



## *junkyard wisdom: Resisting the Whisper of Wealth in a World of Broken Parts*

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By: Roy Goble

### **Book Description (from Amazon)**

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Junkyard Wisdom is an honest exploration of the tension between wealth and poverty, and between faithfulness and temptation, facing followers of Jesus in the developed world. Roy Goble grew up working in his father's junkyard, where he learned to take apart absolutely anything and to evaluate everything for the value of its parts. Later, as he met with success in the real estate industry, Roy experienced the complexity of creating wealth while pursuing what Jesus was calling him to be and do, beginning a decades-long quest for a way to understand his place in God's kingdom and in a global society. Like Roy, most of us live a life of unprecedented abundance. No matter what our income level, walls of security and distraction inevitably insulate us from the poor or anyone else who might threaten our comfortable life. Yet despite our trappings of wealth-or perhaps because of them-we continue to experience a spiritual hunger for something deeper and more meaningful. In a surprising solution to that hunger, God invites us to utilize our wealth and our talents to create kingdom relationships, beginning right in our own communities. We can only enjoy this meaningful life when we break down the walls and live as Jesus calls us to live. This means more than serving meals in a homeless shelter once a month or even flying to a remote region of the world on a mission trip. Instead, the way of Jesus requires genuine relationships with people who are different than us. Until we stop and remember the poor in all of our decisions, and until we intentionally break down the walls that divide us from those whom Jesus loves, we will never experience the abundance of God's love. In such relationships we will discover an exchange of hope between ourselves and the poor. We are commissioned to be ambassadors for Jesus, beginning where we live and reaching the other side of the planet. Junkyard Wisdom is the story of Roy Goble's response to that commission-from the junkyard to Silicon Valley to house churches in Myanmar to Belizean rainforests-as he searches for ways to build authentic relationships of love, faith, and hope. Here, he reveals what's waiting for us on the other side of comfort and complacency-an abundant future we can only reach together.

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## My Synopsis:

I first noticed this book because of the author's name (we're not related) as well as the fact that Bob Goff wrote a recommendation on the top of the cover. Book was wicked good. As a small business owner struggling to get to the point of financial freedom for my family, while simultaneously struggling with internal challenges about giving, faith, and humanity, this book hit close to home and helped me see some things from a bigger perspective. The most important reminder for me from this book is to make sure I don't lose focus of God. And I need to be better at that every day.

## **Junkyard Wisdom**

### Resisting the Whisper of Wealth in a World of Broken Parts

- p. 1 **Junkyard Days**
- p. 3 He was forcing me to think about how to create a better future.
- p. 7 We wealthy people...are adapt at putting up walls to insulate ourselves. Walls of comfort, pride, or denial. Walls made of nothing sturdier than distraction, distance, and new experiences.
- p. 8 If we want to follow Jesus, and live like Jesus lived, we need to start seeing other people as Jesus sees them.
- p. 9 The kingdom is built on relationships. There is nothing we can send beyond our walls that's better than ourselves. And when we go ourselves, Jesus goes with us.
- p. 11 ...highlight the opportunities God gives all of us to change the world...as long as we're willing to start tearing down the walls that separate us from it.
- p. 12 ...any single life ripples outward. But for that to begin, we need to take a leap of faith.
- p. 13 Open doors can bring us surprises that are beautiful and brimming with joy.
- p. 13 Tragedy is no respecter of our defenses.
- p. 13 What if God is waiting to meet us when the rich and poor enter into relationship with each other?
- p. 14 Your easy answer and presumptions get shot to hell.
- p. 15 **First Ripple: Bangkok and Singapore**
- p. 21 Solutions have to start at the source of economic need.
- p. 22 The feeling is unmistakable: I'm already slipping into the amnesia of wealth.
- p. 23 First God loved, then God acted.
- p. 23 ...I'm inclined to believe that God calls us to follow him individually and relationally.
- p. 24 We are, in the words of Anne Frank, bundles of contradictions. And in real life – especially a life spent trying to follow Jesus – those contradictions aren't likely to go anywhere.
- p. 25 Poverty is not simply about a lack of cash, but a lack of hope to believe the life God intends for us is possible. – Ash Barker
- p. 25 Cash without corresponding hope can be worse than useless.
- p. 26 Unfortunately for my piece of mind, Jesus doesn't ask me to look good or to be better than some of my peers – he asks me to follow him. And "follow" needs to be an ongoing verb, even when the amnesia of wealth suggests a rest stop.
- p. 27 If it's true that the path to eternal life starts, and proceeds, *through* this present life, then what happens when I'm a "good Christian" but forget the poor and my neighbor?
- p. 28 We forget the poor through the small, insidious, cumulative decisions we made on a daily basis.

