

STUDIES IN PROVERBS (PART 5)
(Proverbs 15:27; 28:22, 25)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Book of Proverbs teaches us to do what is right and corrects us when we are wrong.**
In Proverbs, God teaches us His principles that will bring us peace and contentment, rebukes us for the sinful things we have done and shows us how to correct our way of life.
- B. The Book of Proverbs consist of verses** – wise sayings about right and wrong ways of living. It enables us to look at life through God’s eyes.
- C. The Importance of the Book of Proverbs** – God desires and commands us to live in wisdom.
- “Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly” (Prov 15:21).
 - “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph 5:15).
- D. The Book of Proverbs teaches us to trust in God.**
- “That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee” (Prov 22:19).
 - “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Prov 30:5).

In this lesson, we will study the subject of GREED:

WORLD’S WAY – WISDOM’S WAY

- **World’s Way** – wrong reaction to life and others
- **Wisdom’s Way** – Biblical (correct) response to life and others

GREED

WORLD’S WAY

- “**Greed**” is defined as excessive desire to obtain and possess. The excessive or insatiable desire for wealth or gain. Greed is covetousness and cupidity.
 - According to the KJV Dictionary, greed is having a keen desire of anything; eager to obtain; as greedy and gain.
- A. Greed Makes a Person Miserable** (Prov 21:25-26)
- 1. Greed** – The desire to have more, to be more, to make more money – can make a person impatient, selfish, and conceited which ultimately leads to fear, jealousy, selfishness and even death: Suicide – “killeth himself” (v. 25)

2. Greed can lead to unhappiness in relationships. It can cause a person to prioritize material wealth over meaningful relationships with others.

B. Greed represents Laziness (Prov 21:25-26)

1. The greedy person desires more and more. However, they are unwilling to work in order to have the goods they need and want – “refuse to labor.... coveteth greedily all the day long ...” (vv. 25-26).
2. The lazy person thinks only of themselves and to do nothing. He is selfish.
3. The lazy person is likely to be struggling in their finances, in their career, in their relationships and in their health.

C. Greed is a Front – Selfishness (Prov 23:7)

- **“Front”** – A false act to impress people
 1. The selfish person is greedy and insincere in his dealings with others.
 2. The selfish person has an ulterior or false motive.

- **Greedy Motives**

A young fellow who worked in an investment house was impressed and very appreciative at the interest his business associates took in the news that his wife was going to have a baby. Every day one or more of them would drop around to his desk to inquire: “How’s the wife doing?” “What does the doc say?” “Any news, old man?” “Many more days?” He did not know that every man in the office had a bet upon when the baby would arrive. The interest in his affairs really concerned a greedy desire to win the office bet.

It is possible for Christians to have false motives. This is why the Holy Spirit says, “Let love be without dissimulation (*to hide or conceal*)” (Romans 12:9) - Source: Let Me Illustrate, Donald Barnhouse

D. The Greedy Person has Insatiable Desires – “Never Satisfied” (Prov 27:20; 30:15).

“Eyes” refers to the sinful desires for those things that we see. The eyes of the Greedy person are never satisfied. He never has enough – He always wants more.

- **How Much Land Does A Man Need?**

After slowly accumulating more and more property, a greedy Russian named Pahom hears that the Bashkirs, a minority race in Russia, are practically giving their land away. He decides to visit them and they offer him as much land as he wants, provided he can walk its perimeter in one day. Pahom agrees and goes out on his trek, but when the sun starts to set, he finds he has walked too far. Running back, Pahom collapses at the starting point just as the sun disappears behind the horizon. The Bashkirs try to congratulate him, only to find him dead. In answer to the question posed in the title, the Bashkirs bury him in a hole six feet long by two feet wide. Pahom destroys himself because he allows the sin of greed to guide his life.

- “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

E. The Results and Consequences of Greed Set Forth in Proverbs:

1. Ill-gotten Gain cannot be enjoyed (Prov 1:19; 10:2; 28:16).

- An “**Ill-Gotten Gain**” is a treasure, wealth or money obtained through dishonest, unrighteous and wicked means. It also refers to cheating, corruption, stealing, swindling, and fraud – none of these are truly profitable.
- The Greedy person, in the end, loses more than he gains – jail, prison, family, job, marriage and reputation.

2. Greed can rob a Greedy person of Life (Prov 1:19)

What does it profit a person to gain the world and lose his soul (Mark 8:36-38).

