

# Wisdom 101: Proverbs

## Lesson #5 – Money Matters

### A Righteous Person's Wealth is Given by God

**3:9-10** – “Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.” (New American Standard)

**10:22** – “It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it.”  
(New American Standard)

**14:24** – “Wealth is a crown for the wise; the effort of fools yields only foolishness.”  
(New Living Translation)

**22:2** – “Rich and poor have this in common: the Lord is the Maker of them all.”  
(New International Version)

**30:7-9** – “Oh God, I beg two favors from you. Let me have them before I die. First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ And if I am too poor, I may steal and insult God’s holy name.” (New Living Translation)

*We know that not everyone who follows God is wealthy, but we also know that every bit of wealth we have comes from God. As Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are wealthy beyond the standards of most others in the world, which should cause these proverbs to hit close to home.*

### A Wicked Person's Wealth is Temporary

**11:4** – “Your riches won’t help you on Judgment Day, only righteousness counts then.”  
(The Living Bible)

**11:18** – “Evil people get rich for the moment, but the reward of the godly will last.”  
(New Living Translation)

**18:11** – “The rich man thinks of his wealth as an impregnable defense, a high wall of safety. What a dreamer!” (The Living Bible)

*Why is it so tempting for us to say wealth is temporary but live as if it is permanent? Read Ephesians 5:8-20; what does that passage teach us about wealth? Read Luke 16:19-31 to see this principle in action.*

President Calvin Coolidge was a frugal, conservative man, especially when it came to his finances. His wife, Grace, was once convinced by a traveling salesman to buy an 1800 page book (a “home medical advisor”) for approximately 15 dollars, which was a lot of money in those days. As soon as she bought it, she began to have regrets, wondering what her husband would say. She left the book on the table, waiting for her husband to find it. Amazingly, nothing was said about it at all. After several days had passed, she opened the book and found that her husband had written a note inside it: “I have looked carefully through all 1800 pages of this work and can find no cure whatsoever for a sucker.”  
(story adapted from John Gipson)

We often have buyer’s remorse after a purchase, but there is something that will never leave us with that feeling. We just have to choose what is truly valuable.

## Poverty Can Result From Injustice

*We are often tempted to think that those in poverty are in that situation because of their own laziness (and there are cases where that is undoubtedly true), but the Proverbs remind us that injustice can also cause poverty, and it must be addressed.*

**13:23** – “A poor man’s field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away.”  
(New International Version)

**16:28** – “Better is a little with righteousness than great income with injustice.”  
(New American Standard)

*How did Jesus treat those who were poor? How should we? James 5:1-6 shows us a first-century example of the kind of oppression that was taking place.*

## Generosity is Vital

**3:27-28** – “Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow’ – when you now have it with you.” (New International Version)

**11:24** – “Give freely and become wealthier; be stingy and lose everything.”  
(New Living Translation)

**28:27** – “Whoever gives to the poor will have everything he needs, but the one who ignores the poor will receive many curses.” (New Century Version)

**29:7** – “Good people care about justice for the poor, but the wicked are not concerned.”  
(New Century Version)

*In the Old and New Testaments, God makes it clear that we should be generous with our wealth and take care of the poor. What are some ways we can do that today? What are barriers that often keep us from being as generous as we could be?*

## Wisdom is Better Than Wealth

*This statement is hard for us to live by, because the opposite is what seems to be valued by our society. Read Ecclesiastes 7:11-13. How does this relate to the Proverbs below? Do we really believe what God says about wisdom? If we do, how will we live?*

**3:15-16** – “Wisdom is more precious than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with her. She offers you long life in her right hand, and riches and honor in her left.” (New Living Translation)

**15:16** – “It is better to be poor and respect the Lord than to be wealthy and have much trouble.” (New Century Version)

**16:16** – “How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver.” (New International Version)

**17:1** – “Better a dry crust eaten in peace than a great feast with conflict.”  
(New Living Translation)

**22:1** – “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold.” (New American Standard)

**28:6** – “Better to be poor and honest than rich and crooked.” (New Living Translation)