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- p. 28 In these and a thousand other small acts of forgetting, I have objectified the poor.
- p. 29 ...when I forget the poor, I forget God.
- p. 31 **Second Ripple: Belize and Haiti**
- p. 33 ...my willingness to ask questions – even questions about buying an island for a joke – led to a real opportunity to do good.
- p. 33 ...the poor have abundant things they are capable of giving – which is exactly why investing in the poor can seem *selfish*.
- p. 34 Willpower is a finite reserve when it comes to following Jesus. Willing yourself to obey works until it doesn't.
- p. 34 Because we're all human, we're all screw-ups. That's our natural state.
- p. 36 ...you can do a lot of unintentional damage if you don't know what you're doing.
- p. 37 When we ignore a whole section of any community, our mistakes are going to be magnified and our successes smaller.
- p. 38 It's the Facebook version of relating to the poor, where everyone presents to each other only those things that are acceptable in public.
- p. 39 I'm convinced that God is calling me to enter lasting relationships with the poor, rather than a) ignoring them or b) entering pretend relationships with them.
- p. 41 Cross the divide. It's that simple, and that impossible.
- p. 45 He never mentioned individual people only percentages and demographics. Eventually I stopped listening.
- p. 47 **Third Ripple: California**
- p. 49 How in God's name could I enjoy such extravagance *while still following Jesus?*
- p. 50 The worst side effect of wealth is the social association it forces on its victims, as people with big houses tend to end up socializing with other people with big houses. – Nassim Taleb
- p. 54 A wise decision can become a barrier to responding to God in the future if it allows us to file and forget an entire category of discipleship and obedience.
- p. 55 God wants his followers to be open to change – to go where the spirit is blowing – and to rely on him during those changes.
- p. 55 Love is always individual because love is always personal.
- p. 57 My unexamined life was very enjoyable...if I started truly following God, my comfortable little bubble would pop.
- p. 58 ...needing God might be the first step to God using me.
- p. 59 We must always train and retrain ourselves to remember that we are global citizens and that God so loved the *world*, not just Americans.
- p. 61 We humans are great at deceiving ourselves though, right?
- p. 61 Whether rich or poor or anything in between, complacency is a terrible model for human life.
- p. 61 If we aren't actively fighting it, we're probably living it – or at least allowing it, even if unintentionally.
- p. 64 Without God's help, I can't follow Jesus.
- p. 65 **The Heart of It All**
- p. 65 The lie that prosperity is God's sign of approval becomes more and more believable.
- p. 67 What if following Jesus looks less like a one-time prayer and more like a lifetime of wrestling.
- p. 69 **Third Ripple: California**
- p. 71 If we're going to talk about God, we need to act like God would act.

- p. 73 ...Jesus, the storyteller, wants us to see that creating money and increasing money aren't bad things.
- p. 74 Wealth creation is good – commanded even – if our aims align with God. But the trouble with aim is that even a little difference makes a *huge* difference.
- p. 74 ...I've tried to put in place some practices that help keep my aim true:  
Viciously attack ego / Shut up and listen / Value community
- p. 75 These three practices help me manage the tension. They're compass checks to keep me on course.
- p. 75 Viciously Attack Ego
- p. 76 The reason for viciously attacking ego is simple: the more I value my own intellect, skills, experience, and so on, the more likely I am to cut everyone else out of the loop. Including God.
- p. 76 Absent external input, you can only attack your ego *some* of the time...
- p. 76 Shut Up and Listen
- p. 76 ...the primary way to deflate your own pride is get outside of your own head.
- p. 76 When I already know all the answers, the only kind of communication that will interest me is one-way: me telling things to others.
- p. 77 By trying to get my ego out of the way so I could listen to and learn from someone else, I grew and changed for the better.
- p. 77 Value Community
- p. 78 I'm not saying such community doesn't happen outside of Jesus. I'm just saying it's a lot less likely.
- p. 78 These aren't principles you put in place once and then forget about. They aren't foolproof. Rather, they're proof against the foolishness of overvaluing yourself, of being too quick to speak, and of operating as a lone wolf.
- p. 79 Every technology or idea can be used or abused. Even our gifts work this way.
- p. 79 The Spirit's gifts exist for the benefit of everyone.
- p. 80 ...point out that any gift from God needs to be used for God's purposes.
- p. 80 Money is a tool. It is also a temptation. It's many things, in fact, but evil isn't one of them.
- p. 81 There are many parts in the body, but they all need each other...and every part is meant to work together for God's purposes.
- p. 82 The more decisions we have to make, the more we grow.
- p. 82 I'm convinced that God doesn't want us to have it all figured out. God asks us to turn off the autopilot. Why? Because when we don't have it all figured out, that's when we need God and the gifts of God's spirit.
- p. 85 **Second Ripple: Belize**
- p. 85 It's too easy to deceive ourselves into thinking knowledge and action automatically go hand in hand.
- p. 85 We need to change our behavior in the present, just like we need to be open to changing it again in the future. But how?
- p. 86 ...common language can deceive us into thinking we understand.
- p. 88 ...small mistakes can prevent relationships from forming or growing.
- p. 89 These verses (Proverbs 31:4-9) are a warning to people of influence who are responsible for dispensing justice.
- p. 89 ...our positions of influence ought to be used to make and enforce just laws, advocate for the voiceless, judge fairly, and defend the rights of the poor.
- p. 91 ...we're far more comfortable seeing people as snapshots than movies.
- p. 92 Cultural translators, help us – challenge us – to remember that life is a series of concentric circles and each circle includes complicated, nuanced lives.

