**Proverbs Chapter 16 (Lesson #17)**

**33** Additional Proverbs from the Pen of Solomon

As we have discussed, the book of Proverbs is broken into **Seven** different sections.

We finished **section I** chapters 1-9, months ago and we have started our journey in **SECTION II,** this is the largest section of the Proverbs and extends from **10:1** all the way to **22:16**. So it is a little longer than Section I.

Scholars tell us that it contains **375 proverbs**. So far we have looked at (32+31+28+25+35+33) **184** of those proverbs. Today we look at an additional **(33 proverbs).**

**As we discussed our last time together, there is a great deal of wisdom in these 13 chapters that make up SECTION II.**

In the first **184** proverbs from chapters **10 - 15**, most of the proverbs were **contrasting statements, this but not that**.

In chapter 16 Solomon shifts from contrasting statement to comparisons. The “but, but, but” from chapters 10-15 are replaced with “and, and, and.”

These comparison sayings often state one basic idea and then look at it from a different angle.

This chapter continues to frequently use God’s covenant name, *Yahweh*. Of the 375 proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16) only 55 use the name *Yahweh*, and nearly half of those are in these two chapters (9 times in chapter 15, 11 times in chapter 16).

This collection of proverbs has three main sections:

1. Wisdom for living before *Yahweh* (verses 1-9)
2. Wisdom for how to behave in the presence of a king (verses 10-15)
3. Wisdom for getting along in God’s world (16-33)

Finally, notice the recurring theme of God’s sovereignty that’s peppered throughout, interspersed in verses 1 and 9 as well as verses 25 and 33. The underlying point is clear: Don’t forget, People make many plans, but God has the final say.

Once Again, we are going to spend about a **minute** on each of these proverbs, **just scratching the surface**, for each is a **treasure chest** worthy of our **individual** **meditation**.

***16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.***

Here we see the first comparison of **Man’s autonomy** and **God’s authority**.

What man plans in his heart belongs to man. Men think freely and they speak freely, after all God has created man with a free will, although the fall has contaminated that free will (Rom 3:10-18; I Cor 2:14).

**But**, the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. Solomon is reminding us that the sovereign Creator has often overridden men’s hearts to accomplish His will.

God never causes men to sin, but He has often used sinful men to accomplish His will.

**CONSIDER** (Pro 21:1; Pro 20:24).

***Vs 2 - All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit.***

Here again, we see the autonomy of man and the authority of God. In this text we are reminded that every man thinks he is right, he sees his actions and activities in a very positive light. Man by nature defaults to self-righteousness.

Men may think they know themselves, but the fall has marred our ability to truly see ourselves as God sees us (Jer 19:9; Ps 19:12).

So the ways of man are pure in his own eyes... **BUT**, the Lord weighs the spirit.

This is both a reassuring thought for the believer, and a day a horror for the lost. It is the Lord who will put all men in the balance.

Do we possess the righteousness that is freely given in Christ (II Cor 13:5).

***Vs 3 - Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.***

**If you are like me you love good advice**, I mean those great recommendations, you know the kind I mean, you look back and go **wow**, that was a **great recommendation**. **Here is one!**

Commit your work to the Lord, **put all of your activities** in the hands of the Lord, **roll the care and responsibility of your activities to the Lord**. **AND...** Your plans will be established, they will be achieved.

Here is the secret sauce to a successful life. Put God in charge of your life, make Him the King, and what you plan will happen, for it is His plans for your life!

**CONSIDER** (Ps 37:4-5; Ps 55:33; IPet 5:7).

*“4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.” (Ps 37:4-5 ESV)*

***Vs 4 - The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.***

Here once again we are reminded of the sovereignty of God. He has a purpose for everything He has created.

Even the wicked, which may seem like they are operating outside God’s control, but they are not. They are on a leash, that will one day lead them to the day of trouble, the day of judgment. (Rev 4:11).

***Vs 5 - Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.***

**Verse 5 reminds us of two important points that we should endeavor never to forget.**

1. God hates pride (I Pet 5:5-6; Pro 6:16-19).

*“5b God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,” (1 Peter 5:5–6 ESV)*

1. **We can rest assured that** pride will not go unpunished**,** in this life or the life to come**.**

We will read this in a moment, but it is fitting here (Pro 16:18 and Pro 11:2).

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18 ESV)*

**One who is never broken before the Lord in this life, will ultimately be broken by the Lord in the next.**

***Vs 6 - By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.***

This may well be the most difficult Proverb in the book of proverbs.

