

“Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor. A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty. Proverbs 22:9, 16 NLT

lectio // Proverbs 22:8-12

You probably already knew this, but I'm realizing, there's quite a lot of "tending to the poor" in Proverbs! Generosity, treating the poor well and wisdom are kind of package deal in the wisdom book. Knock knock. Who's there? Axiom. Axiom who? Aren't ya going to Axiom why? A proverb is a saying. An axiom is an excepted truth, a known and self evident truth. Proverbs is a collection of wisdom sayings, which Solomon authorized to be written. It is generally accepted that Solomon did write a number of passages, but that at least three other men contributed to the collection of sayings. And Proverbs tells us why, and to who it was written: "Their purpose is teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. Proverbs 1:2-5. So why does proverbs talk about the poor so often? Because of the principle of the upside down triangle ▼. Power is often seen as a clamoring to the top ▲, to rule, reign and control everyone and everything below. However, in God's economy, his Kingdom it's pretty much the opposite. The great serve from below. The purpose of power is to support, care and make others flourish. If you want to be great in God's kingdom, learn to be a servant of all - kind of structure. Therefore the wise, the generous, the powerful (of you want to look at it that way) is on the bottom and making everything and everyone above them great. Even good businesses have figured this out. Every great salesperson, entrepreneur and leader understands this principle. It is NOT about them, it's about others. The greatest leaders who are loved and honored in history made it clear, they weren't in it to win it, they were in it for others to win it! So, clearly the proverbs about the poor say it's a race to the bottom, not the top. Plus, if you want to "hangout" with God, stay close to the poor, the needy, the broken and the outlier - that's where God is at work.

Dad,
I have only been blessed and made richer by spending a lot of time, energy and money around the poor - poor in spirit, poor in means and poor in friendships. I was an outlier and an outcast, and you came close to me. You brought the most amazing friends into my life and I am forever grateful. I want to be more comfortable around the outcasts than I am the power circles.