

# Turning Blessings into Curses

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Proverbs 25:16

In the Bible, honey is often used to symbolize God's great blessings for man (cf. Exodus 3:8). Yet in our text, the wise man pointed out that this same blessing can be turned into something with negative effects. It is possible to take the good things God blesses us with and turn them into bad things. This can be done by misuse, abuse, excess, etc. In this lesson, we will consider a few examples of how this can be done.

## Food

- Food is necessary for our survival – it is a daily need (Matthew 6:11); through God's providence, this continues to be available (Genesis 8:22; Acts 14:17); however, hunger still exists (Luke 16:21); therefore, we should not take it for granted but give thanks to Him for it (1 Timothy 4:3-4)
- But this blessing can be abused or used in excess to our detriment – the most obvious way is gluttony (Proverbs 23:20); it can also cause trouble when we value it over our brethren (Romans 14:15-16; 1 Corinthians 8:13) or our spiritual condition (Luke 12:19)

## Money

- Because of the prevalence of sinful attitudes about money, some believe it is inherently wrong – yet it is not (Ecclesiastes 10:19); wealth is a blessing from God (1 Timothy 6:17); it can be used to provide for one's own, help others, and give to the church (1 Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 16:2)
- However, this blessing can be misused and abused – “the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil” (1 Timothy 6:9-10); it is possible to value wealth over heaven or even God (Matthew 6:19-21, 24); some will do almost anything for money (Jude 11), yet in the end it does not profit (Matthew 16:26)

## Jobs

- Typically, when one has money, it is the result of work (Proverbs 14:23) – God expects His people to be hardworking (Ecclesiastes 9:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9; Colossians 3:23); this keeps us from being in need (1 Thessalonians 4:12) and provides us with a clear conscience (Ecclesiastes 5:12); working allows us to help others (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Proverbs 13:22)
- Yet our jobs/labor can cause trouble if misused or done in excess – parental responsibilities should not be forsaken (Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15); spiritual responsibilities should not be neglected (Hebrews 10:25; Luke 12:17-19); it is not wrong to work 40+ hours (Matthew 20:1-8), but work must be kept in its place

## **Marriage**

- Marriage is a blessing from God (Proverbs 18:22) – it is not good for man to be alone, so God instituted marriage in the beginning (Genesis 2:18, 21-24); it is an even greater blessing when both spouses follow God’s will (Ephesians 5:22, 25; 1 Peter 3:1-2, 7); it provides a way to fulfill natural desires and avoid sin (1 Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4)
- Yet a marriage can be filled with problems when spouses aren’t following God’s will – it is better to be alone than with a contentious spouse (Proverbs 25:24); there may be a temptation to put a spouse’s desires/approval ahead of God’s (1 Corinthians 7:32-33); being “unequally yoked” with unbelievers hinders our walk with God (2 Corinthians 6:14)

## **Family**

- As marriage is a blessing, so is the family that comes from that marriage (Psalm 127:3) – family provides a place for wholesome instruction (Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15); it is a set of relationships where we receive support and encouragement (Proverbs 31:12, 28-29); family is the first line of support when we face hardships (1 Timothy 5:3-4, 16)
- However, it is possible for family to have a negative impact – when there is hatred in the home it causes trouble for everyone (Proverbs 15:17; 17:25); when family is placed over the Lord, we cannot please Him (Matthew 10:34-37); when family influences us to sin, the relationship must change (2 Corinthians 6:14) [in the case of marriage, this doesn’t justify divorce/desertion (1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 16; 1 Peter 3:1); but for other relationships, we may need to remove ourselves until attitudes change]

## **Church**

- Many “kinds” of churches, but here we’re talking about the Lord’s church; local churches in particular (Romans 16:16) – in the local church, we have a group of Christians to encourage us (Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25); we have a body through which we can work together in the Lord’s work (Ephesians 4:16); we also have others who can keep us accountable (1 Corinthians 5:11-12; Galatians 6:1)
- But if a local church is not what the Lord wants it to be, it can have a negative impact on us – when sin is tolerated (1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6); when error is accepted (2 John 9-11; Revelation 2:14-16); when division exists (1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 11:17)

## **Conclusion**

- God has blessed us with many good things in this life – we should always be thankful and be good stewards
- Yet we should also not allow the devil to use these things to turn us away from the Lord