

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

APRIL 10 - 14, 2023



Money Wi\$e

Sermon Series

April 16 - May 14

MONDAY

Read Proverbs 1

This week commences a 5-week series in Proverbs, stressing the believer's attitude and practices regarding money. This week highlights "receiving"—acting as good stewards, recognizing that our capacity for earning is God-given, an expression of His grace. Let's start with some background on the book of Proverbs, which comprises the Bible's "wisdom literature," along with Job, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

"Proverbs is a collection of practical life wisdom given mostly in short, memorable statements ... [generally containing] a collection of individual [declarations] without much context or organization by topic. [This book] is unique in its theology, being concerned with practical life wisdom more than ideas about God." (David Guzik)

"In a time when not everybody was [literate], the learning or knowledge of proverbs was a special form of instruction ... [regarding what the wise] shall seek and ... avoid... [and] that [people] irrespective of [their] spiritual blessings ... will reap what [they have] sowed. It contains the advice of divine wisdom for daily life of God-fearing [people] in all [their] difficulties, trials, dangers and joys of [life]." (Arend Remmers) "The short sayings probably originated as folk wisdom generated, preserved, and passed on in the spheres of the clan and the family. ... As this folk and family wisdom was passed on, it began to be written down and collected, ... [which] became the beginnings of the book of Proverbs. ...

“These collections seem to have been used in some sort of school ... as part of an educational program in the royal court ... [perhaps] some sort of ‘internship’ or training program for young people being prepared to take positions in Jerusalem.” (James Limburg) “Proverbs teach wisdom through short points and principles but should not be regarded as ‘laws’ or even universal promises. ... Solomon was [not] the author of all these proverbs. ... Solomon [likely] collected ... other proverbs and set them in his book.” (Guzik)

“*The fear of (deep reverence for) the LORD is the beginning of knowledge*” (Proverbs 1:7). Do you ever need help with your “wisdom,” whether moneywise or otherwise? Spend time in the Bible’s “wisdom literature.”

QUESTIONS

What is your favorite Proverb? Proverbs 111:10 states, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*”—how can we love God while fearing Him?

PRAYERS

For Spencer Whelan and Young Life Capernaum

Pray that God would continue to guide and help Young Life Mount Baldy Capernaum.

TUESDAY

Read **Proverbs 11:28, 16:8; Matthew 6:19-21**

Many claim to believe in God, but not in “organized religion.” Among their common reasons for avoiding Christian assembly: “Churches just want your money.” A survey of the history of televangelists reinforces such skepticism. You may know these biblical facts regarding Jesus’ teaching on money: money is mentioned in 11 of His 39 recorded parables; and about 1 out of every 7 Bible verses that quote Jesus feature money. So, the skeptic’s potential conclusion: “Jesus (like the church) was money-obsessed.”

Among the most misquoted Bible verses is “*Money is the root of all evil.*” What Paul actually wrote was “*the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*” (1 Timothy 6:10, emphasis added). Money itself is neutral. The ability to earn money is God-given but, as with much sin, its overemphasis or misapplication tends toward idolatry and corruption. The related trap—and the foundation for sin—is when one “*trusts in their riches*” (Proverbs 11:28) rather than in God, the Giver of all good gifts (James 1:17).

Jesus taught, “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth*” (Matthew 6:19). God aimed to teach the Hebrews amidst the Egypt-to-Palestine exodus to trust Him rather than in their own ingenuity or efforts. Exodus 6 shares how God provided manna each morning—except for the Sabbath (whose need was met by an allowed double portion collected the prior day)—to feed the trekking Jews. They

were to gather only for their daily need—no more and no less—and consume all that God prescribed. Disobedient Israelites found their “leftovers” rotten and worm-infested.

I’ve heard it said, “If you want to understand someone’s priorities, look at their checkbook.” Accordingly, Jesus taught regarding kingdom living, “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Matthew 6:21). “*God loves a cheerful giver*” (2 Corinthians 9:7) because such a person delights in God’s glory rather than selfish excess.

