

Proverbs 21:17 (NIV)

**He who loves pleasure will become poor;
whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.**

The main teaching:

He who loves pleasure will become poor;

The illustration:

whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.

This illustration is from the days of King Solomon, nearly 3000 years ago. How might we illustrate this truth today?

**What can you expect, if you live for
the "party life"?**

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LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS: (If there is not enough time, skip the first two questions.)

1. **Proverbs 23:20** - Another warning - what does it say?
2. **Amos 6:1-7** - Did Israel pay attention to this warning? What happened to them?
3. **Luke 15:13-16** - What happened to the "prodigal son" (the son who devoted himself to partying and wild living)?
4. **Luke 16:24-25** - What happened to the rich man?
5. **2 Timothy 3:1-5** (especially verse 4) - What will people be like during the "last days"?

THINK ABOUT IT: What are you like? How can you apply this truth to your life?
What can you do with your life, besides living for pleasure?

DO SOMETHING: Pick a "real life" situation, in which you (or someone else) made the wrong choice - a choice that disobeyed this verse. Show how you (or they) could have done what is right, instead.

Proverbs 21:17 - Teaching / Study NOTES

About the Proverbs:

The Proverbs describe life and what you can normally expect in life (whether good or bad). [See www.journal33.org/bible/html/prov-abt.htm for more about the nature of Proverbs.]

The "parallel concepts" in Proverbs 21:17 (NIV)

He who loves	pleasure	will become poor;
whoever loves	wine and oil	will never be rich.

What does it mean by "wine and oil"?

A similar concept in other verses:

- Proverbs 23:20-21 - Don't join drunkards / gluttons... such people become poor.
- Amos 6:6 (and context) - They loved "partying" - wine and lotions - but they ignored the sin in their lives, which was about to bring judgment upon them. [The word "lotion" (N.I.V.) is the same word as "oil" in the Proverbs passage.]

About the "oil":

- [It was NOT motor oil!] The word could be used for any oily substance, whether it was a food (such as olive oil) or a perfume or lotion. [Note: John 12:5 shows us that some of the perfume-type oils could be very expensive.]
- Some translations attempt to communicate the idea by words such as: *good living, luxury, perfume* or *expensive food*. Perhaps the phrase "a lavish lifestyle" would convey the idea.

WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN?

THE PRINCIPLE (first line) - The specific teaching or principle found in this verse deals with values. It focuses on a love for pleasure, and perhaps also on the issue of "instant gratification" (as contrasted with "delayed gratification"). As a way of life, Scripture frequently associates such a focus with folly and with a disinterest in the values of God's kingdom.

THE ILLUSTRATION (second line) - This is an illustration from *their* situation, back then (nearly 3000 years ago). Based on comments given above, you can explain what the wine and oil represent.

AN ILLUSTRATION based on OUR situation today - Discuss: How could the second line be written to illustrate the principle (or teaching), if it were being written in *today's* context? [We have other ways of "partying," besides "wine and oil."]

"HOW AM I TO APPLY THIS VERSE?" [POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION]

What is God telling us about how we are to live? (Focusing here on commands and facts.)

What will most likely happen if we ignore God's Word?

How will the wise person respond to such a proverb? How will the fool respond? WHICH ARE YOU GOING TO BE?

When you receive some money, what do you normally do? [What you do with your money often reflects your attitude or character - and whether or not your lifestyle is wise or foolish.]

What are some specific things you can do in your life, to obey God's teaching in this matter? [How can you apply the commands and facts (revealed in Scripture) to the way you live?]

You may want to discuss some specific examples in which people responded wrongly or rightly in a situation.

You may also want to discuss the temporary nature of living for the present moment. The "partying" may be fun, but the next day, it's all over and your money is all gone...

SOME NEW TESTAMENT VERSES ABOUT THIS MATTER

(You are welcome to look for more verses!)

- Luke 15:13-16 - about the prodigal son.
- Luke 16:24-25 - about the rich man who lived in luxury... and then died...
- 2 Timothy 3:4 - a characteristic of people in the "last days."