

International Conversation Café

Bible Topic: Solomon's Perspective on Money and Wealth

All of us have certain attitudes about wealth. Some of these attitudes come from our parents, experiences, and observations. Probably, all of us need some good advice about money and the Bible provides a wise direction for us.

Read through the following Scriptures. Look for the main thought in each verse.

"Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow,"
Proverbs 13:11.

"He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully," Proverbs 10:5.ca

"Through indolence, the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks," Ecclesiastes 10:18.

What would you say is the main idea of these verses?

Proverbs 13:11 talks about dishonest money. What would be an example of dishonest money? How might it dwindle away?

It is assumed in these verses that money is accumulated by honest labor and hard work. Have you ever seen a case when honest labor and hard work are not rewarded?

The Bible also teaches that money is not the answer to happiness.

Whoever loves money never has enough;
 whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.
This too is meaningless.
As goods increase,
 so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owners
 except to feast their eyes on them?
The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
 whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
 permits them no sleep. Ecclesiastes 5

Summarize the author's perspective about money.

Do you agree with his observations?

Solomon continues his observations about wealth.

I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:
wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,
or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when they have children
there is nothing left for them to inherit.
Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb,
and as everyone comes, so they depart.
They take nothing from their toil
that they can carry in their hands.
This too is a grievous evil: Ecclesiastes 5

*What is Solomon's observation about those who hoard wealth?
Have you seen people who have lost all their possessions due to some disaster?
Did it change their attitude towards wealth? If so, in what way?*

Here is Solomon's conclusion about wealth and possessions.

This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart. Ecclesiastes 5

*In Solomon's perspective, where does wealth come from?
What else does God give besides wealth?*

Overall, the Bible teaches that since God gives wealth, we can freely be generous.

One person gives freely yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly but comes to poverty.
A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
People curse the one who hoards grain,
but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell. Proverbs 11:24-26

*Explain what these words mean.
Tell about a generous person you have known. How has their generosity affected their life?
Is it possible to be generous without being wealthy? If so, how?*