

Is the LORD the friend or foe of your assets? (15:25)

THE TEXT (NASB)

The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, but he will establish the boundary of the widow.

*The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.
Classic KJV - Proverbs 15:25*

INTRODUCTION



Let the proud beware! The LORD both builds and destroys. The LORD is God Almighty. None can stand in His way. He destroys the substance of those who defy Him. A Godless self-reliance ruins us.

Yet the LORD relieves the weak and helpless. Widows are one of the five select groups whom the LORD favours, but it's also interesting to note that He doesn't help every widow.



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COMMENTARY



House and land are primary assets. As in Proverbs 14:1 the Hebrew word for “house” here, בית (bā•yit, pronounced “ba-yith”) refers not only to the external domicile, but also to the extended family and general household. A house may be large or small, but if its owner refuses to acknowledge God, it is doomed. Some have large households, held loosely, in humility. Others have less, but believe it all the triumph of their own abilities. Their pride undermines their financial security.

Why does the LORD destroy the house of the proud? God is not opposed to houses, but the attitude of pride condemns the entire household like a contagious and deadly disease.

Examples Achan and Cornelius

One dramatic example of the LORD’s hatred of pride is Achan in Joshua 7:24. Achan not only disobeyed a divine command, but also hid his disobedience, until Joshua confronted him. His family, his household and all his substance were obliterated. God hates arrogant defiance. The self-centred expend all of their days, building up their estates, for God to erase them!

Another pitiful example is American railroad tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt. His household once held more wealth than the U.S. Treasury. Within one generation, it almost vanished! Though he was extremely wealthy, he’s not as well-known as magnates like oilman John D. Rockefeller, but a look at his life can begin with a visit to [this website](#).

Classic Comments

Preacher-commentator Matthew Henry puts it this way: “The proud, that magnify themselves, bid defiance to the God above them and trample on all about them, are such as God resists and will destroy, not them only, but their houses, which they are proud of and are confident of the continuance and perpetuity of. Pride is the ruin of multitudes.”

Self-Worship



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Anyone can suffer from pride, whatever their age, sex, colour, or creed. What makes pride so detestable to God? Pride and sin have the same centre: “I... me... mine...” Pride is selfism, and sin is pride in action, rebellion against God’s happy plan for us. The human creature tries to seize control and glory from the Creator God Almighty. In his very readable book *Mere Christianity*, renowned British author (the Narnia series) and scholar C.S. Lewis called pride the Great Sin: “There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people... ever imagine that they are guilty themselves... Pride leads to every other vice.” And Latin American preacher Ed Silvoso likened pride to bad breath: Everyone else smells it, but you can’t sense it in yourself.

Humility

The cure for pathetic pride is happy humility, so we see humility highly rewarded in Proverbs 22:4. The more we have, the more we need to give clear and vocal credit to God for empowering us to have and hold it. So, the exemplar of the humble is the widow, the victim of life-shaking pain and loss. She is keenly aware of her vulnerability. She suffers no illusions of grandeur. She is not full of her own importance. The boundary of the widow represents her estate. And this proverb asserts that the LORD protects the substance of the widow.

Example: Mrs. S



At the time she lost her spouse, Mrs. S— and their four children were living in a rental in British Columbia. The household was stunned and overwhelmed with the loss of its husband and father. So Mrs. S— prayed to God for a new home and a fresh start, and then started the search. Two weeks passed with no prospects. Then in her desperation, she cried aloud to God in tears, wailing inarticulately something like: “O Lord, if you don’t find me a good house soon, I’ll buy anything at all, just to get out of here!”



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The very next house she was shown was a large bungalow on a nine-acre parcel, complete with swimming pool, pond, creek, forest, meadows, a hill with a small orchard, and stables for horses. It'd been owned by the mayor. It was a dream home, a sanctuary for her children to recover from the loss of their father. It had just come on the market and was just within her price range. And Mrs. S— knew that the LORD had established her boundary.

