

Pleasing God

July 26, 2020

Proverbs 15:33-16:11

In Proverbs, various styles of literature are used. In chapters 15-22, we find many proverbs that are just one verse long. This “anthology” structure gives great diversity, but it poses a challenge for those seeking threads that tie all the pieces together. For our verses for today, we find some broad headings: God’s sovereignty, God’s judgment and God’s justice.

God’s sovereignty -What is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human free will? Rather than discuss this complex theological idea, the verses today simply assert it. God is in control. Nothing can overpower God, and no one can outsmart him.

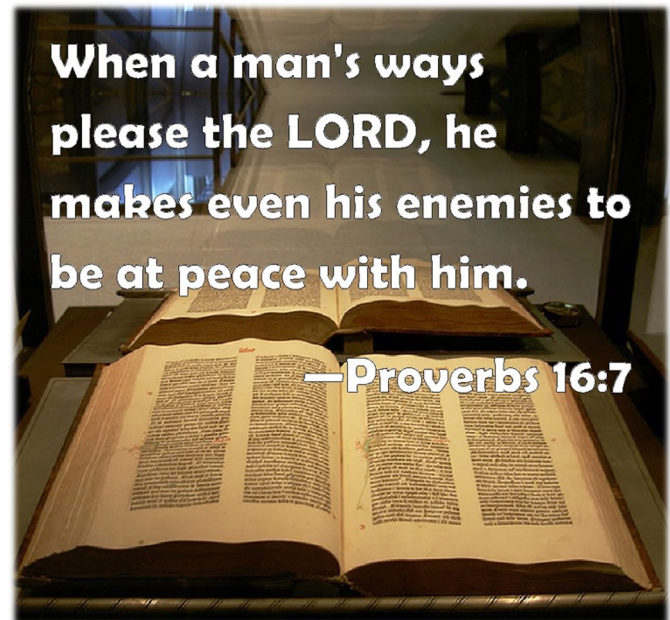
God’s judgment- God’s judgment also shows up throughout the Bible. Proverbs also bears witness to this truth (16:4-5, 7). God does not simply wink at sin or “let it go.” Rather, God sees the world in its throes of injustice, and he will do something about it. It might not be immediate, but God’s judgment nevertheless is certain.

God’s justice - God’s judgment goes hand-in-hand with his justice. But what does “justice” mean, biblically speaking? The heart of justice is “fear of the Lord.” Full justice cannot exist where people do not know and worship the one true God. But justice is not simply an individual affair. Justice also is a state of affairs in which all people are treated rightly. [excerpts by Joshua Sharp]

Wisdom Demonstrated (Proverbs 15:33; 16:8)

- If we are truly wise in the Lord, how will we know it?
 - We know we’re receiving true wisdom if it causes us to have “**fear of the Lord**”.
- In Hebrew text, ‘*fear of the Lord*’ does not mean His presence terrorizes us, instead it implies having God in our lives gives us a sense of joyful trust.
 - His faithful love for us results in our loving respect for Him.
- God has the power and authority to do anything He wants. Compared to Him, we are helpless.
 - This should lead us to come to Him in humility.
 - We should approach Him as humble servants who love Him and seek to please Him.
- As true wisdom prompts us to fear the Lord, true prosperity causes us to make righteousness our priority. When we are wise in Him, we know being right with Him is a priceless treasure.
- While many people today teach a ‘prosperity’ gospel focused on money and possessions, Solomon teaches us that a God-centered perspective defies conventional wisdom about wealth.
 - A wealthy man is content with little as long as God’s with him on his journey.
 - Money and possessions do not make a person content. Better to grow in righteousness than in riches of the world.

➤ **What is the connection between walking with God and contentment?**



Accountability Established (Proverbs 16:1, 4-5, 9)

- The ancients observed that important decisions were often accompanied by increased heart rate and feelings of pressure in the chest. Thus, the heart represented human volition or decision-making.
- We make plans for this and that almost every day.
 - Our plans make their way to our heart where they become felt not just thought.
- However, the final word in our plans should come from the Lord, else our plans will center on our own purposes instead of His.
 - God has made all things in our world so His purpose can be accomplished. We're foolish when we don't take His purpose into consideration.
- The Lord has prepared a day for the wicked to face the consequences of rejecting His wisdom.
 - When a person rejects the Lord, their heart sprouts and grows selfish pride.
- In contrast, when we ask Him to take us where He wants us to go, he will direct our steps along the way and bring us joy.

➤ **Do you experience a sense of joy in making plans for something?**

➤ **Have you shared with others that all will be accountable to God?**

Motives Matter (Proverbs 16:2,10-11)

- **Does the end justify the means?** No.
- **Do our motives matter as long as we do something good?** Yes.
- Sometimes we deceive ourselves into believing that what we are doing is right.
 - **"but the Lord weighs motives"** NIV or **"the Lord weigheth our spirits"** KJV
 - Whereas the heart represented decision-making, the spirit represented the power, or motives, behind our decisions and actions.
- Solomon illustrates the right motive by describing the ideal king. If he turned his heart toward listening to God, the motive for his decisions and judgments would please God.
- Solomon gives another example of the value God placed on right motives.
 - Unscrupulous merchants would manipulate weights and balances in making transactions.
 - **"A just weight and balance are the Lord's"** – The Lord nourished honesty in believers.

➤ **What actions can you take to ensure that your motives please the Lord?**

Blessing Assured (Proverbs 16:3,6-7)

- **"Commit thy works unto the Lord"** – No matter if you are cleaning the floors, designing a spaceship, or preaching the gospel, God wants us to place our work in His hands.
 - We will find that He takes our plans and shapes them so they will honor Him.
- Solomon identifies another blessing God's people receive – sinful behavior is purged.
 - If we have given our life to Christ, He has forgiven our sins.
 - We can attest to His unconditional love for us and His gracious faithfulness.

➤ **Which of God's blessings did you experience this week?**

Biblical Truth: **God's people should seek to please Him in their attitudes and actions.**

**"AS IN WATER FACE
REFLECTS FACE, SO A
MAN'S HEART REVEALS
THE MAN
PROVERBS 27:19"**

Things God Hates (Proverbs 6:16-19)

- arrogant eyes (v. 17)
- a lying tongue (v. 17)
- hands that shed innocent blood (v. 17)
- a heart that plots wicked schemes (v. 18)
- feet eager to run to evil (v. 18)
- a false witness (v. 19)
- one who stirs up trouble (v. 19)



**Proverbs 16:2 All a person's ways
seem pure to them, but motives
are weighed by the Lord**

*Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and
truth iniquity is purged: and by
the fear of the LORD men
depart from evil.*