

# **What Can Result From Greed?**

## **International Bible Lessons**

**Proverbs 15:21-33**

**Sunday, September 18, 2011**

**L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.**

*"Those who are greedy for unjust gain make trouble for their households, but those who hate bribes will live" (Proverbs 15:27—NRSV).*

*"Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live" (Proverbs 15:27—ESV).*

*"He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live" (Proverbs 15:27—KJV).*

The Bible does not condemn ethical efforts to gain for others and ourselves what is financially beneficial, praiseworthy, and right; however, the Bible also teaches, "There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment" (1 Timothy 6:6). The Bible does not condemn acquiring wealth, but the Apostle Paul testified that he had "suffered the loss of all things" and "counted them as rubbish" in order to "gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Unfortunately, a greedy heart moves some to grasp for money, possessions, and power without regard for how they treat others. Some will cheat, lie, and use any unfair means to acquire wealth or avoid poverty. Jesus warned about the dangers of greed, "For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" (Mark 8:36). The Proverbs teach that greedy, unjust people not only bring trouble upon themselves, but also on their whole household.

In spite of the Bible's warnings, some in business, government, and religion still use bribes, fear tactics, and threats to achieve their goals. They will bribe or threaten someone to do something immoral. Or, they will do what is evil because they receive bribes or threats. Some have been paying and receiving bribes for so long they have hardened their conscience and believe those in high positions will protect them from prosecution. However, those who escape the justice of human government will face the justice of divine government. Eventually, God, who hates bribes and unjust gain, will bring those who live wickedly before His judgment seat—both those who pay bribes and those who receive bribes—"but those who hate bribes will live." — © Copyright 2011 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

## **Thinking Further**

1. What actions or characteristics do you see today in a person "who has no sense"? What do you think influenced them to lose or not acquire commonsense?

2. What actions or characteristics would you look for in a person before you would seek advice from them?

3. In what variety of ways may bribes be offered today? Why do you think God and His followers hate bribes?

4. Why might someone need to exercise patience if they ask a question of or seek an answer from a wise person?

5. Why and where should a wise person seek both admonition and instruction? List more than one person or place?