

“If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord — and he will repay you!” Proverbs 19:17 NLT

lectio // Proverbs 19:15-29

I have never been one to borrow money from someone, not family, not friends. I'm not against it or too proud to ask, I've just never liked it. Really, I've never lent money out either. Early on, I chose to GIVE money to a friend instead of lend. Lending got too messy. It felt like I was always worried about getting it back, not because I was cheap, it was because I wanted the lender to do what was right and follow through on their own. I know I'm weird about this! I know of families where one of the siblings just always has money. And the other brother or sister borrows from them. I love that, it's just not me. The wisdom writers frame generosity in this borrower/lender context. Then, outrageously writes, “you are lending to God!” What? God borrows money from us? Doesn't he own everything? Can't he just sell one of the cows, of the thousand he owns, to pay for the poor? What kind of civil system is this? Don't we pay taxes (tithes) for this? God should certainly take care of the poor out of those funds, right? This is where wisdom is just brilliant! What a concept of reverse tunnel vision. We pay the poor. We take care of the poor. We give and God goes into debt TO US when it comes to the poor! That's crazy! Do you feel safe lending money to God? Do you feel good about lending money to God? Do you think God is a good risk? Ah, if the answer is YES, then these are great reasons to give to the poor, because God is their financial backer. This makes me think of the times I've judged the worthiness of the individual or the motive of the individual instead of looking over their shoulder and seeing who is standing as their guarantee. God seems to be pretty good at sorting all kinds of motives, behaviors and even injustices out in his own time and wisdom. Do I really believe that God would forget, or worse, cheat me out of the money he borrowed? Come on. Am I just not seeing this right?

Dad,

Okay, I'm up for a little challenge, are you? I'm going to start with \$100 and give it to the poor.

Maybe it's a homeless person, with their sign, on the corner. Maybe it's an elderly or frail person that just looks like they need a little extra help. I'm going to give it out, lending to you, let's see what happens. This should be fun.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root