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God shall supply all your  
need according to his riches  
in glory by Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:19



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Substance**

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# Substance

## from the Responsive Reading

### **Psalms 104:16**

*The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*

Though the word *sap* doesn't appear in the original Hebrew text, *full* (*šāba'*)—here describing well-watered trees—expresses the amplitude of God's creation. *Šāba'* appears nearly one hundred times in the Hebrew Bible, including twice more in this psalm: "The earth is satisfied [*šāba'*] with the fruit of thy works" and "Thou openest thine hand, they are filled [*šāba'*] with good" (vv. 13 and 28).

### **Proverbs 8:10**

*Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.*

Throughout this chapter, wisdom is portrayed as a woman speaking in the first person. What may seem like a self-promoting style is intended as a kind of résumé, a presentation of wisdom's meaning and value for humanity. One source sees wisdom as foundational to such New Testament teachings as First Corinthians 1:17–31 and James 3:13–17.

### **Proverbs 8:19**

*My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.*

Fruit is a common biblical symbol of the success of God's "planting"—the spiritual growth that comes from living a God-inspired life (see also Psalms 1:1–3 and Jeremiah 17:7, 8). God's command to "be

fruitful" is a recurring theme in the book of Genesis. And Christ Jesus employs the image of fruit throughout his ministry (see examples in Matthew 13:3–8, 18–23; Luke 6:43, 44; and John 15:1–8, 16).

## from Section 2

### **6 | Proverbs 2:4, 5**

*If thou seekest [knowledge] as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*

In this verse, wisdom is introduced as treasure—as riches that are found not simply through rational inquiry or observation but through a heartfelt desire to understand God. Jesus later adopts this image, counseling his followers to turn away from cherishing material things. "Where your treasure is," he teaches, "there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34, citation 13).

### **8 | I Kings 3:5, 6**

*In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, ... and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne.*

Though the ark of the covenant was already in Jerusalem, the Temple had not yet been built. Gibeon, located about seven miles (11 km) northwest of Jerusalem, had a "high place" or sacred altar where Solomon traveled to worship (see v. 4).

# An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“... a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

Solomon wasn't King David's only son; 19 sons were born to David by several wives (see I Chronicles 3:1–9). However, the precedent that the firstborn son inherit the throne was not yet established in Israel. Although King Saul had sons, David was selected to succeed him by divine decree (see I Samuel 16:1–13). And Solomon was chosen to reign after David at Bathsheba's request (see I Kings 1:11–17, 28–30).

Solomon's reference to himself as “a little child” (v. 7) doesn't allude to his age. Scholars believe he was at least in his early teens, and possibly closer to twenty years of age at this time. Metaphorically, the word *child* represents inexperience. The prophet Jeremiah also describes himself this way when God calls him to become a prophet: “I cannot speak: for I am a child” (Jeremiah 1:6).

## from Section 3

### 9 | Deuteronomy 28:1

*It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.*

The book of Deuteronomy, Moses' final instruction to his people, summarizes the laws given to them during the Exodus. Chapters 27–30 represent a kind of epilogue—a list of outcomes when their covenant with God is honored or disobeyed.

This passage is part of a catalogue of blessings for the faithful, along with the promise, “The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure” (v. 12, citation 2).

### 12 | Matthew 6:28, 29

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

Only a few flowers are named in the Bible, lilies and roses among them. Here Jesus may be referring to wildflowers in general, although some scholars think he means anemones or chamomiles.

### 13 | Luke 12:33

*Sell that ye have, and give alms.*

Almsgiving was a central component of the Jewish religion. Likewise, members of the early Christian community shared with the needy and with each other. This generosity, one researcher observes, was natural to those who trusted God's provision: “They do not live in a world of chaotic chance, but in a world governed by the gracious gift of God. Only because they have been so fundamentally gifted can they be without fear and therefore can share their possessions with others.”

Christ Jesus raises the practice of charity beyond human benevolence by redefining treasure as spiritual. “Real security,” writes another source, “is not a matter of individual self-sufficiency and the mere elimination of desire. It consists ... in the possession of another kind of riches—riches which make earthly possessions unimportant.”

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#### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** *Harper's Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

**Cit. 13:** Harrington, Daniel J., et al., eds. *Sacra Pagina*. Vol. 3, *The Gospel of Luke*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991–2009; Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8, *Luke, John*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

# Related healing ideas

## Superabundance

Why do we ask so little,  
when God has given so much?  
“All that I have is thine,” God says;  
all good is in man’s reach.  
The Love that knows no limit,  
the Truth that knows no lie,  
the Life that is immortal,  
are man’s eternally.

God does not give us choice of goods,  
this at expense of that;  
the total sum of all things good  
is man’s for man’s delight.  
God gives all strength and beauty,  
all wisdom, wealth, and skill,  
and gentleness and meekness  
and patience plentiful.

When Jesus fed the multitude,  
he gave not just enough.  
Twelve basketfuls of fragments  
were gathered up in proof  
that Spirit pours out riches  
no mortal sense can count;  
and still today who sups with Christ  
need neither starve nor stint.

God does not weary of our voice,  
nor turn from our desire;  
His love exalts and purifies,  
and answers every prayer.  
And as our longings journey  
upward from sense to Soul,  
“Son, thou art ever with me,”  
God says; “I give thee all.”

By Peter J. Henniker Heaton  
From the November 6, 1948, issue of the  
*Christian Science Sentinel*

## Depth

In depth men have discovered wealth  
untold;  
Wonders of ancient empires,  
oil springs, gold—  
A precious yield.  
In surface soil no treasure is revealed.  
Deep down it lies concealed.

Delve deep in Truth!  
Mere surface scanning will unfold  
No healing gems of thought to grasp  
and hold,  
To share, yet keep. Think deeply and  
Unending riches reap.  
The thoughts of God are deep.

By Mary Bell Rhodes  
From the September 1965 issue of  
*The Christian Science Journal*