



abc links

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on January 31-February 1, 2009

this week's coreverse

A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Proverbs 28:27

usingablinks

Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies that explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage of scripture. Other days you will be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying, answering questions.

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions act as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members to get more information on ABC Small Groups or go to adabile.org>small groups.

See adabile.org>message recaps & Links for ABCLinks archives.



Part Four of a Four Part Sermon Series

"The Boomerang Effect"

When you think of the word "poor," what comes to mind? I don't know who John Scalzi is, but I was recently intrigued by an article he wrote called "Being Poor Is..." Here's what came to John's mind. Do you agree with his definition of poor?

Being poor is knowing exactly how much everything costs.

Being poor is hoping the toothache goes away.

Being poor is knowing your kid goes to friends' houses but never has friends over to yours.

Being poor is living next to the freeway.

Being poor is a heater in only one room of the house.

Being poor is knowing you can't leave \$5 on the coffee table when your friends are around.

Being poor is hoping your kids don't have a growth spurt.

Being poor is Goodwill underwear.

Being poor is feeling the glued soles tear off your supermarket shoes.

Being poor is relying on people who don't give a "_____" about you.

Being poor is stopping the car to take a lamp from a stranger's trash.

Being poor is needing that 35 cent raise.

Being poor is \$6 short on the utility bill and no way to close the gap.

Being poor is never buying anything someone else hasn't bought first.

Being poor is getting tired of people wanting you to be grateful.

Being poor is hoping the register lady will spot you the dime.

Being poor is a lumpy futon bed.

Being poor is knowing where the shelter is.

Being poor is people who have never been poor wondering why you choose to be so.

The authors of the Bible identified the poor in their time and culture as being the widows, orphans and refugees. Widows and orphans were very prevalent as the mortality rate of men was so high. Husbands and fathers were often victims of war or disease. Refugees were the result of famine and war. When people became displaced because of a disaster, people wandered into Israel homeless and penniless. No welfare. No job assistance programs. No social services.

Poverty in America is a bit different today, but God still cares for those struggling to stay above water. God's answer to poverty always was and still is His people! He desires for His people to be the world leaders in caring for the helpless. When the rest of the world walks by and ignores the destitute, God's people immerse themselves in the difficult, complex and messy work of caring for the helpless. This week's proverbs reinforce that those who are wise with their money are generous with those in need.



ada bible church
8899 cascade road se
ada, mi 49301
616.868.7005 | adabile.org

Author information

Phil Niekerk, senior small groups pastor



personal bible studies

God wants the poor and helpless to be taken of. The Old Testament is loaded with commandments about this. The welfare of widows, orphans and refugees was of great concern to God. One of the reasons God addressed this so consistently in Scripture was because the poor were so easy to take advantage of in the ancient world. The poor and destitute had limited power to protect themselves from a dishonest neighbor or to seek justice when someone pulled a shady deal. The Proverbs speak to both sides of the issue of poverty. They warn those who exploit the poor and commission God's people to be generous to those who are in need. This week we'll look at three ways people treat the poor. We steal, we ignore or we give.

What's yours is mine | Theft

*Do not exploit the poor because they are poor,
and do not crush the needy in court,*

*for the Lord will take up their case
and will plunder those who plunder them.
Proverbs 22:22-23*

*Do not move the ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,*

*for their defender is strong;
he will take up their case against you.
Proverbs 23:10-11*

*He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker;
whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.
Proverbs 17:5*

*He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.
Proverbs 14:31*

What do you learn about the character of God from the instructions in these proverbs?

In what area of the world are you most troubled by injustice to the poor? Do any hit close to home for you?

What answers about the problem of injustice do you get from these verses?

What's mine is mine | Greed

*One man gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.*

Proverbs 11:24

*People curse the man who hoards grain,
but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.*

Proverbs 11:26

Take a few minutes to honestly examine your lifestyle. Is your primary financial objective to increase your lifestyle or to increase someone else's? What are the indicators that someone is a hoarder more than a giver? Can someone be both? How so?

What tendencies do you have to hold tightly to something whether money or possessions?

What's mine is yours | Generosity

*A generous man will prosper;
He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*

Proverbs 11:25

*He who despises his neighbor sins,
but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.*

Proverbs 14:21

*He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will reward him for what he has done.*

Proverbs 19:17

*A man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor,
he too will cry out and not be answered.*

Proverbs 21:13

*A generous man will himself be blessed,
for he shares his food with the poor.*

Proverbs 22:9

*He who gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.*

Proverbs 28:27

What do these verses teach us about God's goodness? To whom?

The life of generosity is the life of trust. Do agree or disagree with that statement? Why would trust be connected to generosity?

Is God calling you to give, or to increase your gifts to something or someone? Who or what? How will you budget your giving so that it becomes consistent and impacting?

How is this an act of trust or faith?



small group discussion

leanin

When was the poorest time of your life? How would you define the word poor?

lookdown

Read together the proverbs from the inside pages. Stop between each and discuss the words associated with the proverb.

Discuss the topics of *Theft, Greed, and Generosity* from these proverbs. What is the wisdom taught in each?

lookout

Compare our society with the ancient world. What differences do you see in regards to the poor?

lookin

What steps can you take to prepare to be generous?

When has someone's poverty impacted you emotionally? How did you respond?

When are you more likely to withhold your resources or ignore a needy person or situation? What is at the root of your decision?

How is the character trait of generosity intimately related to the character trait of trust? What do you need to trust in order to be generous?

Who is God calling you personally, or as a small group, to make a generous investment into? Spend a few minutes making a plan to serve.