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Wealth and the Kingdom of God

28: 12-28

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.

We have seen that there are major differences between **Proverbs** and the teaching of **Yeshua** (**to see link click [Da](#) - Ten Sayings about Wealth**). In his book *Jesus and Proverbs, Reconciling the teachings of Jesus and Proverbs regarding money and business*, Gary Miller examines **wealth** and **the Kingdom of God** at work in our everyday lives. Most businessmen and women can easily wrap their minds around the common-sense teachings of **Proverbs**. But what about the teachings of **Yeshua** and **Paul**? **The apostle** reiterated **Yeshua's** view when **he** told the church at Corinth: **No one should seek their own good, but the good of others (First Corinthians 10:24)**. How can one operate a **profitable** business while doing this, and what does a **Kingdom** business look like? Let's look at some elementary business principles. Whether you sell sweet corn in front of your house or own a large company with many employees, there are some basic biblical principles that apply.

1. The Kingdom of God is to be first. Yeshua was clear that we must **first seek the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)**. This foundational truth is easily forgotten amid the constant stress and pressure of business life, and we need to be reminded often. Following **Messiah** is to be first, and every other passion and pursuit must be under **His** control. **Yeshua** said **those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be My disciples (Luke 14:33)**. Our **Lord** calls us to surrender everything and follow **Him**, even if it means abandoning family relationships. Since **Yeshua** calls us to place our families on the altar, we must place our businesses there as well. **Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (First Timothy 5:8)**.

The B'rit Chadashah commands us to work and provide for our families. But sometimes that can become an excuse for selfish business ambitions. **God** has given men a desire to make things work - an inner craving to produce and provide. This is good and normal, and we become concerned when this is absent in a man's life. But this inner desire, which **ADONAI** meant for good, can become a trap when outside the lordship of **Yeshua Messiah**. We need to examine our motives daily. **Yeshua** said that your **soul** is worth more than the entire world. **What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul (Matthew 16:26)?** Do you really believe that? If you own a business, would someone watching your business transactions believe it? **The kingdom of God** must be first in our lives, and we need to be called back to this truth daily.

2. ADONAI still cares about "all these things." A superficial reading of the teachings of **the Master** might cause you to conclude that **God** no longer blesses materially - that during the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**) **Ha'Shem** blessed **His** people with earthly things, but now **His** only blessings are spiritual. While it is true that **Yeshua** warned against **the love of money**, taught that it is extremely difficult for **a rich man** to enter **the Kingdom of Heaven**, and cautioned us not to worry about our physical needs, we must remember that **ADONAI** still provides for us materially. After strongly admonishing us not to worry about what we will eat, drink, or wear, **the Lord** said: **Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33).** **God** hasn't forgotten our physical needs. **He** has made us and understands that we need food and clothing to survive. This verse isn't saying that **He** will supply all of our wants. But it does promise **He** will be with us and provide for our needs.

3. We are to hold our possessions loosely. Many believers throughout history have been called to live in poverty, and many today are willing to live in difficult conditions to follow the **Master**. There are many people in foreign lands that follow **Yeshua** at great cost, even death. But our **Lord** cares about these situations and is well able to provide. **Messiah** declares: **Truly I tell you, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or [husband or wife], or parents or children or fields for Me and the Gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, [husbands, wives], mothers, children and fields - along with persecutions - for the sake of the kingdom of God. Those who follow Yeshua will receive many times as much in this age and in the age to come. They will inherit**

eternal life (Matthew 19:29b; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:29-30).

Many believers in tyrannical countries could attest to the truth of this promise. They have walked away from earthly resources and relationships, and in exchange **God** has provided new friends, homes with open doors, and meals around tables with people who care. So let's follow **Yeshua Messiah** in faith. Let's place our business decisions, our family budgets, in **His** care. **He** knows we have material needs and is well able to provide all of these physical things.

4. Multiplication is of God. Messiah didn't teach it is wrong to earn a **profit**. In fact, all through **His** teachings you find the opposite. Many of **His** teachings, **His** miracles, and even nature demonstrate that **profit**, or increase, is of **God**. How many of us would plant one seed of corn if we knew at harvest time we would only get one seed in return? Multiplication is a basic principle in nature and it tells us something about the character of **God**. In fact, **be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28)** was one of **His** first commands. It's obvious that **ADONAI** loves increase!



