

# Job 36:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

## Analysis

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Elihu presents a conditional promise: "If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures." The verb *shama* (שָׁמַע, "obey") means to hear and heed. The verb *abad* (עָבַד, "serve") means to work or worship. The promise of prosperity (*tov*, טוֹב, good) and pleasures (*ne'imim*, נְעִימִים, pleasant things) reflects covenant theology (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). Elihu's statement contains truth—obedience often leads to blessing in God's general providence. However, his application to Job is problematic. Reformed theology distinguishes between

1. God's general patterns of blessing
2. God's sovereign freedom to ordain suffering for the righteous for purposes beyond simple retribution.

Job's case demonstrates that suffering doesn't prove disobedience, nor does prosperity prove righteousness. The New Testament clarifies that godliness with contentment is gain (1 Timothy 6:6), but following Christ may mean suffering (Philippians 1:29).

## Historical Context

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Covenant blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28-30) shaped Israelite theology. Generally, the nation experienced prosperity under righteous kings and judgment under wicked ones, reinforcing retribution theology. However, prophets (Habakkuk, Jeremiah) and wisdom literature (Job, Ecclesiastes) complicated this

picture, showing that individual experience often departed from expected patterns. This tension required more nuanced understanding of providence.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do we maintain belief in God's justice while acknowledging that righteous people often suffer?
2. What is the relationship between covenant promises of blessing and the mystery of providence?
3. How does the New Testament reframe prosperity gospel in light of Christ's suffering and call to take up our cross?

## Interlinear Text

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אִם	וְשָׁמַע וְ	וְעָבַד דּוֹ	וְכָל וְ	וְיָמֶיהָ	בְּטוֹב
H518	If they obey	and serve	him they shall spend	their days	in prosperity
	H8085	H5647	H3615	H3117	H2896
וְשָׁנֵיהָ	בְּנִעְיָמִים:				
and their years	in pleasures				
H8141	H5273				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 7:23** (Parallel theme): But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

**Isaiah 1:19** (Parallel theme): If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

**Deuteronomy 4:30** (Parallel theme): When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

**Hebrews 11:8** (Parallel theme): By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

**Jeremiah 26:13** (Parallel theme): Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

**James 5:5** (Parallel theme): Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

**Revelation 18:7** (Parallel theme): How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

**Job 22:23** (Parallel theme): If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

**Job 22:21** (Parallel theme): Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

**Romans 6:17** (Parallel theme): But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.