

## Proverbs 14:4

***Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.***

Confession time, and I confess that I am a clean freak. Well, maybe not a freak about it, but I can't stand a messy house or things out of order. I never throw my dirty clothes on the floor, the towels in my bathroom are always hung up just right a not just thrown over the towel rack. Even as I look over at my two aquariums (one freshwater and one saltwater) I have everything in them set just right, and how I want them laid out, all neat and in order.

But, even though I have a lot of stuff, it is all pretty much neat and in order. But there are others who have a clean and neat house, not because they are clean freaks, but rather because they don't have much. Then there are those who have a lot, and their houses are a mess with things thrown all over the place.

Now with all this in mind, read today's verse again: ***Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.***

"Well, I don't have an ox, so I have no idea what this has to do with anything?" you may be thinking.

Well, oxen were used in the fields to plow the fields or hooked to a cart to pull things around (Think horse and cart). So an oxen was a person's bread and butter or used to do his job. Think of your car and how you use it to get to work, or how vans and trucks are used to deliver things. They are all part of your job. So if you have no car, it's pretty hard to get to work or hold down a job. And if you need a van or truck or even your car for your job, if you don't have one you can't do your job, and with no job, no stuff, so your house is empty. ***Where no oxen are, the trough is clean.***

But when you have the right vehicle to use to get to, or do your job, then you should be blessed, because you now have a job and a paycheck, and stuff. ***But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.*** That's why it's so important to take care of the things that the Lord has blessed us with.

I have a teenage son who has his first car and first job, and I explain to him that he needs that job in order to maintain his car, so he can get back and forth to work, so when he works and gets paid he can get gas and oil changes and tires replaced and get it washed etc... Simply he needs to take care of his car (think ox) because without it, he can't get to work and if he can't get to work, no more job and no more paycheck.

God has blessed us all with the thing that we have, like cars to get to work, or even the job that we have, and it's our responsibility to take care of those things because they are God's provision. He has also given us our family, our friends, or co workers, our church family and different ministries. These are all blessing from the Lord as well.

I am one of those fortunate guys to have a Proverbs 31 wife who takes care of our family, home and me. But it is also my responsibility to supply and give and do for her so that she can be that Proverbs 31 woman in our home. If I don't have a job and I abuse her and do everything to make her life miserable, it would be hard for her to be that Proverbs 31 woman. So if I want a Proverbs 31 woman, then I need to be a Ephesians 5 man.

† ***Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.***

So you can complain because your house is a mess, or you can be thankful that God has blessed you with so much to cause it to be messy. Now, you may not have the best car in the world, or the best job or your dream job. You may not have the most comfortable bed, or sofa, or chair. But you have those things that the Lord has supplied for you, so be thankful for them.

† ***Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

People tease me sometimes because I bought my car, brand new almost two years ago, and it still looks like it's brand new, and that's because the Lord has taught me over the years that every thing I have is a blessing from Him and I need to take care of it. As I learn and show I am faithful in doing that, He gives me better things to take care of. Each job I get is better, each car I buy is better and I do have nice things, because I have learned the importance of today's verse ***Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.*** Which is to take care of what God has blessed me with, be it people or things or even His word.

What or who has God blessed you with that you need to take better care of? Or what things has He held back from you because you have shown that you don't take care of what He has blessed you with? If you want to be blessed by the Lord, then you need to be a blessing in what He has given to you already.

† ***Matthew 25:21 (NLT2) The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'***

† ***Deuteronomy 28:1-6 Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice***

*of the LORD your God: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.*