



Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#41) The Proverbs of Solomon 11:16- Honor or Riches?

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 11:16:

A gracious woman retains honor, But ruthless men retain riches.

"Graciousness" should be every bit as valuable to a woman as "riches" would be to "ruthless" (strong, violent) men! There is NO justification for ruthlessness in obtaining wealth, and a woman's reach to obtain graciousness should never approach the ruthless reach of a man for riches. Other proverbs point out dangers in a ruthless approach to obtaining riches:

- **Proverbs 13:7:** "There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; And one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches;"
- **Proverbs 23:4:** "Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease!;"
- **Proverbs 28:20:** "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished."

Such grasping will have "nothing," will make "himself poor," cause "overwork to be rich" and miss out the really good things in life (family, worship, contentment), and it "will not go unpunished" (by God). "Honor" to a "gracious woman" will be her goal, but not the "ruthlessness" to obtain it. The "virtuous wife" will have "strength and honor" as her "clothing" (**Proverbs 31:25**), that her virtuous character is more respected than anything from her closet! Christians wives who have "chaste conduct" are admonished to "not let your adornment be *merely* outward-- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (**1 Peter 3:3-4**). This echoes our proverb.

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