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Honor ADONAI from Your Wealth
3: 9-10

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

There are two extremes in life. When good times roll and when hardship strikes. When life is sweet, trusting **God** with all our hearts feels unnecessary. But when life is bitter, trusting **God** with all our heart seems impossible. We need **wisdom** from those two seasons of life when we are on top of the world and when nothing seems to be going right. **God** is with us in both with **wisdom** that makes a positive difference. Earlier in **Proverbs 3:5**, **ADONAI** calls us to **trust Him wholeheartedly**. Now, in **Proverbs 3:9-12**, **He** leads us to **trust Him** when we are pushed out to these two opposite edges of our lives: **plenty** as seen here, and **pain** as seen in the next file (**to see link click Au – Do Not Despise ADONAI's Discipline**).[76]



As Ray Ortlund relates in his commentary on *Proverbs*, **Solomon** gives us **his counsel** with an **incentive**. What is **his** counsel? **"Honor ADONAI from your wealth."** The Hebrew verb translated **honor** means *to treat ADONAI as weighty*.

The root verb means *to be heavy*, even as we might say today that a person carries social *weight.* That is what **money** communicates . . . prestige, rank, importance. It is all around us every day. In my part of **God's** world, there are some extremely wealthy people. Whose prestige is their **money** enhancing? The sad truth is, too much of the time we honor *ourselves* with our **money**, and **ADONAI** gets second best (if **He's** lucky). But **Lady Wisdom** changes us (see **Am – Lady Wisdom's Rebuke of the Foolish**). **She** is saying, "Make **ADONAI** famous by means of your **wealth**. Use your **money** to increase ***His*** prestige in the world." Why is using your **money** to make **Messiah wise**? Because the more we use our **money** for self-importance, the sillier we look. The pretense of it, the love of appearances, the overreaching – we do that because money has an almost mystical power over us. But the more we heap prestige on **Yeshua** by our **money**, the more weighty, and significant, and relevant *we* become. That is the irony of **money**. There are three things you must understand about these verses.

Counsel: First, some translations say: **Honor ADONAI *with* your wealth.** But a more literal translation is: **Honor ADONAI *from* your wealth.** What difference does that make? I might say, "Hey, I'm **honoring the Lord** when I pay my cable bill on time and when I take my wife out to dinner and so forth, because all my **money** belongs to **God** and I'm doing good things with it. I'm not doing bad things, and that honors **the Lord**." That is how I might **honor ADONAI *with* my wealth**, and I could do that without ever giving a dollar away. But **Proverbs 3:9a** is actually saying: **Honor ADONAI *from* your wealth.** That is, He gets a cut ***from*** my **wealth**. I part with some of my **money** for **His** sake.

The second part of **verse 9** explains how I truly **honor ADONAI from my wealth** . . . **with the firstfruits of all your produce (3:9b ESV). The firstfruits** were the best of the harvest. **In Numbers 18:11-13, ADONAI** describes **the holy gifts** which could be eaten by **the priests and their families** at **their** homes. **Also, yours is the wave offerings that the people of Isra'el give** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Au – The Wave Offering and Priestly Portion**)**. I have given these to you, your sons and your daughters with you. They** could take these **holy gifts** home and share **them** with **their families**. **This** was **a perpetual mitzvah.** The food remained **holy** and was not to be violated by any unclean person. **Everyone in your family who is ritually clean may eat it.** Since **the best items** of produce were to be given **to the LORD, they** became the special food of **the priests and their families**. **All the best of the olive oil, wine and grain, the firstfruits of what they give to ADONAI, I have given to**

you. The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to ADONAI is to be yours.

The concept that **God** gets "the best of the first" is a constant theme in the Bible. **The olive oil** and **wine** mentioned here were not the dregs, but the finest of **the first ripe fruits**. In giving the first and best to **Ha'Shem,** believers were affirming with confidence that there would be something left over for their own needs. And if not, faithful believers still bless **the Lord**. As of today, believers don't worship **ADONAI** just to fill their stomachs. But they (then, and we now) expect that the giving of the first and best to **God** will often result in enjoying more abundance than ever for themselves and for their family. **Tithing** in the Dispensation of Torah was about 25 percent (see **Numbers Cz – A Tenth of the Tithe**), but that is not the standard for us today in the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Do – When You Give to the Needy, Do Not Do It to be Honored by Others: seven principles of scriptural giving**).

