David to repentance.

- *2 Samuel 12:1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. 7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

12. In times of prosperity and in days of celebration the heart is often moved to give gifts to the poor.

- *Esther 9:22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.*

13. God must be, and will be, the Savior of the poor.

- *Job 5:15 But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*
- *Psalms 12:5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*
- *Isaiah 41:17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.*

14. The heart of the Christian wants to be kind to the poor as the heart of Job was kind.

- *Job 29:16 I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.*
- *Job 30:25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?*

15. The conscience of the Christian should be clear in regard to treatment of the poor as the heart of Job was clear.

- *Job 31:16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; 17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; 18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) 19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; 20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: 22 Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.*

16. God listens to the prayerful cries of the poor.

- *Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.*
- *Psalms 72:12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*

17. Poverty shall not always prevail. There will be a new heaven and a new earth some day without the ravaging effects of sin.

- *Psalms 9:18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*

18. As there is physical poverty so there is a poverty of the spirit.

- *Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Psalms 34:6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*
- *Proverbs 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.*

19. Poverty is often a state of mind more than means.

- *Proverbs 13:23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.*

20. Joy and inner happiness follows those who will have mercy on the poor.
- *Proverbs 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.*
21. To show contempt to the poor and to take advantage of them is to show disrespect to God.
- *Proverbs 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.*
22. There is more to life than riches. Personal integrity is honorable in the sight of God.
- *Proverbs 19:1 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.*
 - *Proverbs 28:6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*
23. Those who help the poor make God a debtor to themselves and the Lord will honor His debt.
- *Proverbs 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*
24. Mercy will not be shown to those who show no mercy.
- *Proverbs 21:13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.*
25. Sometimes the state of poverty is self-induced.
- *Proverbs 21:17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*
26. To avoid poverty eliminate debt.
- *Proverbs 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*
27. The more a person gives the more he shall have.
- *Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.*
28. It is foolish to give one's resources to the rich in the expectation of getting something in return.

- *Proverbs 22:16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*
29. Because the hearts of all men are depraved it is possible for the poor to try and exploit others who are poor.
- *Proverbs 28:3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.*
30. It is the role of government to protect the poor.
- *Proverbs 29:14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.*
31. No one should seek poverty.
- *Proverbs 30: 7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: 8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*
32. Some generations are more sensitive to the poor than others.
- *Proverbs 30:14 There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.*
33. The poor are in need of verbal advocacy.
- *Proverbs 31:9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.*
34. The quality of education and the degree of wisdom is not a matter of economic status.
- *Ecclesiastes 9:15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. 16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*
35. The greatest good someone can do for the poor is to give them the gospel.
- *Matthew 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*
36. The strength of sincere Christianity is reflected in how willing their spirit is to help the poor.

- *Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*
37. Sometimes individuals pretend to be concerned about the poor but they are not. Such was the case of Judas who complained that money spent in an act of worship was misplaced.
- *Matthew 26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.*
38. The poor are to be invited to any spiritual celebration.
- *Luke 14:13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:*
39. Conversion makes a heart sensitive to the plight of the poor as in the case of Zacchaeus.
- *Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*
 - *Romans 15:26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*
 - *Galatians 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.*
40. Voluntary poverty will be meaningless without love.
- *1 Corinthians 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*
41. During the days of His humanity Jesus identified Himself with the poor of society to the day of His death.
- *2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*
42. The rich are not to be catered to in the church, nor the poor despised.
- *James 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:*
43. Generally speaking the church universal consists more of the poor than the rich.

- *James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

44. It is possible to be rich materially and poor spiritually and not even realize it.

- *Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*