- p. 92 ...one-way flow of information made it possible for a wasteful mistake to go all the way from idea to execution to eyesore.
- p. 94 The truth is real relationships are frightening.
- p. 94 Life is always complicated – especially for the poor. It is wealth that provides the illusion of simplicity, because it is wealth that allows walls to be constructed that shield us from complexity.
- p. 96 In the timeline of God’s kingdom, breaking down walls is always the right thing to do, even when you can’t see what’s on the other side.
- p. 98 Faith and action are inextricably linked.
- p. 99 ...faith is deciding to act and then watching God show up.
- p. 99 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
- p. 102 There isn’t a convenient rubric to explain kingdom relationships.
- p. 105 Life is messy, no matter where you live it.
- p. 106 In the kingdom economy, it’s possible to lose money on a good investment.
- p. 107 **First Ripple: Thailand and Myanmar**
- p. 107 We must make a conscious effort to look beyond our immediate context.
- p. 108 When wealth and poverty crash together, the fallout can be that stark and that evil.
- p. 111 Today it’s easier to help solve problems than ever before. However, that very ease makes it harder to actually follow the commands of Jesus.
- p. 111 Jesus summed up all of Scripture like this: Direct everything you have and everything you are and everything you do toward loving God and loving your neighbor.
- p. 113 As our world becomes increasingly globalized and increasingly tribal and insular, we need to prioritize and fight for relationships.
- p. 114 If we’re not willing to be wrong, we probably won’t get it right.
- p. 117 ...healing goes hand in hand with hope.
- p. 117 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. James 2:14-17
- p. 119 ...I understood that they were hungry for the same thing I was: hope.
- p. 121 The fact that something is wrong doesn’t make the right answer obvious.
- p. 121 No one’s story is finished yet. Our world, our culture, is all about the moment. Instant everything. In the kingdom, though, there’s the end, and there’s the *end*.
- p. 121 The reality is that each of us is helpless to truly control other people.
- p. 121 Sometimes difficult issues can’t be solved from a distance, but they can’t be solved from up close either.
- p. 122 Love is doing real things for real people.
- p. 122 IF we don’t remain in Christ, there can be no fruit. We simply can’t do it by ourselves.
- p. 122 Maybe that’s why we follow Jesus instead of a set of rules.
- p. 123 **Conclusion**
- p. 125 Wealth can be an extremely pleasant way to suffocate.
- p. 126 It’s simply that when we are surrounded by people so similar to us, *we forget the poor*.
- p. 126 So I have to ask myself the hard questions, over and over.

- p. 128 Too often we label money, uniquely, as the one fallen human creation that's beyond redemption.
- p. 129 But when we fall in love with the world, we insulate ourselves from the world.
- p. 130 Because we think helping the poor is easy, we think helping the poor doesn't require our best.
- p. 130 So often we help the poor...with laziness and platitudes and activities designed more to salve our consciences than to provide real hope.
- p. 130 Being part of Christ's body isn't about checklists, even when you're a wealth creator. Following Jesus is about relationships.
- p. 131 If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart? -- Solzhenitsyn
- p. 131 If we wealthy understand *where* they are living, perhaps we can embrace the *why*: for the sake of heaven.
- p. 132 The wealthy constantly shape and influence the world, whether consciously or not. Imagine what would happen if that influence was guided by the example of Jesus and empowered by the Spirit!
- p. 132 God loves the world, but we can't. We can only love the people we come into contact with, and the only way to love people who are different than ourselves is to be intentional about it.
- p. 132 Finding partners we can learn from and work with, to one extent or another, is vital.
- p. 133 If we're going to change the world, we need allies who are different than we are.
- p. 136 ...the rich person training to serve the poor must learn how to control the mind and heart and soul.
- p. 136 Thumbnail definition of a "saint": an imperfect person willing and ready to be used by a perfect God.
- p. 137 Trust and obedience are the way this works...If we trust enough to obey *today*, God will show us what we need for tomorrow.
- p. 137 Too often, though, we trust our checkbooks and obey our desires.
- p. 138 A Christ-centered exchange of hope happens when we give ourselves away. When we empty ourselves. Because when we do this for the sake of Christ, we will always be refilled.
- p. 138 Living this way requires your faith to grow and your mind to stretch.
- p. 138 Scripture guarantees these things in life:  
    We will have trouble in this world.  
    Christ has overcome this world.  
    There is a world beyond this world. (John 14-17)
- p. 139 If we believe God's promises, the unplanned isn't something to fear, but rather to explore and embrace.
- p. 139 It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures...we are far too easily phased. – C.S. Lewis