

**TOPICAL STUDY OF PROVERBS
CLASS NOTES, SPRING QUARTER
MARCH-MAY 2017
AUDITORIUM CLASS
CASSEL HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST**

LESSON SEVEN. MATERIAL WEALTH: Proverbs 11:28, 13:7, 11; 15:16-17, 16:8, 18:11, 23:4-5, 28:22, 30:7-9; 3:9-10, 10:22, 13:22, 22:16, 27:23-24, 28:8.

INTRODUCTION

First, a couple of administrative items: (1) Next weekend, Karen and I will be leaving town for a week so David Edmonds will be teaching the class. He will be discussing the proverbs that deal with generosity as opposed to selfishness, which is really a subset of this morning's lesson on material wealth. (2) I also wanted to let you know that Lundy Neely will be teaching the summer quarter that starts the first Sunday in June. His class will deal with the book of Ecclesiastes. So, this quarter we're looking at the meditations of Solomon when he was younger and next quarter we're going to look at his thoughts as an older man. (3) Finally, these lessons are put on our web site after they are presented (under media—classes) for further reflection and study. Other classes will be added as well.

You've heard the saying: "You can't take it with you?" Well, I know of one man who tried. Lying on his deathbed, a rich, miserly old man tells his long-suffering wife. "I want to take all my money with me," he tells her. "So promise me you'll put it in the casket." After the man dies, his widow attends the funeral service with her best friend. Just before the undertaker closes the coffin, she places a small metal box inside. Her friend looks at her in horror. "Surely," she says, "you didn't put the money in there." "I did promise him I would," the widow answers. "So I got it all together, deposited every penny in my account, and wrote him a check. If he can cash it, he can spend it."

Proverbs doesn't teach us so much about how to invest our wealth—although it does do some of that---as it teaches the proper attitude towards wealth, what our perspective on material wealth should be.

First, let's discuss the fact that the term "wealth" and "riches" are relative. Most of those in this audience are in the middle class of society. So, we would count those with hundreds of thousands of dollars as rich or wealthy; certainly if they were millionaires or billionaires as wealthy. However, there are those in this country who don't have the abundance that most of us have, who think of us as rich. Certainly that would be the

case with those in third world countries. The reason I bring this up is because we need to listen to the admonitions made to the rich, in these proverbs; because we are rich in the eyes of many in this country and throughout the world.

READ Proverbs 11:28, Proverbs 13:7, Proverbs 16:8, Proverbs 23:4-5, Proverbs 27:23-24, 28: 22. Let's look at what these proverbs teach about pursuing riches and material wealth:

1. That true wealth does not include material possessions.

What do these proverbs imply is better than physical wealth? Righteousness (11:28, 16:8). **Luke 12:15** *“And He said to them, Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”* Paul tells us how great gain is achieved in **1 Timothy 6:6** *“But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.”* He also tells the **Ephesians in 3:8** *“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.”*

What do you think that Proverbs 13:7 teaches about wealth? This proverb could have several explanations. **READ Proverbs 11:24** for a possible explanation. Might help if we used the word “consider” instead of “pretend”. False wealth compared to true wealth.

2. Do not trust in them, or you will fall. Proverbs 11:28, **READ I Timothy 6:17.**

What makes material wealth unreliable and not worth of our trust? Transitory: Proverbs 23:4-5, 27:23-24 due to thieves, changes in valuation, excessive spending or bad investments, lawsuits, etc.

3. Do not pursue wealth as it will result in many miseries. I've been told that some of the most miserable people are those who win the lottery. **Read I Timothy 6:9-10.** Discuss Demas, according to Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, II Timothy 4:10 (loved the present world). Consider **Matthew 6:19-21**: **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

Luke 14:33: **“So therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”**

Does this mean we should do like Jesus told the young rich ruler (Matthew 19:21) and sell all that we have and give to the poor? **Consider Acts 5:1-4.** No, it does mean that we must be willing to give them up if they come between us and the Lord. We must hang on to our possessions loosely. Demonstrate (by offering someone a \$20 bill) how

Christians should hold on to their possessions, loosely. Have the person pry open your fingers and discuss how that pains you. It's the same way when God takes what we hold dear to our hearts from us, if it is not love for Himself.

READ Proverbs 10:22. *I believe that the specific pursuit of material wealth by the Christian is sinful. If God blesses a Christian with physical riches due to monetary talents hard work, or keen investment, that's a blessing from God. But to pursue wealth by a Christian as his goal and focus is committing sin. What do you think?*

Why is it so difficult to understand and accept that true wealth is the spiritual riches found in Christ...and not the physical wealth of this world? Physical wealth is seen, spiritual wealth is unseen.

Proper use of the wealth that God has blessed you with: **READ Proverbs 3:9-10, 13:22, 22:16, 28:8. Proverbs 30:7-9** Let's look at the lessons to be learned from these proverbs:

1. Give to God your first fruits. Proverbs 3:9-10, **READ Malachi 3:10**
2. Share with others. Remember the poor. Paul's advice to Timothy on what to instruct the rich: **READ: I Timothy 6:17-19.**
3. Be content with what God has blessed you. **READ Proverbs 15:16-17**, Proverbs 30:7-9, I Timothy 6:6.

A commercial airline pilot said to his copilot: "See that little lake? When I was a kid I used to sit in a rowboat down there, fishing. Every time a plane would fly overhead, I'd look up and wish I were flying it. Now I look down and wish I were in a rowboat fishing instead."