

## PROVERBS ON PROSPERITY

### The Book of Proverbs

#### Introduction

1 Timothy 6:9, Proverbs 15:27, Proverbs 27:20, Proverbs 23:4, Proverbs 22:2

#### I. Proverbs About How We Gain Money

A. Prosperity Comes From the Hand of God – Proverbs 10:22

B. Prosperity Comes From Honesty and Integrity – Proverbs 22:1

C. Prosperity Comes From Hard Work and Diligence – Proverbs 13:11

#### II. Proverbs About How We Govern Money – Proverbs 11:28

#### III. Proverbs About How We Give Money Away

##### A. The Purpose of Giving

1. To Honor the Lord – Proverbs 3:9

2. To Help Others – Proverbs 3:9-10, Proverbs 11:24, Proverbs 13:7, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6-9, Philippians 4:19

#### Conclusion

Proverbs 30:7-9

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

### Getting Started

1. What images come to mind when you hear the word “greed?” It might be helpful, as you are getting started, to share a few thoughts that have come directly from the sermon: Billy Graham said that greed “is probably the parent of more evil than all the other sins.” Few things are so much at the mercy of life’s fluctuations as money. In a society that is governed by investments, profit and loss, and interest and dividends... it is inevitable that some will get caught in the web of greed.

2. Fill in the blank:

Most days I don't feel like I have enough \_\_\_\_\_.

I often feel like I am not \_\_\_\_\_ enough.

Many people who have chased riches reported that the pursuit became a road full of mirages—bright, enticing gleams of metaphorical “water” which vanished as soon as they got close. One after another the alluring pools turned out to be hot, glowing sand. They reported that the conditions into which riches led them only intensified their thirst. The things we put in the blanks above are likely those same mirages.

### Going Deeper

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:9. What does this passage tell us will happen if we allow greed to control our lives? The desire for riches is deadly. Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, was struck with Naaman’s leprosy because he could not pass up a reward (2 Kings 5:26-27). Ananias dropped dead because his desire for money prompted him to lie (Acts 5:5-6). The rich young ruler could not enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:22-23). The rich man who feasted sumptuously and neglected Lazarus was tormented in Hades (Luke 16:23).

2. Read Proverbs 22:2 and Proverbs 10:22. Where do these verses say our wealth and prosperity come from? If we are going to look at indications of wealth and poverty, we need to recognize that the One who is making these statements is the Lord. He created both the rich and the poor, so we are obligated to listen carefully to what He has to say. Bottom line: God's blessing comes with wealth and without problems.
  
3. Read Proverbs 22:1. The word "integrity" means living your life in a way that follows biblical values when others aren't around. What's the difference between "having a good name" and being *incorruptible*? God is interested in the means as well as the end, the process as well as the product, and the journey as well as the destination. God cares not only about what we get but how we get it. If we secure material prosperity in a way that is not honest and lacks integrity, we can be sure that the blessing is not from God. If we ruin our name in the pursuit of riches, we have lost something very important in God's sight.
  
4. Read Proverbs 11:28. What does this verse tell us will happen if we trust in our money more than we trust in God? There is nothing wrong with obtaining riches, but there is a great deal wrong with trusting in them instead of trusting in the One who gives them—and who can take them away. We are warned against greed and against putting our trust in transitory things like wealth so that nothing comes between us and God. If we manage what God has given, we will have enough money to give away. And there are proverbs that direct our steps in that area as well.

5. The guiding principle of stewardship is that *we must give away what we have in order to keep it*. What do Proverbs 11:24 and 13:7 tell us will happen when we give as opposed to withholding? **Hoarding leads to poverty, but God increases the store of the one who gives liberally. When we have an open hand, not only can we give from our hand to others, but God can replenish our hand with more. However, when God gives and we close our hand tightly around it, we can no longer give to others and God can no longer give to us. You *may* get to keep what you have, but you stop receiving.**

### Applying the Message

1. Scripture tells us that when we give, we are not giving what is ours, but returning what is God's. How does this concept change your approach to giving? What kind of blessings have you seen come from giving? **The big takeaway from this lesson is that God has given us wisdom through the Proverbs. And this wisdom is simple, straightforward, and immediately applicable to our lives.**
  
2. What simple change can you make this week to become more closely aligned with the wisdom from this lesson? How might you go about making this change?