Consider how **YHVH** has revealed this truth about **Himself** in Scripture. In one parable, a **servant** was rebuked for not putting **his money to work** and earn interest before **his master came back from a long trip** (see **The Life of Christ Iq - The Parable of the Ten Minas**). In the same **parable**, others were **praised** for multiplying the investment that had been entrusted to them. **Messiah** multiplied the **five loaves of bread and two fishes** and at one point caused **the apostle's nets to break** from a huge catch of **fish**. **Yeshua** was not opposed to increase. But **He** wants us to understand that it is from **God**. Sometimes we overreact to others' selfish use of their **profits** and come to wrong conclusions. But **ADONAI** intends our fields, factories, and investments to multiply and produce a **profit**.

5. Much will be required. As those **profits** multiply, so does our responsibility as stewards of what **the Lord** has given us. **For whoever much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48).** We live in an amazing time. America represents only about 5 percent of the world's population, yet it controls about 45 percent of the world's wealth. Never in the history of mankind has there been such disparity in the world or such opportunity in one country. Those of us who have grown up in this environment often fail to appreciate the blessing we have been given. If you live under a stable government or have steady employment, you have a tremendous opportunity. Compared to global reality, you have been blessed abundantly!⁵²⁶

When the righteous triumph, everyone is glad. Righteousness is the ethical side of **wisdom**, and **wickedness** the ethical side of **foolishness**. **The proverb** comments on the community benefits of **wisdom** versus the disadvantage of **folly**. **The righteous** rejoice when **wisdom** prevails, and when **wisdom** prevails there is success, not just for the individual but also for the society as a whole. Much glory increases in the community when **wisdom** makes its influence felt. **But when the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding (28:12 Hebrew). They hide in fear** that bad consequences will fall on **them**, through either abuse or neglect.

Whoever conceals their wickedness will not prosper. Wickedness does not lead to success in work, relationships, and life in general. This is true whether **wickedness** is explicit or implicit. In order to reverse **their** fate, **the wicked** must confess **their wickedness** and then demonstrate **their** commitment by stopping **their wicked** actions. **But if they confess and turn from it they will receive mercy** or compassion (**28:13 Hebrew**). This mercy is not running around all day saying, "Yeah, yeah, I did it again;" it's in repenting and turning from your sin the you find mercy. This compassion may come from fellow human beings, but the unspoken agent of **mercy** is **God Himself** (see the commentary on **Ruth Af - The Concept of The Concept of Chesed**). In the final analysis, this verse (like **28:11**) is against deception and for openness and **mercy**. This is the only verse in **Proverbs** calling for a **confession**. Improvement only comes when **people** listen to criticism are open to acknowledge **their** faults and changing **their** lifestyle.⁵²⁷

Blessed are those who always fear (Hebrew: *mefached*) **ADONAI**. The Hebrew word for **fears** in this **proverb** is different from the word in **1:7**, where we read: **The fear** (Hebrew: *yir'at*) **of ADONAI is the beginning of knowledge**. The word in **28:14** is more important. It means to *tremble, to shiver, or to shake*. And the second colon shows us that **fearing ADONAI** is the opposite of **a hard heart**. **But whoever hardens their heart will fall into trouble (28:14 Hebrew)**. It is the

opposite of a flippant, carefree, unserious **heart**. But the irony here is the word **blessed** is a **joyful** word. It basically means “Congratulations!” The word **blessed** is a biblical high-five. Do you see the surprise? The surprise is that a meltdown before **God** is like a dam breaking with overflowing joy. Emotional meltdown before **God**, when we see **Him** as **He** really is and ourselves as we really are, it sweeps away our internal barriers, the defensiveness that keeps **God** at a manageable distance and makes us so sad. But then the Gospel breaks through and floods us in divine forgiveness. Getting past our image-management and trembling before **ADONAI** brings us deep joy.⁵²⁸

A roaring lion or a charging bear is like a wicked ruler over his own helpless people (28:15 Hebrew). This proverb and next one pit a **cruel** and **oppressive tyrant** against **destitute people**. In the first colon, this comparison **proverb** presents two animals, **the lion** and **the bear**, both known to be dangerous. The danger is intensified by the addition of the modifiers **roaring** and **charging**. These animals are in search of prey that they can devour. In the second colon, **the wicked ruler** is mentioned, and seems to be the third violent animal. This ruler’s prey is **his own helpless people**. Tyrants in the past, and even today, as we saw the Muslim leaders slaughtering the **helpless people** of Iran in 2026, suck the lifeblood out of their subjects, making themselves **rich** and their people **poor**. This comparison is an observation, but an observation that serves as a warning to **wicked rulers**. It is also important for us to understand that no one, in reality, is getting away with anything (see the commentary on **Revelation Fo - The Great White Throne Judgment**).