Even if a man could show perfect love and perfect fidelity, how could that atone for sin. If on the other hand Solomon is speaking prophetically and saying it is by a perfect love and perfect fidelity that atonement is made, then we see here a promise that can only be fulfilled in the God-man Jesus Christ.

If Solomon is saying by steadfast love and faithfulness men turn away from sins. **AND**, by the fear of Yahweh yet another method that causes one turns away from evil. Then I agree.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 8:13; Pr 14:16; Ps 97:10).

***Vs 7 - When a man’s ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.***

Have you ever wondered what can calm my enemy down? What can cause this person who hates me to be at peace? The answer is surprising: ***When a man’s ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.***

But you might say, surely Paul’s ways pleased the Lord and yet he had tons of enemies and they went after him.

That of course is true, but think of how many in the Bible were at peace with their enemies because they pleased the Lord.

Solomon was initially at peace with all around him. Joseph was at peace with his master, jailer, Pharoah, and ultimately even his brothers. God ultimately brought peace to Mordecai in spite of Haman’s murderous plans.

Here we have a general rule, of which there are always exceptions. But remember the rule!

***Vs 8 - Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.***

What could really improve your life? More money or more righteous behavior? Of course, most in the world would immediately say more money, but that is the response of a fool.

OH, to be more like Jesus. That is the real way to improve my life. What if my wife saw more Jesus in me, what might that mean in her, what if my colleagues at work saw more Jesus in me, what might that mean in them? What if my Sunday School class saw more Jesus in me?

This is another example of a thought that is repeated multiple times in the proverbs, namely: You are much better off to have little and the Lord, then lots and no Lord.

I realize this goes contrary to our culture, but God is telling us that if we want the good life, pursue Jesus above all else, that is how one secures the good life.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 15:16; Pr 28:6).

***Vs 9 - The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.***

Here again, we see the sovereignty of God and the autonomy of man.

The heart of a man plans his way, it maps his course, it plots his travel plans. Man makes many plans. After all, man is a free autonomous unit. **BUT, the Lord establishes his steps.**

God is the sovereign over his entire creation:

Man proposes, God disposes

Man devises, God directs

Man plans, God determines

***Vs 10 - An oracle is on the lips of a king; his mouth does not sin in judgment.***

An oracle, a divine declaration is on the lips of a king. We would assume Solomon is referring to a good king, although once again this is the rule, and with every king, even good ones there are exceptions.

This good king’s mouth does not sin in judgment.

**BUT…** There is one king, who is 100% righteous and a divine sentence is on His lips, and He never transgresses in his judgment.

**CONSIDER:** (Ps 45:6-7; Jer 23:5-6).

***Vs 11 - A just balance and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.***

This is a reminder that our God is a just God. False balances and deceptive weights are an abomination to Him!

A little sluff here or there may not seem like anything to the average person, but a just balance and honest weights are of the Lord. He does not have any trick weights in his bag.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 11:1; Pr 20:10).

***Vs 12 - It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness.***

This proverb is **not so much descriptive** as it is **prescriptive**.

God is the one who has ordained governments (kings) and Solomon reminds us that it is an abomination for a king to do evil, God has ordained them for good. The throne God has established in righteousness.

**CONSIDER:** (Pr 20:28; Pr 25:5; Pr 29:14).

***Vs 13 - Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.***

**Are you looking for a promotion?** Solomon says that our speech can promote us, our words can win us favor with the king.

Gracious words, seasoned with time (the right word at the right time) is wisdom and according to Solomon righteous lips are a delight to the king. **AND**, the king loves him who speaks what is right.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 14:35; Ps 101:6; Ps 101:7).

***Vs 14 - A king’s wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it.***

Solomon continuing on with the subject of kings. Of course, kings had a great deal more power than your supervisor, your governor, or the mayor.

The king had absolute authority, so he had absolute power. When a king was angry at you, it is wisdom to appease the king’s wrath. But the underlying truth behind this proverb is still relevant.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 20:2; Ps 2:12; Ec 10:4).

***Vs 15 - In the light of a king’s face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.***

We have already discussed how important it is to win favor with the king.

Kings rule with absolute authority, so winning their favor is a great idea and avoiding their disfavor an even better idea.

Think of how some of the saints in the Bible handled kings. Daniel, Esther, even David with Saul. They were faithful, they submitted to their authority, they behaved wisely.

God ordained authority in all areas of our life. At work, at home, in the church, and in our government.

