

Wisdom and Money (Lessons from Proverbs, no. 6)

1. The wise person trusts in and loves God, not money

30:8 - Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God. 23:5 - Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. See also 3:5 & 11:28.

2. The wise person knows many things are better than money

3:13 - Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, 14 for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. 15:16 - Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil. 17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred. 11:4 - Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. 16:8 - Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice. 22:1 - A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. See 28:6.

3. The wise person seeks money by honest toil, avoiding laziness and waste

13:11 - Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow. 15:27 - A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live. 10:4 - Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. 12:11 - He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment. 12:24 - Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labour. 6:10-11 - "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man."

4. The wise person pays their debts without unnecessary delays, and does not take on debts that he will not be able to pay

3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbour, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow" - when you now have it with you. 22:26 - Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.

5. The wise person can be trusted with money – the foolish person wastes it

17:16 - Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom? See also 31:10-16.

6. The wise person gives first of all to the Lord

3:9 Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

7. The wise person is generous

11:24-25 - One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. 22:22 - Do not exploit the poor because they are poor ... for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them. See 28:27, 29:7.