

Proverbs: how to handle money wisely

discussion guide

based on **Proverbs** and Dan's talk on 8/10/23

All our Proverbs-related material is being posted at
www.stjamesbythepark.org/proverbs

Intro: What's the wisest piece of advice you've been given relating to money?

Pick 2 or 3 of the 7 points that Dan made (ideally at least one from points 1-5 and one from points 6-7), and chew them over in more detail.

1. Pray about your pounds

In what ways, if any, have you tended to pray about money and finances?

Read Prov 30.7-9

What stands out to you about this prayer?

In what ways might money impact on your spiritual life?

2. Money isn't always good for you

Read Prov 19.4; 20.23; 23.4-5; 28.25

What are some of the downsides of money mentioned here?

In what other ways might money not be good for you?

When do you need to be reminded that money isn't always good for you?

3. Some things are worth more than money

Read Prov 3.13-15; 15.16-17; 16.9; 22.1

What things are characterised as being worth more than money in these verses?

What other things do you think are worth more than money? Why?

Are there any practical steps you need to take to value these other things over money? (eg one member of our church community recently gave up a job because it involved too many Sunday shifts away from church and too much time away from children.)

4. God *doesn't always* help those who help themselves

Proverbs does encourage hard work: eg 6.10-11; 10.4. But poverty has other causes too: eg 13.23. And sometimes wicked people get rich: eg 11.18. So it's definitely not right to say categorically that God helps those who help themselves (as the popular saying goes).

Remembering, then, that proverbs aren't always promises, how should we understand a passage like 3.9-10?

Read Prov 22.2

Are you ever tempted to look down on those who are poorer? / look up at those who are richer than you?

5. Money is a poor god

In what ways does money promise security and status?

Read Prov 11.4, 28

Where have you seen money fail to keep its promises? (eg one person mentioned a relative who had become very wealthy through their work – but their wealth had been their undoing, leaving them quite poor and with a bad character.)

Read Prov 28.11

When we chase money, it can also delude us. What are some of the ways you've seen money delude people?

Read Prov 18.10

How does the LORD deliver on his promises for security and status (making him an infinitely better God than money)?

6. Your money isn't yours; it's God's

Read 1 Chronicles 29.14. What would help you think of your bank balance as having come from God's hand? (eg one person used to have their banking password as "God's!")

Read Prov 19.17; 29.7 and reflect on this quote about how godly people (according to proverbs) handle money: "The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community. The wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves." (Bruce Waltke)

Read Prov 11.24-25 How have you seen this work out in practice? (eg someone who sponsors a child overseas and gets great reward from receiving their letters)

Read Prov 3.9-10 How do you try to put this into practise?

When did you last review your giving patterns?

What questions do you have about giving to Christian ministry?

7. Embrace the one who embraced poverty for your sake

Read 2 Corinthians 8.9

How might thinking of Jesus' example help us become wiser with our money?

Read Matthew 6.19-34 *or* James 5.1-6 *or* 1 Timothy 6.6-10, 17-19 and reflect on it briefly in the light of what you've read in Proverbs.

Spend some time **praying** that as a whole church community we'd grow in money wisdom this term.