Also, as true as it is that in the light of a king’s face there is life, how much truer of King Jesus. The one who freely offers all who will submit to his authority eternal life!

**CONSIDER** (Pr 19:12; Pr 16:14; Ti 2:9-10)

***Vs 16 - How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.***

What do we really desire? More money or more wisdom. Our answer to this question says a great deal about us spiritually.

According to Solomon, getting wisdom is better than getting riches. Getting חָכְמָה‎ (chokmah) is better than getting gold.Getting understanding or discernment is to be chosen over silver.

Keep in mind this advice is coming from possibly the richest man who ever lived.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 3:15-18; Pr 3:7; Pr 8:10-11).

**Also, the knowledge of the gospel is of greater value than all the treasures of the earth. Never forget this. You are not rich because you live in America. You are filthy rich, for you know the Creator!**

***Vs 17 - The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life.***

If you are like me, when you travel you use GPS to make sure you are on the right road. The Bible is like a spiritual GPS, and it declares, through the pen of Solomon, that the highway of the upright turns aside from evil! The one who is careful about his path is actually preserving his life.

Wondering off the highway of the upright can bring great misery into our lives, while living a life on that highway can bring great peace, satisfaction, and joy.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 12:28; Pr 4:14-15; Pr 14:18).

***Vs 18 - Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.***

Here it is, one of my **life verses.** Pride is what we call in the business world a lead indicator, the lag indicator of pride is destruction. When you see pride (lead indicator) you can be certain (destruction) the lag indictor is on the way.

One commentator called pride: “A force stronger than gravity that brings men down.”

**And…** The same truth stated a second time, but in a different way. And, a haughty spirit comes (is the lead indicator) for a fall!

**Pride is like rat poison** to the **heart**, **soul**, and **mind**. It hardens, cauterizes, calcifies, blinds, and corrupts.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 11:2; Pr 18:12; Pr 29:23).

***Vs 19 - It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.***

Solomon sets before us a choice, which will we choose: First, humility with the poor, to be humble with the poor of this word, or to be rich with the proud.

This should be an easy choice, for, God hates the proud (Pro 6:17), God will destroy the house of the proud (Pro 15:25), the one who has a proud heart is an abomination to God (Pro 16:5).

This is meant to be an easy choice, but in our culture, pride is not that big of a sin, and riches are the most important thing of all. **The better choice is always to avoid pride!**

***Vs 20 - Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.***

We face decisions, choices, problems, and issues every day.

The one who give thought to the word, the one who seeks guidance from God’s word, the one who makes decisions and responds to daily choices based on wisdom from God’s word will find good.

**AND...** Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

Here is the secret sauce of life. Following God’s word and faith in God.

Solomon is telling you and I the way to be successful in life, first by following the wisdom found in His Word, and second by faith (trusting) in Jesus and His finished work at the cross.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 3:5-6; Jos 1:8; Joh 3:16).

***Vs 21 - The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.***

The wise of heart, also called those who discern, the wise of heart are those who understand.

OHHH, to be able to discern, yet Solomon tells us that comes with those who possess **חָכָם‎ (chakam)** in their inner being!

Two observations, wisdom is in the heart, not so much in the head. The outgrowth of this wisdom is not brilliance, but instead discernment.

This wisdom is not so much knowledge, but discernment.

**AND,** sweetness of speech increase persuasiveness.

Just as harsh words can incite anger the opposite is true, sweetness of speech, kindness in the tongue can increase reception of what is taught.

The lesson here is that wisdom should most often be communicated with gracious words and sweet speech!

**CONSIDER** (Pr 15:23; 15:7).

***Vs 23 - The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.***

Here Solomon seems to be saying that wise men cannot hide their wisdom, quite the opposite, the wise of heart teach with their mouths, their speech shows sound judgment, and they persuade with their lips.

Wise men’s words are seasoned with grace and time. The right thing at the right time. **It is the wisdom behind the words that adds to their persuasiveness.**

**CONSIDER** (Pr 15:4; 18:21; 25:4)

***Vs 24 - Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.***

What is your favorite desert? The words of the wise, grace fill words, are like that desert. Grace filled words enter the ear and enliven the soul and body!

Men, are our words should be like this, they should refresh the soul of the listener?

**CONSIDER** (Pr 25:11-12; Pr 18:21).

***Vs 25 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.***

Fallen man naturally assumes he is right, every lost man believes he is proceeding down the correct path. That is the lostness of being lost, that is the condition of the fallen nature.