- A Greedy person that is set upon getting rich in unlawful ways, such as murder and robbery, may in the end lose his own life.

3. Greed brings family problems (Prov 15:27)

The Greedy behavior of a person affects his family. The family will suffer the consequences, such as: The imprisonment of the Greedy person, loss of a provider for the family, being despised by others, and the forfeiture of all they have gained.

4. Greed leads to Get Rich Quick Schemes (Acts 28:22)

The Greedy person has an uncontrollable appetite for money and is blind to the end of his ways which is poverty. Greed leads to poverty rather than prosperity. The Greedy person is always looking for the possibility of obtaining more. This is not the road to riches but to rags and ruin.

5. Greed is Self-Defeating (Prov 11:17)

The Greedy person is ruthless, and cruel. He terrorizes people to collect money from them. They are despised by others and make trouble for themselves. They view gains as more important than people. Those who mistreat and take advantage of their customers will not get repeat business or referrals from their victims. The Greedy person loses in the end.

6. Greed Causes Fighting (Prov 28:25)

The Greedy trust in themselves. They are arrogant which causes strife – They are contentious and divisive. They think highly of themselves which leads to their failure.

- “He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live” (Prov 15:27).

WISDOM’S WAY

○ **Be Wise – Generosity** (correct response)

Generosity is the quality of being generous, liberal in giving, openhanded and kind in giving.

- “Generosity is the quality of being kind and unselfish, especially as it pertains to sharing money and other valuables with others.” – (Got Questions)

A WISE PERSON

- **Prov 3:9** - “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase” Giving to God first helps to conquer Greed.
Giving to God is really expressing gratitude to Him for all His provision. Giving to God helps us to manage His resources and open us to God’s special blessings (Prov 14:31).
- **Prov 3:28** – “Say not unto thy neighbor, God and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.”
We are commanded to be generous to those in need. We should give quickly and cheerfully when funds are available – do not put off helping the needy (cf. 14:21, 31; 22:22-23).
- **Prov 19:17** – “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”
Give a helping hand to the poor. Help the poor to meet their needs. Giving to the poor is lending unto God and He was promised to reward that investment (giving). God accepts our giving as if it was offered directly to Him.
- **Prov 3:27** – “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”
- **Prov 11:27** – “He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.”
- **2 Cor 9:7-8** – “⁷Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor 9:7-8).

SUMMARY OF A WISE PERSON (Wisdom’s Way) from Proverbs

We are commanded to be generous and benevolent when we have the resources to do so. God has promised to bless our giving (Prov 22:9). God responds to our lack of generosity by turning the same ear to us (Prov 21:13). God is honored by our consideration and generosity for the poor. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The giver will experience greater blessings than the recipient.

Practical Application (including results and consequences)

1. Honor the Lord with your substance (Prov 3:9),
2. Give to the poor quickly and cheerfully.
3. Know God’s Word – He loves a cheerful giver.
4. We have the responsibility to give when the opportunity presents itself (Prov 3:27),
5. Generosity brings satisfaction to the giver (Prov 11:17).
6. Generosity results in thanksgiving to God (2 Cor 9:11).
7. Generosity pleases God.

8. Generosity shows that a person is thankful unto God for His provision.
9. Generosity shows that a person loves God.
10. Generosity shows that a person is not selfish.
11. Generosity does not keep records of good deeds.
12. Christians should look for opportunities to give – missionaries, ministries, seminaries, Christian colleges and schools and the poor.

KEY VERSE:

“But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb 13:16).

CONCLUSION:

A. The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)

Jesus referred to the Certain Rich Man in the parable as “Thou Fool” (v. 20). He got his money honestly – through the productiveness of his land. However, his heart was on this world and not on the world to come. This man was rich earthly, but he was “not rich toward God” (v. 21). This man was rich in this world but a pauper in the other world. This world lasts only for a while, but the other world lasts forever.

- Are you “rich toward God”?
- Are you storing up your treasures in Heaven? (Matt 6:20).
- Make a commitment to being “rich toward God” – Seek first His kingdom. Build your life on the solid rock of Christ and be like the person who he called the “wise man” (Matt 7:24).

B. The ABC’s of Salvation

- **A – Admit** that you’re a sinner and that you cannot save yourself (Rom 3:23, Eph 2:8-9).
- **B – Believe** that Jesus died on the Cross and rose again for your sins (Rom 5:8, 1 Cor. 15:3-4).
- **C – Confess**/Call on Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior (Rom 10:9-13)

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“... the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8).