Incentive: Then He will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine (3:10 NLT). To truly honor **God**, calculate your **wealth** not from the net, but from the gross, because it says **all your produce**, that is, **all** our income. Don't give **Him** the leftovers after we have taken care of ourselves. Think of it as **ADONAI** sharing **His** resources to expand the family business – The Gospel enterprise. **He** is entrusting into our care **His** own **money**, and we are investing **His** funds for **His** greater glory in the world today. **He** has made us investment brokers. We invest 10 percent as a tithe, and **He** pays 90 percent commission! **He** is such a good **boss** to work for.

ADONAI's capacity to give far exceeds our capacity to receive. **Yeshua** said: **The way you give to others is the way God will give to you (Luke 6:38b NCB).** **He** doesn't mean, "Give **money** to **God** and **He** will make you rich." If that were the message, **the Lord** would not be honored, **He** would be used. **Messiah** isn't arousing your greed. **He** means if you invest for **His** sake **He** will give you more **money** to invest for **His** sake. If you love **Yeshua**, nothing could make you happier than to **honor ADONAI from your wealth**. Why? Because of how **He** has treated you: **Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bo – The Poverty That Made Us Rich**). Someone like that should be honored, don't you think?[77]

Nevertheless, these verses in **Proverbs** are sometimes used by people who believe

in the “prosperity gospel,” but that is to misuse them. First, there is no *promise* of abundant **wealth**, any more than there was a *promise* of **long life** and **peace** in **3:2**. To claim **a proverb** as a promise is to misunderstand the type of literature it is. A **proverb** describes only a part, not the whole, of life, and so is not always applicable in a given situation or at a given time. Therefore, **Yeshua**, despite honoring **the Father** with **His** whole life, had neither **a long life (3:2)**, nor **barns overflowing with plenty (3:10).** Second, the material prosperity is not limited with the size of the monetary gift, but with character (honoring **the Lord**). Such a character trait would involve not wanting to give **wealth** an inordinate place in one’s desires, so that truly honoring **ADONAI** would entail keeping your life free from **the love of money** because **it is the root of all kinds of evil (First Timothy 6:10).** The prosperity gospel misses the important emphasis in **Proverbs** on the theme of contentment by discovering your sweet spot in life (see **Du – The Prayer of Agur**).[78]

The Message of Proverbs: When considering business, industry, and **wealth**, the book of **Proverbs** has several clear teachings. So for a moment, set aside any preconceived ideas you may have about the problems regarding business and **wealth** in the Church today and consider what the book of **Proverbs** teaches.

1. Common sense: **Proverbs** abound with statements that we refer to as common sense. If you first do this, and then that, the result will be this. **Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest (20:4 NLT).** This is simply a true statement of common sense. If you choose to stay in your warm house and sleep when you should be working in the field, you won’t have a harvest. The book of **Proverbs** is packed with these kinds of profound statements. It is a collection of natural, observable truths about life.

2. Self-preservation: Throughout the book of **Proverbs** the reader is taught to be diligent or he might be taken advantage of, or lose what he has. Notice the underlying message of the following two verses: **Don’t agree to guarantee another person’s debt or put up security for someone else. If you can’t pay it, even your bed will be snatched from under you (22:26-27 NLT).** These verses apply to one who is called co-signing for a loan, when one person pledges to share the risk with someone else. But the verse implies, “Why would you do that? Why take that kind of risk? If the fellow you are co-signing the note for goes belly up, you might lose your own bed!” This underlying thought saturates **Proverbs**. In essence, it teaches that there are consequences to the choices we make in life. Don’t make choices that might cause you to die, to fall into trouble, or

to be led into poverty. If you want to be successful, there are some things you should do and others you shouldn't.

3. Prosperity is the reward of diligence and frugality: **A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies ends up in poverty (28:19 Hebrews).** This message is interwoven throughout the book. If you work hard and are diligent, you will be prosperous. **Proverbs** also warn against seeking **wealth** by other means. **Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows over time (13:11 NLT).** The path to prosperity is clearly taught in **Proverbs**. **Those who love pleasure become poor; those who love wine and luxury will never be rich (21:17 NLT).** The man who chooses to spend **money** on pleasure, living it up as he goes, will never accumulate much **wealth**. The path to **wealth** is hard work and a frugal lifestyle. It was true when **Proverbs** was written, and it is still true today. Material prosperity is the reward of diligence and frugality.