A ruler with no understanding will oppress his people, but one who hates corruption will have a long life (28:16 NLT). This comparison **proverb** is associated with the previous one according to the theme of **the evil ruler**. The two colons contrast **bad** and **good rulers**. The first colon describes a **cruel** and **oppressive ruler** as **the one** who is **without understanding**. In the second colon, we read about **one**, probably a prince, who **hates unjust profit**. By not exploiting **his people** in any economic way, this **prince** is showing **himself** to be **wise**. And as is well known in the book of **Proverbs**, **wisdom** leads to **long life** (**3:16** and **13:12**).

A murderer’s tormented conscience will drive him into sh’ol (see **Af - Sh’ol).** **Don’t protect him (28:17 NLT).** This **proverb** upholds the dignity of human life. If people take a life, their own life is forfeited (see the commentary on **Genesis Cz - Whoever Sheds Human Blood, by Humans Shall Their Blood**

be Shed). Here the first colon describes **someone** who has taken the life of another and feels **tormented** by that act. The second colon seems to suggest that **the murderer** is suicidal. **The proverb** offers no comfort to such a person, indeed, just the opposite. **Solomon** advises the reader of this **proverb** to offer **the tormented person** no help. It doesn't encourage a person to hurry **the murderer's** dash to death, but it does prohibit hindering it.

Those who walk the path of blamelessness will be saved, but the crooked will be suddenly destroyed (28:18 Hebrew). The metaphor that drives this **proverb** is that of **the path**, so prevalent in the first part of the book. There are two paths: **the straight** and **the crooked**. The first colon assumes the former. **Those who walk** in innocence **will be saved**. This raises the question "From what?" At the very least, **the blameless will be saved** from trouble and an early death. The opposite is true for **those who walk on the crooked path**, which presume **evil**. As a result of **their wickedness, they will be suddenly destroyed**.

Verses 19 and 20 contrast the gaining of **wealth** by just and unjust means. **A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies ends up in poverty (28:19 Hebrew)**. This proverb is another version of the warning against the dangers of **laziness** (see **Be - Don't be Lazy**). Here, as elsewhere (**10:5**), this truth is expressed in agricultural terms. The point is obvious. If **people** go out and do the work of planting, caring for **their** crops, and harvesting, **they** will have **plenty of food** for **themselves** and **their families**. But if **they** waste their time on nonessential matters, then **they** will have nothing at harvest time but an empty stomach. But it is important to note that **proverbs** are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal. It doesn't consider all the possibilities. A storm or a drought may undermine even the hardest worker. But if one does not work hard, then there is no chance for a good crop. See **12:11** for a nearly similar **proverb**.

A trustworthy person will be richly blessed, but a person who wants quick riches will not go unpunished (28:20 Hebrew). **Proverbs** warn against those who rush to **get rich (13:11)**. In contrast to the impulsive, this **proverb** says that those who are **trustworthy will be richly blessed**. According to the parallel, these **blessings** are probably thought to include **wealth**. A number of **proverbs** also associate material gain with **wisdom** (as in **3:15-16**). However, it is also likely that **the blessings** could have been understood even more broadly to include things like relational happiness or long life. The punishment of those who rush to

riches also is not specified. Such could include the deep disappointment of the sudden loss of **wealth**, since other proverbs understand the gain of get-**rich**-quick schemes as short-lived.

Showing partiality is never good, yet some will do wrong for a mere piece of bread (28:21 NLT). The first colon is similar, though not identical, to what is found in **24:23**, where we read: **It is wrong to show favoritism when passing judgment.** There the context is more a courtroom scene since the expression **when passing judgment** is added; however, the courtroom setting is the most natural context for this **proverb** as well. But the principle is broader and would certainly cover other areas such as **showing favoritism** in business practices. The second colon provides the motivation for those who *do* **show favoritism** for personal gain. It makes fun of those who do so for **a mere piece of bread**.

Greedy people try to get rich quick but don't realize they're headed for poverty (28:22 NLT). The expression "**Greedy**" is a translation of *evil eye*. This **proverb**, like **28:20** and **21:6**, display **Solomon's** contempt for those who try to find shortcuts to **riches**. **Those** who are **greedy** with **their** time and money would not want to invest either to gain more. However, **they** will have a surprise waiting for them: not more, but much less. **Poverty.**⁵²⁹

