

A photograph of a slum area. In the background, there are modern, multi-story apartment buildings with many windows. In the foreground and middle ground, there are makeshift shacks and structures made of brick, metal, and other materials. The ground is covered in snow and ice, suggesting a cold climate. Power lines and poles are visible across the scene. The sky is overcast.

O, HOW POOR
YOU ARE

⁶ Go to the ant, you lazy one,
Observe its ways and be wise,
⁷ Which, having no chief,
Officer, or ruler,
⁸ Prepares its food in the summer
And gathers its provision in the
harvest.
⁹ How long will you lie down, you lazy
one?
When will you arise from your sleep?
¹⁰ “A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest,”
¹¹ Then your poverty will come in like

a drifter



WE'RE NOT REALLY TALKING ABOUT MONEY, ARE WE?

- It doesn't take long to see that the writer of Proverbs is primarily concerned with the nurturing of spiritual wealth. Wisdom herself is presented as precious and valuable (2:1-5, 3:13-17, 8:10-11, 8:18-21). Other things are similarly framed as treasures that exceed gold and jewels (honor for the Lord, a godly spouse, charitable heart, diligent work ethic, committed friends, discretion in speech, etc.).

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- So when we observe the sluggard being lazy in

TREASURES ON EARTH

Matthew 6:19ff is pretty easy to read, but hard to live by. So what are some of the reasons that we struggle so much with spiritual poverty?



- As our first text says, “a little sleep, a little slumber...” It’s likely that the sluggard didn’t wake up that day anticipating his poverty coming upon him. After all, there is nothing wrong with a little rest (even Jesus took naps).

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- But the well-meaning cat nap can slide so easily into deep ineffectiveness, especially when it becomes habitual. Take worship, for example. Hebrews 10:25 isn’t about “missing church” – it’s about slacking discipleship. This manifests itself in a habitual lack of seriousness and discipline when it comes to our obligations to each other and God.

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- At some point, dormant Christians need to “wake up, rise from the dead, and make the

MIGHT BEGIN WITH GOOD INTENTION



YOU'RE NOT RICH, JUST DISTRACTED

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- Don't we do this on purpose in many areas of life? When we're undergoing a painful procedure we want to be distracted. Bored in a waiting room? YouTube! Conflict in relationships? Go shopping and feel better! Depressed? Grieving? Lonely?

Let's be clear about this: it is insulting to sit in a position of comfort and make patronizing statements about the "nobility" of the poor. But one thing can be said: At least the poor know they're poor. I wouldn't trade my life for anybody else's, but I should strive for clarity and awareness about where I stand with God (Mk. 2:17).



MATTHEW 19:23-24

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle



A photograph of a slum area, likely in an urban setting, showing a narrow, unpaved street with large piles of snow and debris. The buildings are multi-story, with some appearing dilapidated and others more modern. A tall communication tower is visible in the background. The sky is overcast. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

SO HOW DO I
COMBAT THE SLIDE
INTO POVERTY?

- QUESTION THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF YOUR INVESTMENTS IN THIS WORLD

Like people who believe their junk equals wealth, or who get duped into schemes, we need to be skeptical about all the things the world says will fulfill you. What makes a church effective (Rev. 2:8ff, 1 Thess. 2:13ff, 2 Thess. 1:3-5)? What makes for good parenting ? What is true wealth (Luke. 12:20-21)?

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- RECOGNIZE THAT OUR POVERTY GOES BEYOND JUST HAVING NOTHING

Our greatest problem is not the fact that we are deprived. It is not our LACK, but our incredible DEBT, that is most destructive. Just like the parable found in Matthew 18:22ff, we are so deeply “in the red” that it is impossible to pay our way out of