

What is your full compensation package? (10:16)

THE TEXT (NASB)

The wages of the righteous is life; the income of the wicked, punishment.

The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. Classic KJV - Proverbs 10:16

INTRODUCTION



This proverb does not deal directly with money. It uses financial terms to communicate a spiritual truth: “wages” and “income” communicate benefits received for services rendered.

Different actions produce different rewards; the choice of words here implies varying degrees of reward, some receiving much, and others little.

One disturbing aspect of the text is its using the word “punishment,” rather than “death.” Life is contrasted, not with death, nor with oblivion, but with punishment. Could punishment follow death?



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COMMENTARY



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The text presents a scenario in which both the righteous and the wicked are getting what they've earned. Neither is idle nor lazy. Their rewards are not monetary. The text is not describing the earnings on a time-sheet, but the rewards in living for good or evil.

Translation: *wages, income*



The Hebrew word for “wages,” פְּעֻלָּה (peʿûl·lāh, pronounced “pe-ool-lah”), is also rendered as “reward,” but also (perhaps strangely) as “work” or “labour.” It’s used first in Leviticus 19:13 to refer to the wages of a hired man. He should receive his wages on a daily basis, suggesting in a context of regular, systematic employment, rather than one-time, sporadic piece-work. This may imply God’s preference for deliberate, systematic acts of charity, rather than the popular “random acts of kindness.”

The word “wages” (plural) may incidentally be better translated, “wage” (singular), as in the English Standard Version (ESV).

The Hebrew word for “income,” תְּבוּאָה (tebû·āh, pronounced “te-boo-ah”), rhymes with the previous “wages” in Hebrew, indicating some of the beauty lost in translation. Tebû·āh is translated as “increase, fruit, revenue, or gain.” It’s used first in Genesis 47:24, commonly translated there as the “harvest,” from which Pharaoh should receive one-fifth, with the remaining four-fifths going for future seeding and family consumption. It’s used most frequently in a context of agricultural produce or crops.

Both words denote future return for present effort. There is a delay in the return. There is also an increase in quantity. The harvest exceeds what is planted.

Punishment as Payback

Most English translations use the word “sin” instead of “punishment.” The version in Tanakh: *A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (Jewish Publication Society, 1985) uses the word “want.” This also implies conscious suffering rather than unconscious oblivion. The implications are profound! It’s very important to consider what the Master says about the opposite of life. What does happen when life as we know it, here on earth now, comes to a dead end?



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND



Jesus describes two men with very different destinies. One, being wealthy, spent his days partying and feasting. The other, Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), lying at the rich man's door, begging for scraps. Following death, the rich man writhed in fiery agony, while Lazarus was comforted "in the bosom of Abraham," their common father. The one, suffering. The other, bliss. [A very powerful video.](#)

Lazarus was in desperate poverty on earth. In itself, poverty does not bring salvation, but it can make someone more willing to turn to God. Repeated four times, the name "Lazarus" is variation on the Hebrew name "Eleazar," meaning "Whom God helps." Lazarus could do few acts of righteousness in his sorry state, but he certainly called to God.

Salvation is rooted in God, not in our performance. The rich man acted wickedly by ignoring those in need. His wickedness was not in his possession of wealth, but in his selfish, sensual solitude. Jesus is crystal-clear on one major point: Our attitudes and actions in our present life have serious consequences for our future life.

APPLICATION



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- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Think about wealth from two viewpoints: The quality of life and the quantity of assets. Are you increasing your life, or merely increasing your assets? Sometimes you can do both, but often there is a trade-off.
- Watch the following video:

[Click here to view video](#)

- You can be sure of this: Everyone will get what they deserve. They *will* be paid back for what they have done. Operate on the basis that life looks unfair, but God will always ensure that justice is done in the end.
- If you have not yet put your full trust into Jesus Christ to be your righteousness before a holy God then do so immediately.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



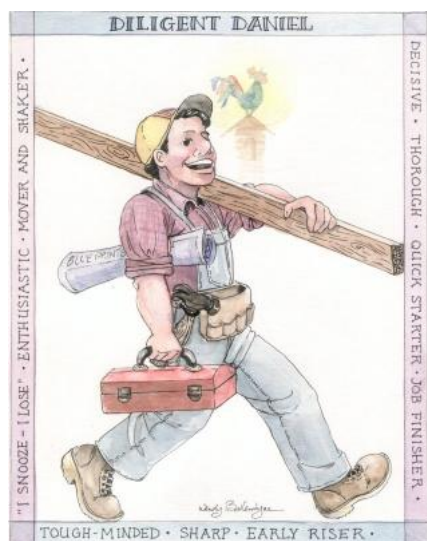
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KEY WORDS

better life (quality), compensation, income, injustice, justice, life, payment, punishment, retribution, income, reward, wicked

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Diligent Daniel?



Diligent Daniel is a friend of Steady Eddie. Whereas Steady Eddie is known for his staying power, Diligent Daniel is known for his decisiveness and thoroughness. He is an early riser, a quick starter, and a job finisher. There's no room for procrastination here.

Daniel is tough-minded and sharp. He tells himself each day, "I snooze- I lose." He pushes himself and calls himself lazy. He is tough on himself—not rough.

He's the one Benjamin Franklin was thinking about two hundred years ago when he came up with the maxim, "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, WEALTHY, and wise." Daniel's also the one the author Oswald Chambers described with the words, "The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."

Daniel is more of a thinker than Steady Eddie, but is known for his enthusiastic work capacity, not his brilliance. He's a mover and a shaker. He's not afraid to get his hands dirty and is in good physical condition. He's a builder. He starts the job right away and gets it DONE. He doesn't flip-flop in this thinking. He is not double-minded. He remains humble while exuding confidence.



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One of his favourite financial tools is the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).



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FOOTNOTES

Photos/Illustrations:

Hendrick ter Brugghen, "The Rich Man and The Poor Lazarus," Painting, 1625, Wikimedia Commons, ID11241.

"In Business," Photo, 2007, stock.xchang, ID754431.

"The Gift," Photo, 2010, stock.xchang, ID1259246.

