

Proverbs on Stewardship

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: It is not uncommon for preachers to warn you to take care of your soul. It is not uncommon to hear preachers talk about how you must take care of your body – to give it rest, to keep it from sin, etc. And preaching those things is good. One area that we don't often talk about is the need to take care of your possessions 财富...how you spend your money, how you care for your car, etc. We call this stewardship.

With today being Thanksgiving Day, I thought it would be good to focus on this topic.

Our headings are:

Securing Possessions

Using Possessions

Abusing Possessions

Our goals: That you will learn to be thankful for all your earthly possessions the Lord has provided for you and that you then use them wisely, knowing you are the redeemed of Christ.

Securing Possessions

1. There are two ways of gaining possessions: You must honestly work for your possessions, or you may inherit other's possessions that they have honestly worked for.

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase.

2. But this honest work must also be diligent and back bending work.

Proverbs 10:4 He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich 游手好闲的, 招致贫穷, 勤力工作的, 得到富足

Proverbs 14:4 Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.

Proverbs 28:19 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough 追求虚华的, 必饱受穷乏之患

Those who refuse to work and rely on the state or rely on the handouts of relatives and friends are not consistent with the teaching of God's Word. A man once argued that his Christian mother-in-law was obligated to buy his diabetic medicine because she had money and he didn't. He refused to see that he was obligated to work. The able man who refuses to work deserves to starve and die.

You must not get wealth from bribes or other corrupt ways, like lotteries and raffles.

Proverbs 15:27 He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.

Proverbs 21:6 Getting treasures by a lying tongue Is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.

People who work in some jobs (like some government jobs) and do nothing should be ashamed and look for other work.

3. Keep in mind there are more important things than wealth. So be careful how much time you invest in securing wealth.

Wisdom and knowledge are more important.

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

Proverbs 8:10 Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; 11 For wisdom is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

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

Proverbs 16:16 How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

A good reputation is preferable over wealth.

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.

Getting a good wife is infinitely more important than getting wealth.

Proverbs 19:14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD.

4. Ultimately 终极而言, it is God who makes rich. Those who take credit for God's work take a dangerous risk! God is a jealous God.

Proverbs 10:22 **The blessing of the LORD makes one rich**, And He adds no sorrow with it.

If God does not bless your effort...if God does not give you knowledge...if God does not give you opportunity...if God does not preserve what you have...it will all come to nothing. You will put it into pocket with holes.

5. God's gives wealth to those who are ready for it.

Proverbs 28:25 He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered.

In his love, God does not usually give wealth to those who are unprepared for it. He knows if someone might become swell headed – boastful – and credit-taking, so he saves them from themselves by refusing to make them wealthy.

Using of Possessions

1. Everything you have belongs to the Lord. So this makes God the director of how you spend your money. You are obligated to learn from him how to use what he has given to you.

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the **LORD Are riches and honor and life.**

You are a mere steward.

Proverbs 19:10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool, Much less for a servant to rule over princes.

2. You must give with liberality 慷慨一. Some people like to give to those who can give back to them, like at Advent season. But giving to the truly poor, especially to the brotherhood of believers, is of more importance.

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

The converse is also true: **Avoid being miserly 吝啬.**

3. You must learn to tithe. If you use that tenth that belongs to the Lord, you become a thief.

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And **with the firstfruits of all your increase;** 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

But tithing is not the only expectation God has concerning you money. God requires you put as much care as you do to tithing to how you spend the other 90%. None of it is yours! Learn to seek advice in how to spend your money.

4. You must learn to save up and invest wisely. If you don't know what interest rate you are paying for your mortgage, it can be a sign of not spending wisely.

Proverbs 27:23 Be diligent to **know the state of your flocks**, And attend to your herds; 24 For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown endure to all generations.

In today's language: Know the state of your stocks!

Proverbs 10:15 **The rich man's wealth is his strong city;** The destruction of the poor is their poverty. 16 The labor of the righteous leads to life, The wages of the wicked to sin.

Use you wealth so that it can advance your family and the kingdom of Christ.

5. Leave an inheritance for your children – not for them to indulge 放任 themselves, but for them to advance the kingdom. Others generously leave some wealth to good charitable causes.

Proverbs 13:22 **A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,** But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

Abusing of Possessions

1. You must not abuse those who earn you your possessions.

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

Some people justify abusing others (employers in socialists and capitalists societies). Others take advantage of the ignorant, perhaps urging them to make poor investments or high-risk investments. Those who get possessions this way have polluted things.

Proverbs 10:2- **Treasures from wickedness profit nothing,** But righteousness delivers from death.

2. You must not lust for, love money, or put your trust in money. If you love money you can't love people and God like you should. Love for God makes you work hard and makes you take care of the world. Love for your children makes you work hard to provide for them. If money becomes your god, you are done for. Keep in mind that this command is for the poor and the rich.

Proverbs 11:28 **He who trusts in his riches will fall,** But the righteous will flourish like foliage 好像绿叶.
Proverbs 28:22- **A man with an evil eye hastens after riches,** And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

If you love or lust for money it will take over your life and you will surely fail to do your other duties. You will surely hoard.

3. Giving wealth cannot give you a better judgment before the Lord. So don't try to use it to bribe him.

That's Islamic, not Christian.

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

4. Don't be wasteful. Some are in the habit of throwing their money around, trying to impress others. But their wastefulness robs others who they could have helped...and their wastefulness often leaves them in poverty.

Proverbs 21:17 He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; **He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.**

But this applies even for little things...like wasting food...not taking care of your toys...leaving your electronics on the couch...or not changing the oil in your car...

Conclusion:

God gives possessions. He has designated the means by which you get them: honest and hard work. He wants you to use your wealth well, as all wealth belongs to him. Give with liberality. Share. Tithe. Save up. He warns you against abuse of your possessions, like hoarding or wasting them.

Brothers and sisters:

1. You may have wondered: Where is Christ is all these moral 道德 demands? Christ is the foundation of how you may spend your wealth. Only when you know the greatness of the wealth you have in Jesus Christ – how you have his blood counted as yours, and his perfect life of obedience counted as yours, and only when you know that you and everything you have now belong to him – then, and only then, you will handle wealth well. That knowledge of Christ's work for you is the only true motivation for wise use of wealth.

2. If you struggle to handle wealth, don't ask for much wealth. Pray like Solomon in Proverbs 30: ...give me neither poverty nor riches...lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the Lord."

3. Learn not to hold too tightly to wealth. Use your hand to help others.

Finally, the greatest treasure that a Christian has is the salvation of this soul and a citizenship 公民 in heaven. Before you consider the pursuit of wealth, you need salvation. So if you are not a Christian, call upon God today and ask him to save you because your punishment was put upon the Lord.