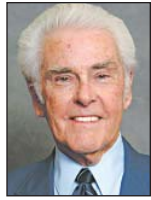


View money properly

In our current economy few people are guaranteed “a sure thing.” The economy can falter and a secure job this year may not be so secure next year.



John Howell

All these reasons can motivate us to earn and build as large a personal nest egg as possible to protect against potential failures. The Bible teaches us to have the right perspective on money and its use in our daily life.

Two common themes related to our lesson are: (1) The doctrine of the two ways and (2) the fear of the Lord. These themes serve as “dialectical foil for many of the observations regarding good and evil.” The related concept of retribution appears even more often and seems an indestructible element of proverbial wisdom.

“The doctrine of the two ways is a part of the doctrine of retribution, presenting a form in which to express the universally applicable doctrine of retribution” (Donald K. Berry, Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament, p. 122.). “The theology of Proverbs affirms both poles of retribution, supporting the communication that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer” (Berry, p. 123).

“**The fear of the Lord.**” We can see how important this phrase is for the compiler of the Book of Proverbs when he places it in the introduction to the book: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Proverbs 1:7).

Since most of the proverbs draw upon a mixture of ancient near Eastern sources, “Israel’s sages needed a method to demonstrate

knowledge as the unique property of the Hebrews. Defining knowledge as ‘fear of Yahweh’ gave the unique theological method.” (Berry, p. 124).

The phrase “the fear of the Lord” occurs more often in Proverbs than elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. A New Testament concordance indicates that the similar phrase is uncommon in the New Testament as well.

Riches are fleeting (Proverbs 23: 4-5). “Do not wear yourself out to get rich.” There are several reasons to wear yourself out, but money does seem the most productive. At the time of this writing, the World Olympics are going on in Rio de Janeiro and hundreds of youth and young adults are wearing themselves out for fame and recognition of their countries, but money seems not to be the main motivation.

Across the nation, hundreds of first responders are working day and night to protect their neighbors. Money itself cannot bring to the surface such devotion. Money is essential to their family’s welfare but it does not accomplish devotion their task. Wisdom from the Lord can help make proper decisions.

Money flees away when we spend too much time on it. The most probable cause for money disappearing is that it goes up in smoke from fire. In reviewing copies of the Word & Way, I am struck by the number of churches that burn down each year with significant monetary loss by people who invested funds for building them. Some of this loss could probably have been minimized by better maintenance. Wisdom from God could have helped protect the members.

Bible Studies for Life

July 17, 2016

Scripture: Proverbs 23: 4-5;
30:5-9

Look to God’s Word (Proverbs 30:5-6). It is important to place our faith in God even when we cannot protect our assets from vandalism, storms, fire, robbery and other destructive forces. In the midst of situations we cannot control, our great responsibility is to watch out for each other wherever we can.

As the result of tree damage that blocked a neighbor’s driveway while they were away on a trip, my son and another neighbor cut up the tree and then cleared up the driveway so they could get into their house.

Be content with what God provides (Proverbs 30:7-9). The writer of the Book of Hebrews encourages, “And so Jesus suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood....through Jesus, therefore let us offer a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is blessed” (Heb. 13:13, 15-16).

The deception in wealth is that I do not need God; the deception in poverty is that God can’t help or doesn’t care. Each of these assumptions is inaccurate as can be seen from the extensive work done in places designed to feed adults and children by volunteer workers. God’s guidance has led hundreds of devoted people to give millions of dollars in ministry to the wealthy needy and to persons in poverty.

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