

***Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries:
Our Least Favorite Subject—Money! ~ Selected Proverbs***

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Text Introduction: We have been saying that the book of Proverbs is the most practical book in the Bible. Every line is flowing with God's wisdom. Indeed the book of Proverbs is categorized as a book of wisdom. We are spending some time this month in the Book of Proverbs, and we are calling our study "Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries." Today, instead of dealing with only one proverb, we are dealing with a multitude of Proverbs on one subject—money. So, to get us going, let's look at one Proverb and then I will point you to several others.

Text: Proverbs 3:9-10

⁹ Honor the LORD with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest;

¹⁰ then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Introduction: Two weeks ago we studied what I called "Our Favorite Proverb"—3:5-6. I suppose some might consider our topic this morning as "our least favorite subject." Interestingly enough, one could say that this first text this morning is actually a continuation of our text from 2 weeks ago.

Considering our title for this series, "Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries," I think that most of us can agree that money is one of our greatest worries. I looked at a couple of surveys this week and was not shocked at what I found. One survey revealed that 2/3 of people in America were significantly worried about money. I actually wonder if that might not be a shade too low in reality. I found another survey that indicated that when people were polled as to subjects of worry, money headed the list, even above one's own well being. But, God's Word reveals that we need not worry about money. God's Word again proves to us to be a ***living Word***, because of the abundance of teaching on the subject of money.

Three Perspectives on Money that Take Away the Worry!

1. We must maintain a right perspective about money.

- You cannot trust in money. (11:28;18:11)

Proverbs 11:28

Anyone trusting in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage.

Proverbs 18:11

A rich man's wealth is his fortified city; in his imagination it is like a high wall.

- You cannot trade money for the things that matter most.
 - Fear of the Lord (15:16)

Proverbs 15:16

Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure with turmoil.

- Love (15:17)

Proverbs 15:17

Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox with hatred.

- righteousness (16:8)

Proverbs 16:8

Better a little with righteousness than great income with injustice.

- wisdom (16:16)

Proverbs 16:16

Get wisdom—how much better it is than gold! And get understanding—it is preferable to silver.

- a good name (22:1)

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold.

When I think about this list, I think about a statement like this: “Money will buy a bed but not sleep; books but not brains; food but not appetite; finery but not beauty; a house but not a home; medicine but not health; luxuries but not culture; amusements but not happiness; religion but not salvation; a passport to everywhere but heaven.” (The Voice In the Wilderness, quoted in Discipleship Journal, Issue 53, 1989, p. 21.)

- You cannot take money with you. (27:23-24)

Proverbs 27:23-24

²³ Know well the condition of your flock, and pay attention to your herds,

²⁴ for wealth is not forever; not even a crown lasts for all time.

So, Proverbs 23:4-5 is our guide. “Do not weary yourself to get rich!”

Proverbs 23:4-5

⁴ Don’t wear yourself out to get rich; stop giving your attention to it.

⁵ As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears, for it makes wings for itself and flies like an eagle to the sky.

George Washington Truett was the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas for 47 years (1897-1944). The story is told of how he once visited a wealthy West Texas rancher to have dinner. After dinner the rancher took the preacher out on the balcony of his mansion. The man pointed to the South toward some oil rigs and said, “I own everything in that direction as far as you can see.” He pointed east toward some cotton fields and said, “And I own all of those fields.” He pointed toward the North to a huge herd

of cattle. You guessed it—he bragged of how he owned all the cattle. He turned toward the west and said, “I own all in that direction except the sun.”

The story goes that Dr. Truett said to the man as he pointed to the sky, “And how much do you own in that direction?”

We ought to ask ourselves that same question today, for that is the only thing that matters.

2. We must make our money by right practices.

The Church’s teaching on money has often times been unbalanced emphasizing only the giving aspect of money. But, did you know that God cares as much about the way that you obtain your money as He does the giving of money? Just as there are God-honoring ways to give away your money, there are ways that honor God or dishonor God in regards to the getting of money. The Bible is a source of wisdom for both.

3 Rules to Live By:

- The blessing of the Lord makes rich. (10:22)

Proverbs 10:22

The **LORD**’s blessing enriches, and struggle adds nothing to it.

- We ought to work for what we get. (10:4-5, 14:23, 28:19-20, 27:18)

Proverbs 10:4-5

⁴ Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring riches.

⁵ The son who gathers during summer is prudent; the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful.

Proverbs 14:23

There is profit in all hard work, but endless talk leads only to poverty.

Proverbs 28:19-20

¹⁹ The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.

²⁰ A faithful man will have many blessings, but one in a hurry to get rich will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 27:18

Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever looks after his master will be honored.

- Beware of dishonest ways of gaining wealth. (21:6)

Proverbs 21:6

Making a fortune through a lying tongue is a vanishing mist, a pursuit of death.

3. We can master our attitudes and our money by honoring the Lord with our money. (3:9-10)

Proverbs 3:9-10

⁹ Honor the LORD with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest;

¹⁰ then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

- Principles of Honoring the Lord: From the start and from all!

The surrender to giving and the priority on giving erases all other questions about giving.

- Promise of Honoring—When we honor the LORD with our wealth, we have promise after promise that He will supply all of our needs.

Remember as we have studied Proverbs this month we have kept encountering this idea of the heart. I have reminded you over and over again that the Biblical usage does not refer to our physical organ, but instead the “whole personality of the individual.” We might say that the heart refers to what makes us really “tick.” What is it that really gets you excited? What do you live for?

Missionary David Livingstone had a heart for the nations. Livingstone was a missionary first to China and then to Africa. He spent 30 years in Africa. He believed it was his mission to pave the way for other missionaries to go to Africa. He stayed through great hardship. Upon his death, some of his close associates cut out his heart and buried it in Africa before returning his body to be buried in Westminster Abbey. Fitting, I think, for someone who gave his heart for Africa to have his heart buried in Africa.

If you died today, where would be the most appropriate place for your loved ones to bury your heart?