

# Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

## BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 28:15-28

**15** Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

**16** A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.

**17** If one is burdened with the blood of another, he will be a fugitive until death; let no one help him.

**18** Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.

**19** Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

**20** A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

**21** To show partiality is not good, but for a piece of bread a man will do wrong.

**22** A stingy man hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty will come upon him.

**23** Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.


**24** Whoever robs his father or his mother and says, "That is no transgression," is a companion to a man who destroys.

**25** A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.

**26** Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

**27** Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.

**28** When the wicked rise, people hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase



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## DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 28:15-28

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In the latter half of Proverbs 28, King Solomon continues his discourse in contrasting the evil intentions of some people with the good or righteous intentions of others. Solomon's wisdom, granted to him by God, serves to demonstrate specific real-world examples that we can apply to modern situations as well.


In several of Solomon's analogies, he equates wicked intentions with greed and dishonest gain. It's still true today that some people become so obsessed with the acquisition of wealth that their priorities shift to where riches, comfort, material possessions, and social status become what's most important to them. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus tells us, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

During Biblical times, the wealthy included kings, their families, nobles, and administrators appointed by the king. Wealth was primarily linked to land ownership, with land often acquired by buying up property from people who defaulted on their loans during bad harvests or frequent droughts. During Roman occupation, power and wealth was mostly accrued through the collection of taxes on agricultural produce, tolls from cargo ships transporting spices and other goods, and the Temple taxes. I can imagine there was a distinct difference between those with wealth and those without, both during Solomon's rule and into Jesus' life and ministry.

Solomon used examples from his own life and experiences to stress how leaders who use their power and wealth to oppress the poor will eventually fall into poverty themselves. Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, prayed the same idea years before, but in a different way: "The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts" (1 Samuel 2:7).

In Biblical times, God honored those who helped the poor and oppressed, just as He does so now. Integrity and hard work are noble pursuits in God's eyes, just as they were then. "A faithful man will abound with blessings (verse 20)." The same is true today. Even poor men who display true faith in God will abound in blessings.

I used to think I was rich, or rather, I lived like I was rich, but my so-called riches were acquired by taking advantage of others. I accrued a great amount of debt while I was "living way above my means". Being a single working mom, trying to obtain a higher education, and the sole provider for three kids guaranteed me the maximum amount in student loans, the maximum amount offered in earned income taxes, and maximum government benefits. I, of



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course, took advantage of every penny that was offered to me. My greed kept me working three jobs while attending school full time instead of spending time with my kids. I missed out on several years of their childhood because my focus was entirely on me. However, I was able to justify my actions by convincing myself and anyone who asked that everything I was doing was all for my children, when the truth was that my actions were going to cost them the most in the long term.

Having more money brought more expenses and more anxiety, especially when the money started running out. Anxiety turned to fear and depression and then to desperation. In desperation, I turned to God, and surrendered my entire life to Him. He immediately turned everything around at that point. Everything changed so quickly that I knew it had to be His doing because no one else could've done what He did.

Ten years later and I feel wealthier than I ever have before, although my monetary income is minimal. I am rich in God's blessings. I am rich in love, in friendships, in family. I am rich in His strength, His wisdom, His mercy, His grace. And I am able to share my riches with the poor and the oppressed, with those who are truly impoverished, all over the world, and I am only able to do so because of Him. Additionally, undoubtedly because of God, all my debt accrued over the last thirty years was completely forgiven a couple months ago, towards the end of the Jewish year of Jubilee, which happens every fifty years. I am truly blessed, and to God be the glory forever and ever, amen!

## Questions:

1. How important is money to you? How much do you really need?
2. Do you agree that the love of money is "a root of all kinds of evil" as stated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 6:10? How has money had an adverse effect on decisions or choices you've made in the past?
3. Are you a good steward of the blessings God had bestowed on you? Do you believe there could be room for improvement?