

Care and Compassion in Proverbs

Are there any proverbs that speak
of care and compassion in
English?

A quick reminder

Proverbs as Wisdom, Fear and
Faith

Purpose of Proverbs

- ¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
- ² for attaining wisdom and discipline;
for understanding words of insight;
- ³ for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- ⁴ for giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young-
- ⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance-
- ⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
- ⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Tips for interpreting Proverbs

- These are proverbs not promises
- They are general principles not all-embracing descriptions of reality
- We should “read a direction” of the proverbs

Our verses today!!

Proverbs 22:2, 9, 16, 22-28

Proverbs 29:1-14

Proverbs 21:3-10, 13, 15

Proverbs 28:3, 5-6, 8-11, 22, 27

Proverbs 17:1-5

Proverbs 25:8-11, 16-19

What do these verses say about care and compassion?

- From our set of verses we can identify those which refer to care and compassion, especially towards the poor
- Then we can analyse the ways in which proverbs talks about care and compassion
- “Read a direction”

Four principles to draw out

- God and the poor
- Justice not religion
- The blessings of generosity the curses of stinginess
- Wisdom and justice

God and the poor

- *Proverbs 17:5* - He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.
- *Proverbs 19:17* - He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.
- *Proverbs 22:2* - Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.
- *Proverbs 22:22-23* – 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

God and the poor

- *Treating the poor well pleases God*
- *Rich and poor are of equal value*
- *God is the advocate of the poor*

Justice not religion

- *Proverbs 21:3* - To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice
- Also see Mark 12:32-33 "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Justice not religion

- *Righteousness and justice are God's requirements not religious observance.*

Blessings of generosity and curses of stinginess

- *Proverbs 21:13* - If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor; he too will cry out and not be answered.
- *Proverbs 22:9* - A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.
- *Proverbs 22:16* - He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty
- *Proverbs 28:3* – A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.

Blessings of generosity and curses of stinginess

- *Proverbs 28:6* - Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.
- *Proverbs 28:22* - A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.
- *Proverbs 28:27* - 27 He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.
- *Proverbs 29:4* - By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down. If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure.

Blessings of generosity and curses of stinginess

- *Generosity and compassion ultimately bring blessing*
- *Favouring the rich over the poor brings disaster*
- *Justice gives stability*

Wisdom and justice

- *Proverbs 28:5* - Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully
- *Proverbs 28:11* - A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.
- **See also Jeremiah 22:15-17**

Jeremiah 22:15-16

"Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.

He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD.

Wisdom and Justice

- To care, to be compassionate and to do justice is wise and true knowledge of God
- All true knowledge of God is born of obedience (John Calvin).

Conclusion

- God is on the side of those who require care and compassion
- Justice, care and compassion are God's requirements of His people
- Ultimately caring and being compassionate are good for our lives
- We show our wisdom and gain wisdom by caring and being compassionate

Micah 6:8

*And what does the LORD require of
you?*

*To do justice and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your
God.*

What is the LORD requiring of us in changing
the way we live and act towards the poor?