

## Proverbs on the Future

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: As we begin a new year I expect that you will take some time to reflect on your future. You will think about what 2015 might bring for you. What would your life be like at the end of 2015? Would you be married? Would your children be healthy? Would you have another child? Would you get that promotion? Could you be unemployed? Would you have to change jobs? You might even wonder whether you might still be alive at the end of the year.

It is not strange or wrong to contemplate 沉思 the future. You should think about and plan for it. So what I want to do today is help give you some guidance from God's Word regarding your future. The astrologer isn't reliable. Only God is. He controls the future.

Our headings are:

**You have a Future!**

**Wait for it!**

**Work for it!**

Our goals are: **That you will remember on this New Year's Day that your future is properly wrapped up and tied up with Jesus so you can then deal with challenges of this life in a more comfortable, less panicked way.**

### **You have a future**

**1. While you can't be sure that you will be alive at the end of the year...or be sure whether you will still have a job, or whether you will be married, or if you will have a new child, what you can know for sure is that you have an eternal and bright future.**

How can you be sure that you have an eternal and bright future?

"Wisdom" in Proverbs, is often a name that is used to describe Christ and his work. (This is why Jesus is called the revelation of God...and the Word of Wisdom of God.) Look how wisdom refers to Christ.

**Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom,** And the man who gains understanding;

You don't have a good future by simply learning "wisdom," in a general sense, like in reading many books and learning how the world works. **This Wisdom of which the wise man spoke is the source of true happiness.** The only source of true happiness is Jesus. By Christ you are saved! To help prove the point that Jesus is Wisdom, consider this passage!

**Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;** By understanding He established the heavens;

**2. You have an eternal and bright future in Jesus Christ full of gladness.** You see, **living long without living well is not a real incentive** 奖励. (People commit suicide when they are acutely 急性sick because they don't see a good future. They have life but it is not a good life for them.) So God highlighted the fact that you have eternal future AND it will be full of joy and gladness.

**Proverbs 10:28 The hope of the righteous will be gladness,** But the expectation of the wicked will perish.

**And of course this is not the type of gladness that makes you giddy** 头晕**for a few moments,** like having a tender steak or a good glass of wine. This is gladness of the soul. It will find its ultimate expression in heaven.

And **see how the wise man contrasts the gladness of the Christian with the "expectation of the wicked."** He sets gladness in contrast with hell. So this is not short termed thinking.

The important thing to note here is that you don't need to worry about trials that may come upon you in the next year. Those trials you will face in the coming year will be insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

**3. While you have a future of eternal gladness, don't boast about it,** as it is not wrapped up in who you are or what you are able to do. If you boast, boast in what Christ has given and what Christ has promised you.

**Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow,** For you do not know **what a day may bring forth.**

This is the allusion 暗示 to a woman in labor who doesn't know what she will give birth to...a boy or girl...a healthy or a sick child! **But she must continue to labor.** She does not boast about having a healthy baby girl!

**Regarding this life:** Don't boast about this life...as if you can accomplish anything by yourself. The strong dies. The weak may live to be a good old age. A healthy person might go on a plane and never get to his destination. Beautiful flowers one day become a wilted 枯萎mess the next. Whether you live or die is wrapped up in the perfect will of your Creator and Re-Creator.

**Regarding the next life:** Don't boast about heaven, as if you did anything to merit it. Boast of Christ who has promised it to you.

**4. The wicked also have a future. But because they don't know Jesus, their future is filled with gray skies that will ultimately end up in hell.**

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good, **But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.**

You can say that this is a predictable result for sin...sin that has not been pardoned by Christ.

## **So Wait**

**1. Wait with expectation.** There is always the tendency to be impatient...to want everything done yesterday. But what would encourage you to patiently wait?

**a. The cure for impatience is to realize that the joys of the reward will be so great and beautiful that it is worth the wait.** Yes, delayed gratification is ordained 注定 by God and man must accept it, but your loving Father wants you to know that it will be wonderful and worth the wait. It will be like you would be eating from the Tree of Life.

Proverbs 13:12 **Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.**

**Who likes to have to wait for blessings?** But deferring the blessings is like using the small fish you caught to catch bigger fish. You might have to wait longer, but you will get more in the long run. Don't worry if the stock market or the housing market crashes in 2015 and you lose money.

**b. The cure for impatience is to realize the great wealth you already possess in Jesus Christ.** If you don't see that you already have the comforts in life and the assurance of heaven, you will be impatient. And often you will want to substitute the simple earth joys for heavenly joys.

**2. Wait with preparation.**

Proverbs 21:31 **The horse is prepared for the day of battle,** But deliverance is of the LORD.

