

## Proverbs Week #139 (13:11-12)

*"Wealth gained quickly will dwindle away, but the one who gathers it little by little will become rich. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is like a tree of life." (Proverbs 13.11–12 NET)*

*"Wealth obtained by fraud (מְהָרָה vanity- a vapor) dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases it. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled (רָצוֹן - comes) is a tree of life." (Proverbs 13.11–12 NAS95)*

*"Property gotten hastily with lawlessness is diminished, but he who gathers for himself with piety will be increased. A just person is compassionate and lends. Better is he that begins to help heartily than he that promises and leads another to hope, for a good desire is a tree of life." (Proverbs 13.11–12 NETS)*

"The proverb argues for the accumulation of wealth through virtue, not through get-rich schemes and vice, by weighing the scales at the end of the day. [Gotten] by unsound means (*mēhebel*) basically means “puff of air/vapor”; it is often used metaphorically for what lacks permanence. The metaphor of getting money from a vapor suggests what English speakers call “easy money,” including tyranny, injustice, extortion, lies, and windfalls, at the expense of others... Instead of these “windy” methods, the book prescribes the substantial methods of patience, diligence, prudence, generosity, and faith, virtues that have stood the test of time. Dwindles (*yim āt*) is a denominative of the *ma ‘at* that denotes “to be little,” such as small in size (Prov10:20; 13:11) and/or short in duration (Prov 5:14; 6:10)."<sup>1</sup>

The translators of the LXX often include expansions to the text when attempting to give their understandings of the intended meaning of the Hebrew text. As we study in the book of *Qoheleth* each year during Succoth, when we try to make sense of this world “under the sun” we find that all our answers are like a vapor or striving after the wind. If we make a connection between *Qoheleth*, our current verses from Proverbs, and the LXX translators “additions,” we can conclude that only those who are pious (in the truest sense – the just being those who live by faith) will find their wealth enduring and increasing.

*“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. “To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. “Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. “In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. “But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money... “Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master...’ (Matthew 25.14–30 NAS95)*

Yeshua’s parable seems to have one clear message. Each us are given talents (resources) from God. How will you use what God has given? In Gal 6 we learn an idea similar to “talents.” We learn of a “load” which only we can carry. As families and friends we can help each other carry the load that God has given us. We can encourage one another to love and good deeds (Hebrew 10:24). Ultimately, each one of us is commanded by God to love Him and to love our neighbor. Only we can do that. To fail to do these commandments can be compared with dropping the load God has given (refusing to carry it) or hiding what God has given in holes that we have dug.

The phrases “hope deferred” and “longing fulfilled” speak in the language of human experience. They point us to the true realities found only in God. Our faith is founded on God’s promises. God is really here and with us. We feel pain when we realize things we have hoped for fail to come true. God’s promises will always come true. As we realize this (sometimes in faith) it is a “tree of life” and we are strengthened!

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<sup>1</sup> Waltke, Bruce K. The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.