

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23ⁱⁱ

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD is the maker of them all. Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of anger will fail. Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the LORD pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.

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About Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

The Book of Proverbs consists of short, memorable sayings drawn from human experience which are shaped poetically for memory and meaning. Proverbs generally uses the parallelism of couplets to juxtapose truths and tease out new meanings.

Since they are practical, proverbs serve a multitude of functions for people in their communities including observation, command, admonition and prohibition. In general they help to preserve tradition, promote proper behavior and ponder the mystery of life. They promote the mastery of everyday life by directly relating it to the mystery of God's creation.

In today's reading, the proverbs relate the social status and guide the social interactions of the haves—the rich—and the have-nots—the poor. Justice and generosity will be rewarded by God, who is especially attuned to their plight.