

What kind of wealth should you seek? (10:22)

THE TEXT (NASB)

It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich and He adds no sorrow to it.

The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Classic KJV - Proverbs 10:22

INTRODUCTION



There are two kinds of riches: Those with sorrow and those without sorrow.

Clearly, no one wants misery with their riches.

How can we get the right kind of wealth—wealth without sorrow?



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COMMENTARY

We learn from this text that riches do not, in themselves, dispel sorrow and buy happiness. Precisely the opposite may be true. Wealth often comes with sorrow. So who would want that? Only those who naively make money their primary pursuit or purpose. When riches bring sorrow, they are not a blessing of the LORD.

Who is the *LORD* ?

When we see the word “Lord” all in uppercase, LORD, it refers to God’s personal name. It first appears in the Bible at Exodus 3:13-15, where it translates as “I AM WHO I AM.” This is comprised of the Hebrew letters YHWH, the proper name of God. For centuries, this YHWH has been transliterated as Yahweh. This has then been rendered “Jehovah,” combining the consonants of YHWH with the vowels of Adoni or “lord” in lower case.

This is the proper name of a person in capitals; it is not the label of an office or a position.

The English convention, all-uppercase LORD (as opposed to Lord) alerts the reader that it is a different Hebrew word. We find an example in Hebrew of the two different words in the same sentence, yet translated by the same English word, except for the upper and lower cases, in Psalm 110:1.

I say it again: This is the work of an individual person, not an abstract principle, force, or concept. When it comes to money (as with everything), this is a crucial distinction. This person LORD customizes blessings, tailor-made. Five dollars with God’s blessing can benefit us more than \$5,000,000 without it.

Translation: *makes rich, sorrow*



The Hebrew verb, “he will enrich,” אֶשְׂרֶה (‘āšar, pronounced “aw-shar”), is used first in Genesis 14:23. Abram was adamant to take nothing from the king of Sodom, lest it be said that the king



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of Sodom made Abram rich. Abram clearly spoke of visible, tangible wealth for everyone to see, rather than the intangible goods of health, family, and happiness. Abram wanted it absolutely clear to all that he had no interest whatever in the king of Sodom's physical or monetary assets, like it was dirty money.

The Hebrew noun translated here as “sorrow,” עִצְבּ (‘eṣeb, pronounced “eh-tseb”), is used only three other times in the Old Testament. The Hebrew root word indicates physical suffering as well as emotional sorrow. For example, ‘eṣeb is used first in Genesis 3:16, where it refers to the pain and sorrow that will accompany childbirth, after Adam and Eve sin against God. The word is also translated as “hard work” (*God’s Word* version), “difficulty” (*International Standard Version*), “toil” (*Jewish Publication Society*), pain (*Literal Translation* version), “trouble” (*Tree of Life* version), and “grief” (*Young’s Literal Translation*). Work and responsibility were God-ordained before sin entered the world, but toil, sorrow, and pain came as a result of human rebellion.

Forbidden Treasures

The Bible uses this particular “enrich” to refer to possessions beyond basic food and clothing. Of the 17 times it is used in scripture, it always refers to substantial riches, not refer to intangible benefits. Any wealth from God is pure; there are no strings or conditions attached! Classic Bible commentaries such as those of Matthew Henry, Matthew Poole, Barnes’ Notes, the Pulpit Commentary, and others all give the same message, summarized best in the *Geneva Study Bible*: “All worldly things bring care and sorrow, whereas they who feel the blessings of God have none.”

When God makes us rich, He wants us to be joyful, not anxious. If we sense sorrow, anguish, or grief in the pursuit of wealth, we’re probably way off track. Polluted wealth is not the kind the LORD wants for us. Perhaps we’re putting the wealth first—ahead of God Himself. We may be totally unaware of the troubles it will bring. Money itself is not evil, but the love of money results in great evil (1 Timothy 6:10). When the Gehazi, the helper to the prophet Elisha, took treasures secretly, the LORD allowed Gehazi to keep them, but with a terrible new sorrow—leprosy. The whole sad story is in 2 Kings 5:1-27.

