

The Way of Wisdom 3
Neither Poverty nor Riches: The Wisdom of Contentment
Prov 30:7-9

*“Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die:
⁸ Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. ⁹ Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.*

There is danger in having too much

Generally speaking, the Bible sees wealth as a mark of God’s blessing, although there are exceptions. (Pr 15:16-17)

Having money can lessen your dependence upon God. (Dt 8:12-18)

“...remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth...”

Thanksgiving is an opportunity to remind ourselves of that as we thank him for all that we have.

There is danger in having too little

Two causes of poverty

Your own foolishness (Pr 24:30-34)

External circumstances, including injustice (Deut 10:17-19)

Two responses to poverty

A social support system (Deut 14:28-29)

Individual compassion (Deut 24:19)

One of the side-effects of poverty is the temptation to take what doesn't belong to you. (Prov 6:30-31)

"...or I may ... steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."

As Christians we carry Christ's name, and along with that we carry his reputation with others. Either we live up to Christ's name, or we damage his reputation.

But contentment leads to thanksgiving

"...give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread."

Jesus taught us to pray the same way. (Matt 6:11)

In the midst of economic turmoil I can respond in fear and panic, or I can learn from scripture that all we have comes from God, to trust him to care for us, to be content with what we have, and to give thanks.