

Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)  
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

## (#85) The Proverbs of Solomon 14:20-21- With Friends Like These...

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

### **Proverbs 14:20-21:**

The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, But the rich has many friends. 21 He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.

**Verse 20:** The "poor" have less to offer than the "rich," and neighbors "hate" (detest, are impatient with) them! The "rich" may have "many friends" who have been attracted by the wealth, like flies to garbage. How sad for both! Such "fair-weather friends" should never be considered when evaluating a person's worth! Human value should not be based on either what a person has or doesn't have ("rich" or "poor").

**Verse 21:** Those who "despise" (think lightly of, disregard) a "neighbor" (nearest, closest), especially a "poor" one, will not show "mercy," and this lack of mercy will come back to them:

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard. (**Proverbs 21:13**)

Jesus thought of the poor when He said,

"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil."  
(**Luke 6:35**)

"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (**Luke 14:12-14**)



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God invests good in the “unthankful and evil,” and so should His children (Christians), but it is up to the “unthankful and evil” to pay it forward! Dinners or suppers, usually require a social obligation in return, but Jesus insists that the poor and downtrodden should be served “because they cannot repay you.” Good, done for good’s sake, does not have a price tag! And Jesus’ prophecy of the Day of Judgment will be a reckoning of deeds done...

“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” ([Matthew 25:35-36](#))

No good deed will go unrewarded because only “do-gooders” will be saved! Other proverbs which speak on this subject include:

- The poor man uses entreaties, but the rich answers roughly. ([Proverbs 18:23](#))
- Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend. ([Proverbs 19:4](#))
- All the brothers of the poor hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him. ([Proverbs 19:7](#))
- The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both. ([Proverbs 29:13](#))

