

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes Book of Proverbs—Proverbs 16

9/19/12

Wisdom Instructions On God's Providential Care

THEME: Wisdom For All People (Chapters 10-24)

PURPOSE: Solomon wanted to impart wisdom to all people, regardless of their age, sex, or position in society. These short, wise sayings give us practical wisdom for daily living. We should study them diligently and integrate them into our life.

OUTLINE:

I. A PURPOSE FOR EVERYTHING (1-9): "Commit your work to the LORD, and then your plans will succeed."

II. KINGLY ADVICE (10-15): Kings must never judge unfairly.

III. MORE GLORIOUS THAN GOLD (16-17): Wisdom and understanding are better than riches.

IV. PRIDE AND PROSPERITY (18-24): It is better to be humble and poor than proud and rich.

V. A GODLESS GROUPING (25-30): The way that seems right actually leads to death.

VI. TEMPER YOUR TEMPER! (31-33): "It is better to be patient than powerful."

Proverbs 16
(New International Version)

To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue. ² All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD. ³ Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. ⁴ The LORD works out everything to its proper end— even the wicked for a day of disaster. ⁵ The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished. ⁶ Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.

⁷ When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them. ⁸ Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice. ⁹ In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.

¹⁰ The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth does not betray justice. ¹¹ Honest scales and balances belong to the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making. ¹² Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness. ¹³ Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value the one who speaks what is right. ¹⁴ A king's wrath is a messenger of death, but the wise will appease it. ¹⁵ When a king's face brightens, it means life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.

¹⁶ How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver! ¹⁷ The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives.

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. ¹⁹ Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud. ²⁰ Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD. ²¹ The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction. ²² Prudence is a fountain of life to the prudent, but folly brings punishment to fools. ²³ The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction. ²⁴ Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

²⁵ There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. ²⁶ The appetite of laborers works for them; their hunger drives them on. ²⁷ A scoundrel plots evil, and on their lips it is like a scorching fire. ²⁸ A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends. ²⁹ A violent person entices their neighbor and leads them down a path that is not good. ³⁰ Whoever winks with their eye is plotting perversity; whoever purses their lips is bent on evil.

³¹ Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness. ³² Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. ³³ The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

PROVERBS 16:1

This verse can be understood to mean that the final outcome of the plans we make is in God's hands. If this is so, why make plans? In doing God's will, there must be partnership between our efforts and God's control. He wants us to use our minds, to seek the advice of others, and to plan. Nevertheless, the results are up to him. Planning, then, helps us act God's way. As you live for him, ask for guidance as you plan, and then act on your plan as you trust in him.

PROVERBS 16:2

People can rationalize anything if they have no standards for judging right and wrong. We can always prove that we are right. Before putting any plan into action, ask yourself these three questions: (1) Is this plan in harmony with God's truth? (2) Will it work under real-life conditions? (3) Is my attitude pleasing to God?

PROVERBS 16:3

There are different ways to fail to commit whatever we do to the Lord. Some people commit their work only superficially. They say the project is being done for the Lord, but in reality they are doing it for themselves. Others give God temporary control of their interests, only to take control back the moment things stop going the way they expect. Still others commit a task fully to the Lord but put forth no effort themselves, and then they wonder why they do not succeed. We must maintain a delicate balance: trusting God as if everything depended on him, while working as if everything depended on us. Think of a specific effort in which you are involved right now. Have you committed it to the Lord?

PROVERBS 16:4

This verse doesn't mean that God created some people to be wicked, but rather that God uses even the activities of wicked people for his good purposes (see *Genesis 50:20*). God is infinite, and we are finite. No matter how great our intellects, we will never be able to understand him completely. But we can accept by faith that he is all-powerful, all-loving, and perfectly good. We can believe that he is not the cause of evil (*James 1:13, 17*); and we can trust that there are no loose ends in his system of judgment. Evil is a temporary condition in the universe. One day God will destroy it.

PROVERBS 16:5

Pride is the inner voice that whispers, "My way is best." It is resisting God's leadership and believing that you are able to live without his help. Whenever you find yourself wanting to do it your way or looking down on other people, you are being controlled by pride. Only when you eliminate pride can God help you become all he meant you to be.

PROVERBS 16:7

We want other people to like us, and sometimes we will do almost anything to win their approval. But God tells us to put our energy into pleasing him instead. Our effort to be peacemakers will usually make us more attractive to those around us, even our enemies. But even if it doesn't, we haven't lost anything. We are still pleasing God, the only one who truly matters.

PROVERBS 16:11

Whether we buy or sell, make a product or offer a service, we know what is fair and honest and what is unfair and dishonest. Sometimes we feel pressure to be dishonest in order to advance ourselves or gain more profit. But if we want to obey God, there is no middle ground: God demands honesty in every business transaction. No amount of rationalizing can justify a dishonest business practice. Honesty and fairness are not always easy, but they are what God demands. Ask him for discernment and courage to be consistently honest and fair.

PROVERBS 16:18

Proud people take little account of their weaknesses and do not anticipate stumbling blocks. They think they are above the frailties of common people. In this state of mind they are easily tripped up. Ironically, proud people seldom realize that pride is their problem, although everyone around them is well aware of it. Ask someone you trust whether self-satisfaction has blinded you to warning signs. He or she may help you avoid a fall.

PROVERBS 16:22

For centuries people sought a fountain of youth, a spring that promised to give eternal life and vitality. It was never found. But God's wisdom is a life-giving fountain that can make a person happy, healthy, and alive forever. How? When we live by God's Word, he washes away the deadly effects of sin (see Titus 3:4-8), and the hope of eternal life with him gives us a joyful perspective on our present life. The fountain of youth was only a dream, but the life-giving fountain is reality. The choice is yours. You can be enlightened by God's wisdom, or you can be dragged down by the weight of your own foolishness.

PROVERBS 16:31

The Hebrews believed that a long life was a sign of God's blessing; therefore, gray hair and old age were good. While young people glory in their strength, old people can rejoice in their years of experience and practical wisdom. Gray hair is not a sign of disgrace to be covered over; it is a crown of splendor. As you deal with older people, treat them with respect.

PROVERBS 16:32

Self-control is superior to conquest. Success in business, school, or home life can be ruined by a person who loses control of his or her temper. So it is a great personal victory to control your temper. When you feel yourself ready to explode, remember that losing control may cause you to forfeit what you want the most.

How God Is Described in Proverbs

Proverbs is a book about wise living. It often focuses on a person's response and attitude toward God, who is the source of wisdom. And a number of Proverbs point out facts of God's character. Knowing God helps us on the way to wisdom.

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| <i>God...</i> | is aware of all that happens (15:3) |
| | knows the heart of all people (15:11; 16:2; 21:2) |
| | controls all things (16:33; 21:30) |
| | is a place of safety (18:10) |
| | rescues good people from danger (11:8, 21) |
| | condemns the wicked (11:31) |
| | delights in our prayers (15:8, 29) |
| | loves those who obey him (15:9; 22:12) |
| | cares for poor and needy (15:25; 22:22, 23) |
| | purifies hearts (17:3) |
| | hates evil (17:5; 21:27; 28:9) |
| <i>Our response should be...</i> | to fear and reverence God (10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16; 16:6; 19:23; 28:14) |
| | to obey God's Word (13:13; 19:16) |
| | to please God (21:3) |
| | to trust in God (22:17-19; 29:25) |