God doesn’t need our money. What He wants, however, is for us to be faithful stewards with grateful, generous hearts. Thus, Pastor Jon Courson states, “[The offering] isn’t God’s way of raising money; it’s His way of raising children.”

QUESTIONS

Is money “the root of all evil”? Why do you think Jesus taught more about money than He did about heaven? What does “If you want to understand someone’s priorities, look at their checkbook” mean?

PRAYERS

For Spencer Whelan and Young Life Capernaum

Pray that God would bring volunteers to best serve kids in this community.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Proverbs 8:1, 18-21; 1 Kings 3:4-14**

Upon first reading, Proverbs 8:18-21 sounds almost smug. However, stepping back to this Proverb's opening verses reinforces that this is penned from the perspective of personified "Wisdom" rather than its human author's—this literary approach parallels Proverbs 1 and 2. These encouraging verses characterize abundant life to those walking in Wisdom's way, with God Himself in Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 8:17 sets up the promises of verses 18-21: *"I (Wisdom) love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me."* The foundational theme of this passage is to seek and embrace wisdom as a basis for blessings. The penman, King Solomon, knew a good bit about this. When God asked the young, newly-crowned Solomon what he wanted, Israel's third king humbly asked for wisdom instead of wealth, conquests over enemies, and/or long life. God was so pleased that He granted Solomon what he requested along with these other things (1 Kings 3:4-14).

Sadly, Solomon succumbed to the lures of idols, affluence, power and pleasure-seeking during much of his reign. He discounted the warning of 1 Kings 3:13: *"Walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments."* Elderly, reflective Solomon's related regrets and insights are chronicled in Ecclesiastes.

Solomon's follies aside, however, there is much to take from today's featured Proverb. Wisdom yields "*riches and honor*" (Proverbs 8:18) not necessarily temporally, but certainly eternally. And wisdom is borne out of right relationship with God (Proverbs 111:10). "*Fruit*" and "*yield*" are "*better than ... fine gold ... and choice silver*" (8:19)—this compares the emphasis of faithful believers with those selfishly pursuing worldly "success." "*Granting an inheritance*" (8:21)—there is no better legacy than helping others find Jesus, particularly one's close relatives.

Our continuing aspiration should be to "*walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice*" (8:20). The Bible is clear regarding how: "*act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God*" (Micah 6:8). Such faithfulness is fueled by an attitude of gratitude, one of continual thanks to God for His goodness and provision. The faithful Christ follower will thereby wisely "*store up ... treasures in heaven*" (Matthew 6:2).

QUESTIONS

Why do you think Wisdom is characterized as a person in Proverbs 8? In what ways did King Solomon squander God's generous gifts to him? How will you "*store up ... treasures in heaven*" (Matthew 6:2)?

PRAYERS

For Spencer Whelan and Young Life Capernaum

Pray that God's will be done during our summer camp trips.

THURSDAY

Read **Proverbs 30:8-9; 1 Kings 17:8-16; Mark 12:41-44**

If you've read Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* or seen the play or movie, you'll appreciate that its hero, Jean Valjean, might embrace Proverbs 30:8-9. Valjean was caught stealing bread for his starving sister, imprisoned for 19 years only to repent later and live a redeemed, incognito life as an ex-con. His youthful appeal might have been, *"LORD, keep me from poverty 'lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God' (Proverbs 30:9)."*

As fallen people, extremes can bring out the worst in us. Abundant riches and the often corresponding delusion of self-sufficiency lead some to *"deny You and say, 'Who is the LORD?'" (30:9)*. Those who endure great poverty sometimes go the deceitful route of young Valjean. Neither path honors God as the One providing gifts and opportunities to grow into greater Christlikeness. Sadly, however, we don't need to experience excessive poverty or wealth to become deceitful or proud.