Does the LORD Help Every Widow?

Apparently the LORD has criteria for the widows He helps directly. In 1 Timothy 5:3-16, we get more details: “Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.” In other words, God has designed the family as the primary care-giving unit.

God first expects family members to care for their own. For a widow to qualify for financial assistance from the church she should meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 60 years old;
- Have married only once;
- Have a reputation for good works;
- Raised her children;
- Showed hospitality to strangers;
- Helped weary believers;
- Assisted those in distress;
- Devoted herself to good works.

What a list! Possibly excluding many. These days, given life insurance, we don't often think of widows needing special help. However, we ought not think only of their financial necessities, but also remember their needs spiritual and emotional needs. The LORD helps the humble.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus says that pride is an evil embedded in the core of human nature. Jesus Himself was not proud! He humbled himself by stepping down, down, down in obedience to his heavenly Father. He left the position and privilege of deity to become like a mere mortal, and He then refused to be made king (John 6:15), choosing instead to be brutally executed on a cross like a common criminal (Philippians 2:6-8).

APPLICATION



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- Memorize the text in your favourite translation and think about it often.
- Have you thanked and publicly honoured God for helping you get to where you are in life regardless of how much or little you have achieved in your own estimation?
- Have you thanked and publicly honoured others (parents, teachers, coaches, trainers, co-workers) for their contribution to your success?
- Are there widows you can help and thereby increase your blessing from God?

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



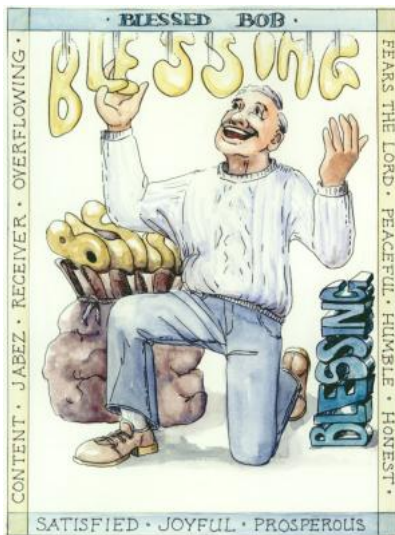
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KEY WORDS

estate, generosity, house, insecurity, LORD, pride, protection, security, stability, widow, worse life (quality), bf saving

ILLUSTRATION

[Who is Blessed Bob?](#)



Blessed Bob is very fortunate. He recognizes that good things come from God! God is shunned by many, but not by Bob. Bob loves God. He wants to receive all the good things that God has for him. He's not too proud to ask God for help. In fact, Bob prays often. Some think that he prays without ceasing. But he is not without fault. Blessed Bob makes many mistakes, and when he does, he admits his errors. He corrects them and presses on.

Bob gets so many blessings he feels overwhelmed. His cup overflows. But he doesn't hoard his blessings. Like Generous Genevieve, Blessed Bob likes to give to others. He is truly prosperous, even though there are many who are financially richer than he is.

We see examples of Blessed Bob in the Bible in the lives of Job and Joseph. Job went through some very good times (Job 29:2-25) and some very bad times (Job 2:7-8). Joseph had similar financial cycles (Genesis 39:2,21). Both men kept their focus on God, not on their financial condition (Job 1:21, Genesis 50:19-21).

More recently we have examples of those who have lived with the same life focus. R. G. LeTourneau was the inventor of the largest earth moving machines in the 1930's and 1940's. He credited God for his tremendous success. He gave away much of his wealth while he was



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still living saying that, "When I shovel money out to God's interests, God shovels money back to me, but God's shovel is bigger than mine." He was called the mover of men and mountains because of his great work and influence. On his gravestone, R. G. LeTourneau left all visitors with these words, SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU MATTHEW 6:33.

Blessed Bob is full of joy. He is satisfied with life!

