

## Proverbs Lesson 12: Economic Well-Being

How many of us consider ourselves economically wealthy? Does it depend on perspective?

- Jesus comments on the wealthy: **Luke 18:18-25** (Story of the rich, young ruler.)
- Are we, as followers of Christ, supposed to sell all we have and give it away? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the young ruler's core problem? \_\_\_\_\_

(See **Luke 16:13** & **Luke 12:34**)

The Proverbs have much to say about wealth. They examine what humanity's response is and what it **should be** to situations regarding wealth or lack thereof.

- Proverbs are not commandments or statements of absolute truths.
- Proverbs are general truths that if heeded will have a positive impact on life.
- Proverbs are guidelines for a life to be drawn closer to God.

This lesson examines four aspects of the response to wealth:

- Personal gain: the right and the wrong way
- Perils of wealth to recognize and avoid.
- Impact of wealth or poverty on interpersonal relations.
- What we should do with our wealth.

(All quotes in this handout are from the NKJV)

### Ways of Gaining Wealth

The proverbs suggest the correct path is indirect.

Prov 3:9-10 *Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

Prov 10:4 *He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.*

Prov 11:25 *The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will be watered himself.*

Prov 28:19 *He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!*

Question 1: What three actions suggested by these proverbs are likely to lead to wealth?

3:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

10:4 & 28:19 \_\_\_\_\_

11:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: After restoring the Law, King Hezekiah had the people give to the Levites according to the Law. What did they do? What was the end result? (**2 Chron 31:4-10**) \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3: Can we outgive God? What did God say He would do in **Mal 3:10**? \_\_\_\_\_

Prov 13:11 *Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.*

Prov 22:16 *He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty.*

Prov 28:8 *One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion gathers it for him who will pity the poor.*

Prov 28:22 *A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him.*

Question 4: What are some characteristics of those in the above verses who choose the wrong path to wealth? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 5: What do the verses say will be the end state of such a person? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 6: Example: King Ahab took possession of the vineyard of Naboth by dishonesty (1 Kings 21) and God sent Elijah to tell him what? (vs 21) \_\_\_\_\_

Question 7: 28:22 above talks about a man with an evil eye. What is Paul's warning about those who "hasten after riches" in 1 Tim 6:9-10? \_\_\_\_\_

### Perils of the Rich

Prov 11:4 *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*

Prov 11:28 *He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage.*

Prov 13:8 *The ransom of a man's life is his riches, but the poor does not hear rebuke.*

Prov 18:11 *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own esteem.*

Prov 23:4-5 *Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.*

Question 8: In 11:4, what might be the "day of wrath" to which Solomon refers? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 9: What does it mean by the "ransom of a man's life" in 13:8? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 10: In 18:11, is the rich man's "high walled city" a refuge or a prison? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 11: Amid the beautiful poetry of 23:4-5, what is the core guidance it provides? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 12: What did Paul instruct Timothy to tell the rich in 1 Tim 6:17-19? \_\_\_\_\_

### Impact of wealth or poverty on interpersonal relations

Prov 18:23 *The poor man uses entreaties, but the rich answers roughly.*

Prov 19:4 *Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend.*

Prov 19:6 *Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.*

Prov 19:7 *All the brothers of the poor hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him.*

Prov 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

Question 13: In 18:23, what attitudes are represented by the poor and by the rich?

poor: \_\_\_\_\_ rich: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 14: In the middle three proverbs above, what kind of "friend" is referenced? \_\_\_\_\_

As in 22:7, the world classifies people in hierarchical ranks based on wealth or status.  
Question 15: In **Luke 18:10-14**, what did Jesus say is the characteristic we should have?

Question 16: In a parable ending in **Luke 12:20**, Jesus labeled the parable example a Fool. In **vs 21** he extended the condemnation to whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Prov 13:7 *There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; and one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.*

Prov 28:6 *Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*

Question 17: These two proverbs illustrate the contrasts that can be seen between rich and poor. What contrasts are illustrated here? \_\_\_\_\_ vs \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ vs \_\_\_\_\_

17a: How can the rich have nothing and the poor have riches? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 18: How does this correlate with Jesus' sermon sayings in **Luke 6:20** and **6:24**?

### **Benevolence & Generosity**

Prov 3:27-28 *Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.*

Prov 19:17 *He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.*

Prov 21:13 *Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.*

Prov 22:9 *He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.*

Prov 28:27 *He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses.*

Question 19: Can we outgive God? What did Jesus say in **Luke 6:38**? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 20: The poor can't always pay back our generosity, but who does 19:17 say will? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 21: How do we distinguish between the genuinely needy and the scam artist?

Question 22: Who does **Gal 6:10** say should be our special benevolent focus? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 23: What attitudes does **2 Cor 9:6-7** say we should have when we give?

Does John's question in **1 John 3:17** have an answer? It says:

*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?* \_\_\_\_\_

## Summation

Prov 22:2 *The rich and the poor have this in common, the LORD is the maker of them all.*

Prov 30:8 *Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food allotted to me;*

Question 24: What else does Paul tell Timothy we all have in common (**1 Tim 6:7**) that is similar to vs 22:2? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 25: What line in the Lord's Prayer in **Matt 6:9-14** is most similar to the end of 30:8?  
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Question 26: What warning does Jesus give the man who wants his inheritance in **Luke 12:15**?  
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Question 27: In **2 Cor 8** Paul admonishes the Corinthians regarding their giving saying in vs 8: "*I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love...*" and in vs 10: "*And in this I give advice...*" and then proceeds to lay down a principle for Christians in **2 Cor 8:13-14**.

Summarize the principal: \_\_\_\_\_  
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