4. Poverty is the reward of laziness: **Solomon** describes some things **he** observed while taking **a walk**. **I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one with no common sense (24:30 NLT). Thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and its stone wall was broken down (24:31 BSB). Then, as I looked and thought about it, I learned this lesson: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a thief, and scarcity will attack you like an armed robber (24:32-34 Hebrew).** This is another recurring theme in the book of **Proverbs**. Material poverty is the result of poor choices, especially **laziness**. If you are going to extract food and blessings out of this cursed earth, you will have to work for it. It will not come easily. Just as diligence and frugality have a reward, so does **laziness**. And the reward for laziness is **poverty**.

5. Planning and saving for the future: In **Proverbs** the lowly **ant** is held up as a positive example: **Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise. Though they have no chief, officer, or ruler, they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter (6:6-8 NLT).** Notice **the ant** is not only a diligent worker, but **it** also plans ahead. **ADONAI** has placed within **the ant** the knowledge that summer doesn't last forever. So while there is plenty, **the ant** gathers and saves for **the** coming **winter**. The lesson here is evident. A **wise** man knows that if he is going to succeed materially, he will need to plan ahead and save during times of plenty.

6. Material wealth is a blessing from God: **Proverbs** also shares some of the blessings of being rich. **Wealth makes many "friends," but poverty drives them away (19:4 NLT).** This verse, along with others, says that a man who is **wealthy** will have more friends (hopefully for the right reasons). Material **wealth** also provides some earthly security. **The rich man's wealth is his fortress; the poverty of the poor is their ruin (10:15 NLT).** The rich man is able to defend himself against many things in life, another advantage to having **wealth**. Different men in the TaNaKh, whom we hold up today as righteous, like **Abraham (Genesis 13:2)**, **Isaac (Genesis 26:12)**, **Jacob (Genesis 34:23)**, **Joseph (Genesis 41:37-44)**, **David (2 Samuel 7:9)**, and **Solomon (1 Kings 10:14-25)**, were very **wealthy**. I believe this is a fulfillment of **God's** promise. One verse in **Proverbs** says it like this: **Wealth is a crown for the wise, but the effort of fools yields only foolishness (14:24 NLT).**

Though the road to wisdom is not easy, it is one with great rewards. Wisdom is better than material **wealth**. **Solomon** chose **wisdom** over **riches** (see the commentary on **Solomon As – Solomon's Wish: Solomon's prayer for wisdom**). But because of **his** choice, **h**e also came into great **wealth**. As the book of **Proverbs** teaches again and again, **wisdom**, while not fail-safe, is the most certain route to legitimate and long-lasting material **wealth**. Of course there are exceptions. There were poor widows who were faithful to **ADONAI** and **wealthy** men who were ungodly. But in general, **wealth** is a sign of **God's** blessing.[79]

There are many good books on building **wealth**. Take for example Dave Ramsey. His books have been best sellers, and many would say his message has saved their finances and marriages. But we might ask the question. Does **God** really intend for modern believers to purposefully accumulate **wealth**? Are large businesses generally a sign of **God's** blessing? Is the book of **Proverbs** really the last word in financial teaching? Dave Ramsey isn't the only one who likes to camp out in the teachings of **Proverbs**. You can learn more about running a business from **Proverbs** than from any business seminar because **it** provides a sound road map for accumulating material **wealth**. But before we conclude that **Proverbs** is the last word in Kingdom-focused living, we need to investigate further. What does the B'rit Chadashah teach? What did **Yeshua Himself** say on this topic (see **Da – Sayings about Wealth**).[80]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise and thank **You** for being such a **wise**, loving and generous **father**. Like the gracious giving of **Your Son**, I am delighted to give my financial resources to **You**. **You** are worthy of my resources, whether I am wealthy*

*or poor. The Macedonian churches set a remarkable example of giving out of their poverty, which all **Your** children should follow**.** Giving out of a heart of love for **You** is what **You** desire, not giving because someone feels pressured into it. Again, the Macedonians are a perfect example of giving eagerly though they were in poverty **(Second Corinthians 8:1-4).** More important than giving of money, is to give oneself **first**, as the Macedonians did. **Moreover, it was not just as we had hoped, but they gave of themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will (Second Corinthians 8:5).** May I follow **Messiah Yeshua's** self-sacrificing example of giving. **For you know the grace of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah – that even though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that through His poverty you might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).** Love that is only in words is not love. By their gracious giving may your children show the **proof of their love (Second Corinthians 8:24b).** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*