

Proverbs Week #28 (3:9,10)

Proverbs 3:9,10 "Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Like many of the lessons from Proverbs, today's verses may not seem to have any immediate application for children. For most children, the burdens of work and earning a wage are not on their minds. The making of budgets and paying bills is something that they will eventually be taught—but not today.

This proverb finds its source in the Torah. God commands His people to bring the first of their harvest to the place where He has placed His name. (Deut 26:2) While it's direct application is to agricultural produce in the land (grain in the barns and grapes for making wine), I believe these verses provide a foundation for a correct attitude toward money and wealth. Gaining and keeping wealth is not in itself a bad occupation. What we do with what God gives us, and our attitude toward Him is the key.

In Matthew chapter 25 Yeshua taught a parable about talents (a talent was a unit of measure and likely represented a large sum of money). His parable starts with a man about to go on a journey. He turns over his possessions to his servants. Some are given much and some are given little. After a long time the master returns to find what his servants have done with what was entrusted to them. To those who used the talents wisely the master declares, "well done good and faithful servant." To the one who hid his talents he declares, "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest." We are not all the same. God has made each one of us in His image but different. To some He has given more talents and having been given more, more will be expected of them. As disciples of Yeshua we have been bought with a price and our goal in life is to glorify God. (1 Cor 6:20)

Psa 112:1-3 "Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever."

The themes of fearing and honoring God, trusting in Him, and doing what he commands were enough for the writers of the Psalms to sing about! "Praise the Lord!" This is an imperative – it's a command. If you can't find anything in your life worth thanking God about then I suggest you unpack your talents from their hiding place. God has given us as individuals, families, a community, and as a nation great things! May we also give back to Him.

"How can we do that?" you might ask. I want to renew a suggestion I taught back when we were studying the beatitudes. Children and adults give your time and attention to God first – then as you are trusting in Him ask someone if there is anything you can do to help. Stop what you are doing and look around (it's ok to do that even right now). Who is sitting next to you? Have you asked them lately if there is anything you can do to help them? Do you already know things that you could be doing (maybe something that they have already told you and you weren't really listening)? Learn to be a servant of God as you serve others. Learn by practice. I've often heard it said, "Practice makes perfect." In truth practice makes permanent. Be thankful to God for what He has given and multiply His talents as you serve others in His name.