

How is profit polluted? (10:2)

Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.

THE TEXT (NASB)

Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing but righteousness delivereth from death. Classic KJV - Proverbs 10:2

INTRODUCTION



There is more than one kind of wealth.

Not all income yields the same benefit! It's not enough to look at the numbers. We need to inspect dollars; not just count them. The accumulation process can contaminate the wealth. The money-making method is very important. Scrutinize how the **gains** are made.

Illegal or immoral earnings ruin the blessing power of profit, regardless if we are caught in the act.



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COMMENTARY



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Pray for Proper Profit



If **ill-gotten gains do not profit** then we should ensure that whatever gains we achieve are legitimate. One way of doing this is to pray that God will guide us in the earning process so that it's morally and ethically correct. Another way is by simply asking God himself to provide the gains (e.g. good crops) so that we can be sure they are not ill-gotten. Is prayer part of your financial success strategy? Jesus recommends it. "Give us this day our daily bread," Matthew 6:11. Simple prayers and requests ensure that material assets are not ill-gotten but come from God.

Ethical Business is Better

The text seems to make the case for ethical investing. The business gains from narcotics or other illegal substances, pornography, immoral entertainment, theft, and deceit will yield no ultimate benefit. The same goes for "grey" activities such as downloading music without paying, not reporting "cash payments" on income tax returns, and personal use of company time or materials. Those engaged in such activity certainly disagree. Otherwise they would immediately cease and desist. As the saying goes, "Crime doesn't pay." In fact it seems to pay, albeit briefly.

Death by Degrees



Note, the text does *not* say that **righteousness** brings financial profit; it **delivers from death**. The coupling of these two vastly different concepts, wealth and life, implies that they compete for our affection. This trade-off theme of "your money or your life"



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is common. Clearly there is no profit without life! Riches do a dead man no good.

This death that is avoided by righteousness, may not mean physical death only, but may include depression, weakness, confusion, inner darkness, anxiety, and all similar perils.

Faith-Based Business is Best



How can money be purified? In the strict sense of the word, all humanly generated funds are evil since all descendants of the first Adam are evil by nature. If righteousness is determined by a simple adherence to a moral code, for example the Ten Commandments, then how can we be sure if we have kept them well enough to neutralize our inherent wickedness, lest our efforts are useless. The Bible says, “the righteous shall live by faith,” Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17. Therefore, *gains that are not faith-based are not righteous*. God requires that those who are righteous live by faith in him as opposed to living by their own moral code yet without God. We chaffe at submission to God.

Every time we venture out in our life of faith, we will find something in our circumstances that, from a common sense standpoint, will flatly contradict our faith. But common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense. In fact, they are as different as the natural life and the spiritual. To read more press [here](#).



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

If *righteousness delivers from death* then why do good people die?

Not all people die! The Bible speaks of two who did not die: Enoch and Elijah. Enoch had a uniquely intimate relationship with God for many decades. God decided to exclude Enoch from physical death (Genesis 5:23,24). Similarly, Elijah's body was taken up to heaven without dying (2 Kings 2:11).

Jesus had a different experience en-route to heaven. He died physically, was buried physically and rose from the dead physically. He, the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) was sinless! His death is the true righteousness that delivers His followers from death itself (John 11:25). For believers in Jesus, physical death of the body is compared to physical sleep for the body (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Consider *how* you are earning your paycheque. Are the goods or services you provide, morally defensible before God? Study Habakkuk 2:9-11 to see how ill-gotten security self-destructs.
- Don't jump at just any chance to get more money. Sometimes there are undesirable side effects.
- View death in a broad sense as including discouragement, despair, and misery. Remember righteousness includes joy, confidence and peace.

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



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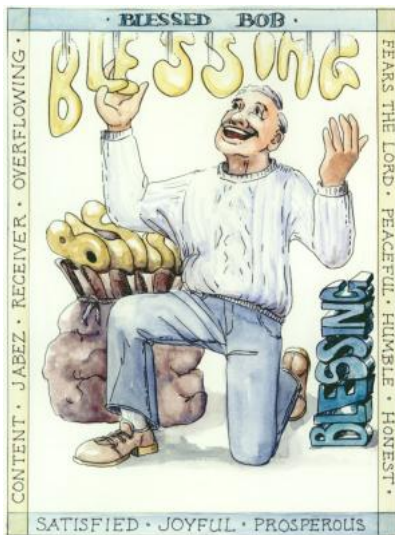
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KEY WORDS

contamination, death, deliverance, ethical investing, prayer, profit, righteous, social responsibility, wicked, wisdom, worse life (quality), bf serving others

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!

