

Episode #635 The Why Question 20: Six Kinds of Poverty

I. One of the most difficult questions we must ask ourselves regarding God, life, and the world is the “why” question. We who believe that there is a God Who is all-good and all-loving and Who made the world must answer why then this world is such a terrible place and in such a mess.

II. One of the sad situations we face in this world is the reality of poverty. As our country shut down its economy out of fear of a virus, many people have lost their jobs, their businesses, and their dreams, and have ended up in poverty. Why does God allow such a thing in the world?

III. The Six Kinds of Poverty in the Old Testament.

A. *Rush/reysh*. Lacking the necessities of life.

1. Proverbs 10:4: it can come about from slackness.
2. Proverbs 13:18: it can come from refusing instruction.
3. Proverbs 14:20: the poor have few friends.
4. Proverbs 19:1: integrity is good in a poor person.
5. Proverbs 22:2: the LORD makes both poor and rich.
6. Proverbs 28:3: a poor man might oppress another poor man!

B. *Dal*. Impoverished or reduced.

1. Leviticus 19:15. Neither poor nor mighty should be favored in judgment.
2. Proverbs 10:15. Poverty destroys the poor.
3. Proverbs 19:17. It is good to pity the poor.
4. Proverbs 28:11. A poor man with understanding sees through the arrogance of the rich.
5. Proverbs 28:15. A wicked ruler is like a wild beast to the poor people.
6. Isaiah 11:4. Christ will judge the poor with righteousness in His kingdom!

C. *Checer/machcor*. In want.

1. Proverbs 11:24. To withhold more than is fitting can lead to poverty.
2. Proverbs 14:23. Talking rather than working leads to poverty.
3. Proverbs 21:5. Haste and impatience lead to want.
4. Proverbs 28:22. Haste to get rich can lead to want.

D. *Anah*. Wretched.

1. Deuteronomy 24:14-15. Israelites were forbidden to oppress hired servants.
2. Psalm 35:10. The LORD delivers the needy!
3. Psalm 68:10. God has prepared His goodness for the poor.
4. Psalm 72:4. God shall judge the poor of the people.
5. Psalm 82:1-4. God’s command to wicked rulers is to defend the poor!
6. Proverbs 14:21. The one who has mercy on the poor is happy.
7. Proverbs 15:15. Every day of a wretched person is a bad day.
8. Ezekiel 16:49-50. Part of Sodom’s problem was she did not help the poor.

E. *Ebyon*. Destitute, helpless, deficient in will and in wealth.

1. Deuteronomy 15:4-5. Jehovah promised if they obeyed Him there would be no poor among them in Israel! Yet consider verse 11.
2. Deuteronomy 15:7-8. They were not to refuse to help a poor brother.
3. Psalm 107:41. Yahweh sets the poor on high in the kingdom to come.
4. Psalm 109:31. The LORD stands at the right hand of the poor!
5. Isaiah 25:4. Jehovah has been a strength to the needy in his distress.

F. *Yarash*. Dispossessed.

1. I Samuel 2:7. Yahweh makes poor. Does this mean He does it every time?
2. Proverbs 20:13. If you love sleep, you might come to poverty!
3. Proverbs 23:21. The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty.

IV. Conclusion: while thought and diligence can deliver from poverty, plenty of causes can lead to poverty. It was the Lord's constant command to remember the poor. Yet oppression is often the lot of the poor and helpless. Ultimately we will always have the poor with us until God's kingdom comes, when He will judge their cause. Yet until that time, it is our job to help the poor as we can.