No horse can't expect to win the race if it did not daily exercise. Horses need to be fed a good diet. Horses need vitamins and minerals. Most horse trainers take their horses to thinner air to force them to increase the size on their lungs. And it is no different for you spiritually.

**3. Wait with contentment.** Don't be envious of sinners while you are waiting for heavenly things. Naturally no one likes to see the wicked prosper. And even though the godly might suffer, wait!

Proverbs 24:19 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the wicked; 20 For there will be no prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

Why would you want to envy and man who will die and spend eternity in hell? Let the wicked enjoy even a little, for their lot for eternity is misery. And don't worry if you lose your job, or you get sick. Don't worry if a loved one dies. You have far greater things waiting for you.

## **So Work**

**1. Work hard while you wait for heaven instead of being envious and becoming preoccupied with things in this life, work hard.** Work and store up things for heaven.

Proverbs 23:17 Do not let your **heart envy sinners,** But be **zealous for the fear of the LORD** all the day; 18 **For surely there is a hereafter,** And your hope will not be cut off.

This goes against your natural instincts. You want to see Christians prosper on this earth and don't mind so much if the wicked suffers. But you are called to be zealous for God's work, regardless of the natural outcomes in this world...for the outcome in this world is just temporary.

**2. What work can you do while you wait?**

**a. Feed daily upon the Word of God so will be healed of your diseases.** Sick people can't work well. Furthermore, if you are only thinking of this world, then physical food will control your life.

**b. You need to pray for strength to be able to do these things and store up wealth in heaven.** If you don't pray, you show that you don't need anything from God. But to have treasures in heaven, you need heaven's abilities. So pray for those abilities.

**c. You need to practice what you read, using the strength God gives you,** just as eating the right food isn't enough to get strong. You also need exercise. You need exercise in doing good.

**d. You need to worship and work with passion and zeal.** This is the greatest good thing you can do! You need to serve others by teaching them God's Word. Simply put, you need to love and live the 10 laws. If you don't put the focus here, you might make it to heaven, but you will deny yourself greater riches to enjoy there. Heaven is not socialist. Everyone will not have the same.

**This work is hard, as none of these 4 things comes naturally. So you need Wisdom – Jesus – to help you to do them!**

Proverbs 1:3 **To receive the instruction of wisdom,** Justice, judgment, and equity; 4 **To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion—**

Wisdom cleans you out and then you are prepared to walk with the Lord into the future.

Proverbs 11:3 **The integrity of the upright will guide them,** But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.

Wisdom works through his Holy Spirit to give you integrity.

**3. If you are going to do this hard work, you must get rid of fear.** Fear kills.

Proverbs 31:25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and **she laughs at the time to come.**

**This excellent woman worked hard and laughed at what was ahead.** She was laughing at the **tougher times that might have been ahead** or she was **laughing at the joys that are waiting for her in the future.** When the Scripture doesn't speak about which reason she was laughing, it likely that it intends to speak of both. She is facing the future without fear.

Faith kills fear. It was her faith in Christ! The object of her faith tears down the stronghold of fear.

**4. With the call to work for the future clear, with the assistance to work for the future clear, with the hindrance (fear) to work for the future clear, you have no reason to worry about the future.**

Your future is sown up with who you are in Jesus Christ. In him you have a good future.

Proverbs 24: 13 My son, eat honey because it is good, And the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste; **14 So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul;** If you have found it, there is a prospect, And your hope will not be cut off.

### **Conclusion:**

**You have a future, a good and rosy future.** But **you have to wait for it—**wait for the time appointed by God. And you have **to work while you wait.** And this work, for which God equips you with everything you need, is **paying work. You will receive full payment in heaven, and payment** may start in this life as well. You are not saved by your good works, but you are rewarded by it.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Rejoice! **You have a future, one that is wrapped up and tied up with Jesus.** You were in him when he died on the cross, you were in him when he was put in the grave and arose. He is present in you by his Holy Spirit today and is preparing a place in heaven for you. **So wait for it.** Don't get impatient and complain **when things don't go your way** and **when you don't get the things** of this world that you desire. **And then work.** Work with his assistance and assurance that you are saving up for your future. Worship the Lord. Work for his kingdom. Save up for the future with wealth that truly matters.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you have a torrid 炽热的时间 ahead. You might have a good life now, but you have no such hope in your future. But you can have a new future if you have a new Lord. For Jehovah to be your new Lord, he must clean your sins out. And he has provided the means – the suffering and death of Christ in the place of sinners – to clean you out. May you call on God for a new future in this New Year.