Consider: Peter and Elizabeth



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Peter and Elizabeth are married with two children. Peter has a responsible job and earns a substantial income. Elizabeth works part-time. They're both dissatisfied with their present income and would like to increase it substantially. Elizabeth is looking for full-time work; Peter, for a part-time job in addition to his full-time position.

Peter and Elizabeth often discuss the possessions of their friends and relatives. Peter would like a car one-better than his friend Jack has, while Elizabeth craves a more luxurious home. They both believe these things will make them happy. They assume that the people with more and nicer things are happier, so they habitually buy things on credit and have accumulated significant debts. They're now feeling lots of pressure from creditors, causing significant tension between them. They have visible wealth, mixed with grief and sorrow. That's not blessing wealth the LORD loves to give.

Picking Second Best



Often the LORD allows us to have the things we crave, though they're not be good for us. For example, Jesus allowed "the rich young ruler" to keep his wealth and walk away (Mark 10:17-22). The Gospel says clearly that the thought of selling all he possessed and giving it all to the poor grieved him greatly. The prospect of trading treasures on earth for treasures in heaven was not an attractive exchange in the rich young ruler's mind. What good are treasures in heaven? Who eats pie in the sky?

The rich young ruler was tied to what he had here. He did not have faith to see the unseen, and without faith, it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). He kept his visible wealth, but kept it with sorrow. The text here however speaks of something better: Riches without sorrow, the kind the LORD loves to give! Is there some criterion that God uses to determine who gets what? Or does God arbitrarily or capriciously give pure wealth to some and withhold it from others?

Humble Faith

God's criterion may revolve around one possession: Faithful humility. Many times the Bible tells us, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble," (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5, Daniel 4:17b). We are also told that the righteous live by faith (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38). I believe humble faith is the key to receiving true blessing. Further, God



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uses times of material wealth and poverty as teaching tools, like training seminars, to teach us humble obedience in faith. God will not grant pure riches to the arrogant, conceited, and wise in their own estimation. They may get rich, but only with sorrow, worry, and grief.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

How did Jesus handle sorrow? He was prophesized as the “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” Isaiah 53:3. Jesus actually invites sorrowful workers to join him: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest,” Matthew 11:28. What’s more, we’re told to “cast all our cares on Him, for He cares for us,” 1 Peter 5:7.

How can Jesus give rest to all of us who dump our sorrows and troubles on Him? Does He have unlimited resources? Can a mere mortal make such a crazy promise, and still be thought a good man? There are only three possible answers, that CS Lewis (Mere Christianity) calls, “Liar, Lunatic or Lord”:

- First, His claims were all a hoax and a scam;
- Second, He was a deluded maniac;
- Or third, He was, is and always will be God Almighty.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Stop trying to get riches without getting God.
- Try to qualify for the blessing of the LORD. Hint: God opposes the proud. (Isaiah 66:2)
- Is the LORD a party-pooper? Is God a killjoy? Many have this picture of God, but this is not the God of the Bible. Look at John 10:10 to see how Jesus described his life purpose. Read Acts 3:26 to discover God's servant's strategy for blessing us.

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



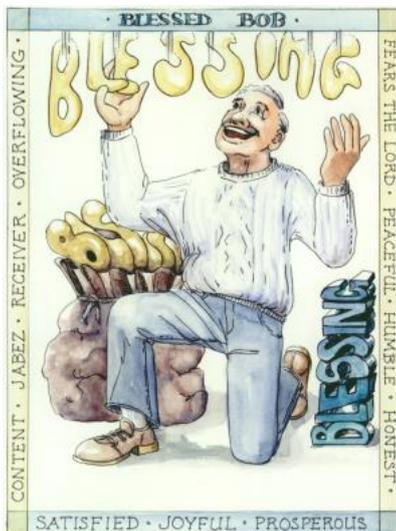
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KEY WORDS

anxiety, blessing, contamination, ethics, humility, LORD, more assets (quantity), productivity, punishment, rich

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!