In the end, people appreciate frankness far more than flattery (28:23 NLT). We have already been introduced to the idea that constructive criticism is better than superficial and misleading **praise (13:1 and 17:10)**. It is also the subject of this **proverb**, with its encouragement of **frankness** over **flattery**. Real fellowship, whether in a marriage, a friendship, or in your congregation, depends on **frankness**. In fact, the tunnel of conflict is the passageway to intimacy in any relationship. Until you care enough to confront and resolve underlying barriers, you will never grow close to each other by facing and resolving our differences. However, **frankness** is not a license to say anything you want, wherever and whenever you want. It is not rude. The Bible tells us that **there is** a right **time** and a right **way** to do everything. **There is a proper time and a proper procedure for every matter (Ecclesiastes 8:6)**. Thoughtless words leave lasting wounds. **ADONAI** tells us to speak to each other in the congregations of **God** as loving family members. **Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters (First Timothy 5:1-2 GWT).**⁵³⁰

Whoever robs their father or their mother and says, "What's wrong with

that?" is no better than one who destroys (28:24 Hebrew). Proverbs insists that **children** show proper respect to **their parents (20:20, 30:11-14 and 17)**. A number of these **proverbs** assume that **the parents** are godly, and this **proverb** probably does as well. However, the principle of not stealing would apply to anyone, and **those** who stoop low enough to rob **their parents**, no matter what **their parents** are like, would earn **Solomon's** contempt. Stealing destroys the most intimate of relationships. What is especially reprehensible about **their** behavior is that **they** don't feel any remorse. Perhaps **they** feel a sense of ownership of **their parents. The one who destroys** may refer to a particularly dangerous type of criminal (also see **18:9**). Such **children** may think that **they** are simply taking what rightfully belongs to **them** because **they** are a member of the family. But in reality, **they** are no better than a criminal from outside the family. Such a **proverb** may come from the mitzvah to **honor one's parents** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bp - Honor Your Parents**). Stealing does not **honor them**.

The greedy stir up strife, but the one who trusts in ADONAI will prosper (28:25 Hebrew). The contrast here is between **those who** are **greedy** and **those who trust in ADONAI. Those who trust in ADONAI** do not have to **stir up strife** to find satisfaction with **their** lot in life. As **the greedy stir up strife, they** annoy and even anger others from who **they** are trying to get what **they** think **they** need. Therefore, there is always chaos around **them**. On the other hand, **those** who put **their faith in ADONAI** are content with life.

Those who trust in their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom will be safe (28:26 NLT). Wisdom involves **the fear of ADONAI** and an aversion to self-reliance (**3:5 and 7, 26:12, 27:1, 28:11**). To **trust** in one's own **heart** is the epitome of **foolishness** because **the heart** is limited in its **knowledge** and also, apart from relationship with **God, wicked. Solomon** would have agreed with **Jeremiah**, who in **17:9** states: **The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?** As is taught in numerous places in **Proverbs, fools** are on the road to death (**1:19 and 32, 2;18, 8:36, 9:18, etc**), which may be implied here by the explicit statement in the second colon that those who walk on the right **path, walking in wisdom**, will be **rescued. Proverbs** typically leave the general danger from which **the wise** are **rescued**, but they would at least include things like relational entanglements and/or an early death.

Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to poverty will be cursed (28:27 NLT). Proverbs consistently teaches

that **those** with means must be generous toward **the poor**. This **proverb** motivates such generosity with the promise that **the giver** will **lack nothing**. This would imply that **ADONAI** would take care of such a person and would undercut the primary fear behind not giving. *Not to give* is a form of control and a human attempt to grasp at security. To **give** requires the giver to **trust** more. **Those** who *don't give*, according to the second colon, will only increase **their** troubles. It seems obvious that **ADONAI** is the driving force behind **the curses**.

When the wicked rise up, the people go into hiding; but when the wicked perish, the righteous flourish (28:28 Hebrew). The first colon is a close variant of **28:12b**, and the thought is essentially the same. When **wicked people** are in a position of power and influence, the harm that results is such that people “head for the hills,” if they can. **People** go underground because if **their rulers** are **wicked**, then it is likely that **they** will abuse those under **their** power. However, when these abusive **rulers** are destroyed, then **the righteous can flourish**. Such a situation bodes well for the public good. This **proverb**, among many others, points out that **wisdom** not only benefits the individual but also the community.⁵³¹

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** steadfast **love**! Any possessions that I have are only the result of trusting in **You**. It is a far greater gain to follow **You** and grow to be like **You**, for **godliness brings contentment**, but **riches** often bring **temptations and traps**. Now **godliness with contentment is great gain (First Timothy 6:6)**. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil - some, longing for it, have gone astray from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (First Timothy 6:9-10a), but loving **the Messiah** brings eternal peace and joy! **These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have shalom. In the world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world (John 16:33)**! Thank **You** for **Your** great **love** and **wisdom** that puts trusting in **You** as the most important thing anyone can do, far above obtaining **wealth**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*