

# Pondering Proverbs #3

Proverbs 22-23

## **MEMORY VERSE**

PROVERBS 22:1

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Six sheets of paper, tape and some plastic gemstones (available in resource room).

Two index cards with two different scenarios written on them before class for the children to act out (see “Acting School” activity).

Several slips of paper, markers, plastic gemstones (use the same ones as in the Attention Getter), a paper bag, construction paper and stickers.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Wisdom Auction**

For this activity you will need six sheets of paper, tape and some plastic gemstones. Give each child a few gemstones to bid with. On five sheets of paper write five things that children might like to buy, such as in-line skates, a trip to an amusement park, season tickets to their favorite sports team, etc. Then on the sixth sheet of paper write down “wisdom.” Tape all six sheets to the wall.

Hold an auction and allow children to bid on the items. Allow them to join together if they would like. Save wisdom until the very end. When they bid on wisdom, don’t allow any of them to buy it. Explain that no amount of money or precious gems is enough to buy wisdom; it is far more valuable than anything we can buy with money. Use this to introduce the theme for today.

Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.

## LESSON TIME!

With all of the material things in the world, it is hard to keep our eyes focused on God. We are tempted and can be drawn away from God. When Jesus was here He spoke a lot about having wisdom with money and riches. He knew that the love of money was the cause of much evil in the world (Matthew 7:24) and that is why He spoke about it so often when He was teaching. In 1 Timothy 6:10, Paul cites the love money as the reason some have strayed from the faith.

Having a lot of money is not a sin; it is when we hoard it (keeping it all to ourselves) that it becomes a sin. God gives some people a lot of money and others, little money. Some in this world are rich and some are poor. Jesus said that there would always be poor people in the world. If we are blessed with money, we are to use what the Lord has blessed us with to help those who are in need.

Jesus taught in Luke 12:48, "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.** In our lesson today we will see what the Lord has to say about the difference between His riches and what the world calls riches. Let us look at what Proverbs says about it.

### PROVERBS 22:1-2, 4

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,  
loving favor rather than silver and gold.

The rich and the poor have this in common, the  
LORD is the maker of them all.

**By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life.**

This chapter starts out by telling us that “a good name” is to be chosen rather than great riches. Think about a person you know and what is the first thing that comes to your mind when you do? Are they kind, loving and gentle or are they rude, mean and selfish? Then think about yourself and what people think about you when they hear your name. If Jesus lives in our heart, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. If we walk in the Spirit, our lives will have good fruit coming from it. If we do not walk in the Spirit, bad fruit will show. This is what the Bible is teaching here. We need to choose God over everything else in this world. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

The Bible then goes on to talk about the difference between a rich person and a poor person. According to God there is no difference; He made them both. You may have more clothes, more toys, or more food to eat than another child, but that does not make you better. Maybe you do not have a lot of things, but that does not make you any less important than a person who has a lot of things. God made both the rich and the poor and He does not love one more than the other.

Deuteronomy 10:17 says, “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality.” That is to say, God looks at you and I the same whether we have a lot or little. If we have money but not Jesus in our heart, we are poor. And if we are poor and have Jesus in our heart we are rich! **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

Having money does not make you more or less of a Christian than someone who does not have a lot of money. Just because a person may have more material things or money in the bank than another person does not mean that God favors them more. Jesus said that

much will be required from those who are given much. If we are truly seeking God and loving Him, we are given riches, honor, and life. These riches that we have in Jesus Christ are not always the same kind of riches that the world seeks.

When verse 4 says, "by humility and the fear of Lord are riches and honor and life" the Bible is not speaking necessarily about money as riches; it is speaking about the riches of God. Being rich in God is having His peace, joy, love, (all the fruit of the Spirit) and everlasting life. No amount of money can get a person into heaven, only a relationship with Jesus. We are rich when we have a relationship with the Father! **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

#### PROVERBS 22:9, 16

**He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.**

**He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty.**

So what does the Lord expect of us when He has given us much in the way of money and material things? What did Jesus mean by "to whom much is given, much will be required"? Well, in the two verses that we just read, the Bible tells us a little bit about what we are to do when we have more than someone else. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

When we have more than others, whether it's food, money or clothing, and we see someone who is in need of those things what does the Bible say we are to do? Verse 9 says we will be blessed when we give to the needy. Now we are not to give just to be blessed or to give so others will think we are really "cool" or "great" people. We are to give because we are grateful for what the Lord has blessed us with.

Jesus taught in Matthew 6:3, 4, "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." Basically Jesus is telling us "Hey, when you do something kind and generous, don't go around telling everyone what you have done." If you do, that will be your reward. But if you keep quiet and do not make a big deal about giving, then God will reward you.

The Bible also tells us what will happen if we make it our main goal in life to get a lot of money. In verse 16, we see the person who takes from the poor to get rich and gives to the rich will become poor. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

God has given everything to us, and He can take it from us if He wills. There is a danger in making money the most important thing in our life. We can even be deceived into thinking that we earned it all by our own hands. We may begin to believe that we do not need God anymore. How sad to think this. We are all dependant on God and His provisions.