The Apostle Paul knew the pinnacles of elite education, high IQ and the advancing career of an esteemed Pharisee, while also knowing the lows of poverty, hateful persecution and danger. Yet in all of this, Paul *"learned ... to be content. ... [and] the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need ... [Paul could] do all things through Him who strengthens"* (Philippians 4:11-13). He embraced the truth, *"to live is Christ"* (Philippians 1:21), regardless of financial position or worldly stature.

The poor widow whom Jesus commended for her all-in generosity understood this: “*Out of her poverty [she gave] everything she had*” (Mark 12:44). She was not “possessed by her possessions.” Perhaps she knew the story of Elijah and the destitute Sidonian widow who fed the prophet a cake made with her final portions of flour and oil. Her faithful generosity was rewarded, as thereafter “*the jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty*” (1 Kings 17:16).

Though we cannot “outgive God,” the message here is not the “prosperity Gospel.” God—who has given everything, including His Son—owes us nothing. However, grateful and faithful stewardship of God’s provision enables present abundant life and anticipates eternal riches in His presence.

QUESTIONS

Why did the penman of Proverbs 30:8 ask that God “*give me neither poverty nor riches*”? What “secret” did Paul learn to help him through the inevitable highs and lows of his ministry? What did the two widows featured today have in common?

PRAYERS

For Spencer Whelan and Young Life Capernaum

Pray that God would be guiding Young Life staff of LA and draw them near to Himself.

FRIDAY

Read **Proverbs 23:4; Job 27:16-19; Matthew 19:16-24**

Is it a sin to be wealthy? When asked this, Saddleback Church's founding pastor, Rick Warren, responded, "I don't think it is a sin to be rich. I think it is a sin to die rich." A take-away from Warren's quote: be a good steward, generously using God's gifts for His kingdom purposes.

Jesus issued a famous, though often misapplied, saying after His exchange with the "rich young man" in Matthew 19:24: *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."* Many use this, among other Scriptures, to villainize the rich. However, Jesus was not saying that being wealthy is sinful. His warning pertained to making riches an idol, clinging to them selfishly.

Job was affluent, but was stripped of almost everything per Satan's torment temporarily permitted by God. Job understandably struggled in his infirmities and losses, yet did not waiver in faithfulness to God. His observations regarding "prosperous" wicked people are shared in Job 27:16-19. They harmonize with a story you may know. A man watched the somber funeral procession of a prominent, though ungodly, deceased multi-millionaire. Seeing the hearse at its end, he turned to another and asked, "How much did he leave behind?" The other answered, "Everything!"

Jesus Christ is our ultimate Example in all of this: “... though He was rich (in the joy of deity and eternal, bountiful love within the triune Godhead), yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich (in the things of God)” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Reflect upon what God Himself chose in Jesus’ first coming mission: extreme poverty as the Son of an impoverished, initially unwed teenaged girl; no permanent home nor steady income upon commencing His ministry; penniless while walking voluntarily and faithfully toward the most painful, humiliating death possible.

How is your heart when it comes to finances? Are you a grateful steward, generous toward those less fortunate? Or do you “toil to acquire wealth” (Proverbs 23:4), perhaps seeing the LORD as an untrustworthy God of limitations rather than abundance?

QUESTIONS

Do you agree with Pastor Rick Warren’s perspective on wealth and sin? What are some of the perils of being rich? How does the saying, “You can’t take it with you” apply to the themes of today’s devotional?

PRAYERS

For Spencer Whelan and Young Life Capernaum

Praise God for the years that Young Life has been in this community and how God’s hand has been guiding and providing for this ministry.

Sources

- David Guzik's quotes are from <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/proverbs-1/#top>.
- Arend Remmers' quote can be found at <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/proverbs.html>.
- James Limburg's quote is from <https://enterthebible.org/courses/proverbs/lessons/background-of-proverbs>.
- Jon Courson's quote is from his Searchlight ministry video, accessible at <https://www.joncourson.com/playteaching/T412>.
- Rick Warren's quote can be found at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/septemberweb-only/137-41.O.html>.

