



[Ecclesiastes 7:11-12](#)

(11) Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. (12) Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.

New International Version

Proverbs 8:1-11, 32-36 provides an understandable overview of the importance of wisdom, spelling out why it is superior to wealth:

Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors: to you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things; for my mouth will speak truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her. . . .

Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death.

[Jesus](#) teaches in [Matthew 13:22](#), “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” Wealth has a way of deceiving a person. Anyone is susceptible. When a person is poor, he can be deceived into imagining that, if he were rich, he would be happy. When he is rich, he deludes himself that, if he were only richer, he would be content.

The problem is not the wealth. The problem is in the heart because of what we have been taught by our culture about wealth's protective capacity. That belief is often a delusion, since the common

understanding regarding wealth is not from [God](#). This delusion really has no end because human nature, without God's help, is insatiable. In contrast, godly wisdom is perfectly balanced and feeds the heart with the right thoughts.

There is no doubt that people of sufficient wealth use it to protect themselves from much of the unpleasantness of life in [the world](#). They tend to eat more nutritious food, which often costs more. They may be careful where they shop; they may make their homes into virtual fortresses; they may travel about only at certain times; they may not make an ostentatious display of their wealth, but they may surround themselves with guards for protection. Wealth is indeed a symbol of strength.

The last statement in [Ecclesiastes 7:12](#) says that “wisdom gives life to those who have it.” What a gift! At this point, its superiority over wealth becomes very apparent. Wealth can shelter a person from certain classes of physical evils, but it can do nothing against the far more formidable and dangerous spiritual and moral evils that endanger the continuation of life.

Wealth may even promote involvement in the temptations of moral evil. It cannot protect one from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, which may open the door to destroying the person's life. Wealth cannot purchase entrance into the [Kingdom of God](#). God's wisdom arms His people against those foes of eternal life. God-given wisdom can motivate an individual to give himself to God in humble submission. Conversely, wealth may prove an obstacle because it opens a door to spending it for one's own pleasures.

Wisdom is a greater strength because this kind of wisdom is a gift from the Creator, who expects it be used spiritually to enhance the relationship with Him through prayer, study, obedience, and service. If one cooperates by living by [faith](#), God adds what we as individuals lack by giving more gifts. He can even defend us from illness, which money cannot. Can money protect one from the satanic spirits responsible for the moral breakdowns of life? In times like these, if we are living within God-given wisdom, we have the greatest, strongest, and only reliable defense available.

Wisdom gives life. In contrast, [Proverbs 8:36](#) declares starkly, “Those who hate wisdom love death.”

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Nine\): Wisdom as a Defense](#)

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