**But...** The **end of that way**, the way that men assume is correct, is **death**.

This is a repeated proverb for Solomon, he wanted his sons to understand this ultimate truth.

What we believe, what we assume, what we think, apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit and the Word, is likely leading us to destruction.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 14:12; Pr 21:2; Pr 12:15).

***Vs 26 - A worker’s appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on.***

This is simple observable wisdom by Solomon and one we should never forget. Apart from the sluggard, the lazy person, what drives a person to hard work is survival.

Keep this in mind... Sometimes people need a hand-up, but they rarely do they need a hand-out. For when we simply continue to give, we short-circuit what God has built within man and that is the desire to survive.

***Vs 27 - A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.***

The Hebrew word translated “plots” means to dig. It is of course true that a worthless man plots evil. But it is also true, and this is what I believe Solomon is getting at is that a worthless man digs up evil on others.

The worthless person, the wicked person loves to find faults, failures, sins in others. In fact, they dig for them. Then worthless men and women rejoice when others fall.

AND... his or their speech is like a scorching fire. They dig up evil on others and broadcast it far and wide.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 12:18’ 16:28; Pr 11:13).

***Vs 28 - A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.***

A dishonest man, a lying man spreads strife by his lies.

**And...** A whisperer, a gossiper separates close friends.

Here Solomon highlights two sins, that are both done with our lips, that destroy men’s reputations and ruin relationships.

**Simply put**, avoid lying and gossip, which can destroy men and both which God hates.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 10:18; Pr 111:13; Pr 18:8).

***Vs 29 - A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good.***

When I read this proverb, the first thing that came to mind was a modern proverb that teaches this same point, namely: **Bad behavior corrupts good character.**

This of course is Biblical, Paul said it this way to the church in Corinth: *“Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."” (1Co 15:33 ESV)* This is exactly what Solomon is teaching here.

Here Solomon warns his sons about violent men. Men who are corrupt (in it various forms) entice their neighbors to follow along in that corruption.

**And...** Men who are corrupt lead those around them in the way that is not good.

As parents we understand this principle, I hope we understand it as adults.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 1:10-14; Pr 3:31).

***Vs 30 - Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things; he who purses his lips brings evil to pass.***

This is a little tough, but I believe what Solomon is saying is that the one who closes his eyes to evil is the one who is also planning evil. Solomon could be saying the one who winks at sin, is a planner of dishonest things himself.

The one who purses his lips, the one who uses his mouth to convince others to bring evil to pass. Evil men shut their eyes to the evil around them and uses their lips to persuade others to evil.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 6:12-13; Pr 12:13; Pr 12:22).

***Vs 31 - Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.***

Most of us, in this group have gray or graying hair. Does our wisdom make our graying hair a complimentary crown, an insult, or a contradiction?

If you have the amount of wisdom as you do gray hairs, your gray hair is a crown, it was gained through a righteous life that glorifies Jesus.

If on the other hand you have loads of gray hair and little wisdom. You are a contradiction and thus behaving like a fool.

May our gray hairs each be gained by a life lived committed to following Jesus. May they serve as a badge of wisdom experienced and lived out.

**CONSIDER** (Ti 2:1-2; Job 12:12; Pr 16:31).

***Vs 32 - Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.***

Here is wisdom that is repeated multiple times in the Proverbs, a wise person is one who is able to rule his spirit and emotions.

Solomon would tell us that one of the best tests of our spiritual condition is how, through the power of the Spirit, we rule our emotions.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 14:29; Pr 19:11; Jam 1:19-20).

**Vs 33 - The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.**

We use words like luck, chance, coincidence, or even accident. But never forget, our God is sovereign, He is not only ruling His world, He is also ruling and directing our lives**.**

**CONSIDER:**

When the flood came or how long it lasted, luck or a sovereign God. The formation of the nation of Israel, luck or a sovereign God. How long the nation of Israel was in Egypt, luck or a sovereign God. Joseph’s rise to power, luck or a sovereign God. Daniel’s rise to prominence, luck or a sovereign God.

Never forget (Rom 8:28;29).

I have heard enough, I have seen enough, and I am thoroughly convinced that we serve a sovereign God who is in absolute control!

I asked Copilot to sum up the teachings of Proverbs 16 in one or two sentences. Here is the response: *Proverbs 16 teaches that while humans may make plans, it is ultimately* ***God who directs their steps****, weighing motives and guiding outcomes. The chapter emphasizes the value of humility, righteousness, and wisdom over pride and wealth, urging us to align our actions with divine purpose for a life of peace and integrity.*