Just like King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel who thought that he was responsible for all that he had. God humbled this king and took everything away from him. God even made him like a beast and he lived in the wild like an animal until he came to believe that God was the reason for everything he had been given. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

Believing that we are solely responsible for our prosperity could lead us to poverty. Money is not evil; it is the loving of it that is a sin. The other thing to be careful of is spending so much time seeking money or things that we neglect more important things like or families or going to church to worship the Lord. When that happens, money has replaced God in our hearts and has become an

idol to us. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.**

## **Acting School**

Choose four volunteers to go to acting school. Their task will be to take a situation that you will give them and then act it out. There will be two situations for two pairs of children. The first situation is how not to treat those who have less than we do. The second situation is how we should treat those who have less than us. This activity will teach the children how Christians should treat others who may have less.

Before class write down two scenarios for the children to act out on index cards. The first should be any scenario that has a person treating a poor person in the wrong way. The next scenario should be a person treating a poor person the right way.

After the scenarios gather all of the children together and ask which scenario is the one that pleases the Lord? Why?

### **PROVERBS 22:22, 23**

**Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;**

**For the LORD will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.**

During the time that the Bible was written cities were usually surrounded by walls and had a gate leading into the city. At the entrance of the city you would have men of prominence (leaders of the city) sitting and discussing important affairs of the city and then you would also have the beggars. There were also gates leading to the homes of the rich people of the city. The people who were lame and poor would sit at the gates oftentimes begging for food and money. These poor people would often be robbed of the

little they had or be treated cruelly because of their physical condition. God is teaching us in these proverbs that we need to help those who are poor and oppressed.

Jesus taught in the account of the rich man and Lazarus what happens when we trust in our riches instead of God and we ignore or treat those who are sick and poor in a bad way (Luke 16:19-31). In this story Jesus was not telling us that if we give to the poor or sick that we will go to heaven. He was showing us that when we become Christians our hearts are made new and if we are truly born again we will have compassion for all people just like He did.

How are we treating those who are less fortunate than ourselves? This is a very important question to ask ourselves. God wants us to treat others who are hurting with love, compassion and kindness, just like Jesus. Then we will be truly blessed when we obey God in this way. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this world.** Again we are learning that when we seek God first we will be rich in His wisdom and desire to help those who are in need.

### PROVERBS 23:4, 5

**Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease!**

**Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven.**

Once again we are told not to make getting rich our priority in life. If Jesus has first place in our hearts then nothing else is going to matter. We certainly need money to be able to live in this world, and it is important; but we have to be careful not to allow it to become the most important thing in our lives. That place is only reserved for the Lord.

In Isaiah 55:8 the Lord says to us, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." God tells us that we do not think like He does, about anything. He speaks so much to us about money and wisdom with it because He knows how easily we can be tempted to allow it to become more important in our lives than it ought to be. **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than this worldly gain.**

If we didn't need His constant help in this area He would not mention it so frequently to us. When we start thinking that money is the key to all happiness and success we are not thinking with the mind of Christ. In verse 4 it tells us to "cease" living by our own understanding. That word cease means to STOP! Just like in Proverbs 3:5, 6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

It is interesting that these verses talk about how we shouldn't overwork to become rich. Sometimes people work a lot of hours and even neglect their families and neglect God just to make more money. If we do that we are showing that we are putting our trust in those riches and making them more important than God. The Bible asks, "Why would we put our trust in something that can just fly away?" Riches can be here one day and gone the next. Just when you think you have a nice amount in the bank, then the car breaks down or the refrigerator gives out. We need to keep our focus on the Lord, not on how much money we have. God will never leave us nor forsake us, let's put our trust in Him for everything.

How do you spend your money? Maybe you earn allowance at home for doing chores. Have you asked God to give you wisdom with the money you get? Maybe you get money for your birthday or Christmas? Have you ever prayed for the Lord to show you how He wants you to use that money? **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than worldly gain.**

Things in this world--things that money can buy--easily deceive us. Things that we treasure more than God will never bring true happiness. Whatever it is that we treasure, that is truly where our heart is (Matthew 6:21). If we love money more than we love God, that is our priority and money has become our god. When we make Jesus number one in our life then we will find that **Wisdom comes in seeking the riches of God rather than worldly gain.**

## Choosing a Good Name

Our memory verse today says, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches.” We do not get to choose our names do we? But we can choose whether or not we will have a “good name.” This is referring to our reputation. To have someone hear our names and think about someone who is kind, obedient or helpful is better than not being those things and having all of the riches in the world.

Before class, write down as many “good” characteristics as you can think of, like: kind, gentle, faithful, etc. Write them on small slips of paper and place in a bag. On a separate piece of construction paper (one sheet for each child) allow the children to draw their names. Using the plastic gems from the Attention Getter give the children a few gemstones each. Have them give you their gemstones in exchange for “drawing” a characteristic from your bag. Use this activity to illustrate how much more important a “good name” is rather than many riches.

On their piece of construction paper, have the children write down their characteristics under their name. They can then finish decorating their picture. As an option they can use other craft items or stickers for decoration.

## PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for all that the Lord has given them. Also lead the children in prayer to ask direction in how to use what the Lord has blessed them with. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.