

Stand Alone

Full Barns & Honor to the LORD

1.15.2023



THE JOURNEY
CHURCH

SCRIPTURE:

Proverbs 3:9-10

SERMON:

The last two weeks we talked about faith that moves the heart of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Today is on a subject that may feel less spiritual on the surface, but in reality, has everything to do with our previous weeks as well. We are talking today about money, wealth, and generosity.

Today I'm talking about something we rarely, if ever talk about here at TJC, and it is the subject of money. Many Christians have a strange relationship to money. We often don't know how to think biblically about it. What is your relationship to money? Everybody's got one.

Exegesis: Proverbs 3:9-10

VS 9: Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;

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The book of Proverbs is a collection of wisdom sayings. They are not just suggestions or good practice tips for life advice, though they certainly are...but God-breathed Scriptures that instruct us specifically about how the people of God should live. Can a non-Christian follow the proverbs and benefit? Absolutely. But it is better to understand these as how God's covenant people should live.

We read in vs 9 to "Honor the LORD (YHWH) with your wealth..." Your wealth is the combination of resources you have and accumulate in life (money, land, possessions, stocks, income, etc.). We are to "honor the LORD" with those things. The **first** thing to see, what we do with those things matters to God. How we use them and treat them are on God's radar. There is a way of honoring Him with it or not honoring Him with it. The **second** thing, how do we honor Him? We'll get more into this in the next verse, but the way we **acquire it, manage it, and use it** all matters to Him. He's either honored or not. Is it **acquired** in an honorable way? If you're acquiring wealth by providing pornography or drugs to people, that's not honorable. If you're acquiring wealth by cheating people,

that's not honorable. Is it **managed** honorably? Do you lose it with foolish choices? Do you go shopping for perfume, but are late on your car note? Do you **use it** honorably? Is the cause of Christ helped by how you use your wealth?

-Notice next it says, "and with the firstfruits of all your produce." So not only should our wealth (which is our whole financial picture) but the firstfruits of our produce. What is that? In an ancient agricultural society, it was the first portion of your harvest of crops or animals from your herds. The things that made you wealthy (your crops or herds) were given as firstfruits to the LORD. This is what tithing is. Tithing was always about giving a tenth of your produce, whatever that number was. If you had 10 sheep, you gave 1. If you had 100 sheep, you gave at least 10. The tithe (the tenth) belonged to the LORD.

Do you give the firstfruits of your income to the LORD? Some Christians like to argue that this is no longer binding for us in the New Covenant, but I have never met someone arguing that who was known for their generosity. Most Christian scholars and theologians agree that the principle laid out in the Old Testament about tithing is upheld or supported in the New Testament. Doing this or not doing it is connected to whether we're honoring the LORD.

So there are two things in vs 9, honoring the LORD with your **wealth** (the whole picture) and with the **firstfruits** of your produce. Wealth and income.

How would you answer the question: Are you honoring the LORD with your wealth and income? Yes or No? Don't offer disclaimers. Yes or No. This has everything to do with faith and trusting in the power of the Spirit as we've talked about in previous weeks.

VS 10: "then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."

The promise here is that if we honor the LORD with our wealth and income, He will bless us and there is an "on earth" component to that blessing, not just in Heaven. We know our reward is ultimately in Heaven, but there are earthly blessings too. Verse 10 is not a curse, it is a gift. Having wealth or plenty is not a curse, it is a gift. It is to be received as a gift, as a blessing from the LORD.

What are we to make of this promise when compared to Luke 12:13-21?

*Don't covet (that is sin). He didn't manage his money honorably. He tore down good barns just so he could build bigger ones to store away the increase. What he didn't do is honor God with it. He wasn't rich towards God. He forgot that He was an earthly steward

for God and thought he was free to do whatever He wanted. This Parable doesn't teach that being rich or that wealth is bad. It teaches that mismanagement is.

John Wesley famously said, ***"It is therefore most urgent that God's people know how to make use of their money for his glory. All the necessary instructions can be condensed into 3 simple rules: Gain all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can."***

Gain all you can (in honorable ways). Save all you can (it is a blessing to leave something for your children's children). Give all you can (generosity and being a conduit of God's blessings to others is far better than receiving). The Parable of the Rich Fool was that he wasn't rich toward God and lived as if earth was all he had.

Going back to the opening story, Chris ought to make as much money as he can so he can give away large sums for the glory of God. Can he save and create wealth? Absolutely. The question is always: Is God being honored with our management, not "Am I making too much?"

This isn't about the amount you make/have. If you're not following these principles when you have a smaller amount, what makes you think you will as you gain more? Statistics show that giving decreases as wealth increases. There is a tension in this: wealth is not bad, but management can be. The more you gain, the greater your responsibility/stewardship.

APPLICATION:

1. Take inventory on how you acquire, manage, and use money and wealth.
2. Give your firstfruits to the church and beyond it to other ministries.
 - automate your giving so it isn't a debate (online) - don't make excuses, reorganize your spending habits so you can walk obediently with God
3. Don't expect God to pour out blessings if you're not obedient in the small things.
 - the text promises abundance of blessing as a result of obedience in management
4. Recognize your financial management as a spiritual issue.
 - we're accountable for how we acquire/manage/use money, - don't look for money to be your Savior or security (only Christ can be both)

REVIEW:

- Who did you have a spiritual conversation or share the gospel with last week? How did they respond?
- Verse 9 - How do we honor the Lord with our wealth and the firstfruits of our produce? What are other ways we can honor the Lord?
- Verse 10 - Is this a promise of prosperity if we honor the Lord with our wealth?

REFLECT:

- Have you ever known someone who was very generous to the church? What was their countenance like?
- What do we learn from Luke 12:13-21 as it relates to our wealth?

RESPOND:

- Are you tithing and giving generously? Discuss ways to increase your generosity and honor the Lord with your wealth.
- Who do you know that needs to hear the gospel or more about this teaching this week?

MEDITATE:

- ❖ Matthew 6:21 - *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

MEMORIZE:

- ❖ Proverbs 3:9-10 - *Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; "then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine."*

PRAYER FOCUS:

- ❖ TJC Elder: **Chris Townson**
- ❖ NAMB Church Planter: **Gregory Barnes** - Windsor Mill, MD - *Love Light City Church*
- ❖ Unreached People Group (UPG): **Aimaq** in Pakistan
 - Population: 6,400
 - Christian: 0.0%
 - Evangelical: 0.0%
 - Primary Religion: Islam
 - Primary Language: Aimaq
 - Status: **Unreached**