

Good morning! The book of Proverbs is a wonderful guide to life, filled with practical counsel about relationships, the way we handle our work lives, manage our time, take care of our bodies. It's not really a "rule book" but it certainly contains concepts that, if we will apply them, will help us to order our lives in ways that please God. In some ways it can be seen as a User's Manual. God has created us to live a certain way and if we live our own way in opposition to the User's Manual we cannot expect that the results will be good. We can choose our conduct but we cannot choose the results---or as the great and wonderful Ern Baxter used to say, you can choose to jump out of the window on the 30th floor but you cannot choose to re-enter the building on the way down! This morning let's look together at a short but powerful proverb that demonstrates just what I mean:

The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will himself also call out and not be answered.

**Proverbs 21:13**

Short and sweet, right? The Bible has a great deal to say about the way we treat the poor. For whatever the reason, God seems to have a special affection for the poor, for widows and for orphans. He promises good things to those who care for the poor and He promises consequences for those who do not. God is a generous God. Let me say that again: God is a generous God. He is generous beyond imagining, providing even the air we breathe and the planet on which we live. He provides abundant resources for our daily living. If you and I take what He freely gives and withhold it from those who are in need, He has this special Bible Promise for us: we will call to Him and not be answered. He will ignore our cries when we call on Him. What do you think of that? God is generous and He wants us to be like Him. Part of the transformed life God has for us is that as we grow into His grace we should become more like Him. Consider this morning: are you becoming more generous? If not, today is a great day to repent! Be intentional. Look for ways to apply the generosity of Jesus to the lives of people you encounter. Be like Jesus today: be generous to the poor!