This is a question many have wrestled with does being poor mean you are under a curse? Or is poverty inherently shameful, especially when it seems to result in rejection from others?

Proverbs 14:20 (ESV)

> *“The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends.”*

And again:

Proverbs 19:4 (ESV)

> *“Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.”*

These verses, written by King Solomon, reflect a realistic observation of human behavior, not divine commands or moral imperatives. Solomon, known for his unparalleled wisdom (1 Kings 3:12), wrote much of the book of Proverbs not to issue

commands, but to record principles, patterns, and realities of life. These are not laws or instructions, but insights drawn from human experience.

For example, if someone today says, *“Kind people often get taken advantage of,”* it doesn’t mean they are advising people to stop being kind. Rather, they are pointing out a pattern that can be observed in life, regardless of whether it’s just or fair.

The same applies to Solomon’s proverb in Proverbs 14:20 it’s not a call to pursue wealth in order to be accepted, but a sobering reflection of how society often treats people based on their status or resources.

Not Every Proverb Is a Command

Some misread the Proverbs as if every statement is a direct command from God. But that’s a misunderstanding of biblical genre. Proverbs are general truths, not universal guarantees. They are observations that are *usually* true, not promises that are *always* true.

Solomon clarifies this in another proverb:

Proverbs 28:6 (ESV)

> *“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.”*

Here, Solomon affirms that integrity is more valuable than wealth. This verse directly contradicts any notion that wealth automatically equates to blessing or approval in God’s eyes.

This affirms the biblical truth that God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7), not at external status or possessions.

The Poor Often Go Unnoticed, Despite Their Wisdom

Solomon also highlights how society often disregards the wisdom of the poor, even when it is life-saving:

Ecclesiastes 9:14–16 (ESV)

> “There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it. But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man’s wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.”

This passage demonstrates that being poor does not mean one is lacking in value, intelligence, or divine favor. On the contrary, it shows how true wisdom can come from the most overlooked individuals. But due to social prejudice, their wisdom often goes unrecognized.

Yet Solomon concludes:

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (ESV)

> *“Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.”*

This wisdom has eternal worth, even if it’s ignored in this world.

True Riches Are Found in Wisdom and Integrity

Solomon consistently elevates wisdom and righteousness above material gain:

Proverbs 16:16 (ESV)

> *“How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.”*

And again:

Ecclesiastes 4:13 (ESV)

> *“Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice.”*

These verses counter worldly thinking. According to Scripture, true wealth is spiritual wisdom, understanding, integrity, and the fear of the Lord.

The Christian Calling Includes Rejection

In the New Testament, Jesus makes it clear that following Him often leads to rejection, not popularity:

Luke 21:16–17 (ESV)

> *“You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name’s sake.”*

Jesus never promised His followers a life of ease or universal acceptance. Instead, He warned that the world would hate them, just as it hated Him (John 15:18–19).

Being poor or rejected for Christ’s sake is not a curse it is a mark of faithfulness.

Spiritual Riches in the Midst of Earthly Poverty

To the church in Smyrna, Jesus says:

Revelation 2:9–10 (ESV)

> *“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. … Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

Here, we see that poverty in the eyes of the world is not how God measures wealth. Jesus calls this persecuted, impoverished church rich, because they are rich in faith and perseverance (see also James 2:5).

The rejection or hatred one may experience due to poverty is not a curse, and it is certainly not a sign that one is outside God’s favor. Rather, it is a reality of life in a broken world a truth Solomon observed, and Jesus confirmed.

But the good news is this: God sees, God knows, and God rewards.

> *Galatians 6:9 (ESV)*
> *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”*

Let us, therefore, seek wisdom over wealth, integrity over popularity, and faithfulness over comfort. In Christ, we are already rich beyond measure.

May the Lord bless you and give you strength to remain faithful, whether in abundance or in need.

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