

Everyday Wisdom

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[0 : 0 0] We are going through the book of Proverbs. We're not hitting every chapter, but we are picking out a few chapters here and there just to try to get familiarized with the book of Proverbs, how to study it.

And as we look through individual Proverbs, we'll be able to point out some different things that might help with the book overall as we read and study the book. Today, there's a few things I want us to pay attention to as far as themes.

Really, here in this chapter, there's a few themes. I think one is wisdom towards God and our relationship towards him. There's also several Proverbs here that either are directed to kings or directed to people who are dealing with kings or rulers.

We don't have as many kings today as back then, but it applies to any kind of governmental leader. And then also wisdom in regarding to making decisions or plans.

So those are a few different themes that we'll be seeing today. Also, there are a few verses in here that some take to promote a view of that everything in your life is determined, determined by God.

[1 : 1 8] Everything that happens is God's doing. Sometimes people refer to that as Calvinism. But there is this view that is fairly popular in the Christian world and has been for many, many years.

It was popularized by a guy named Calvin before him, a guy named Augustine. But there was this thread, and it really, I think, comes from the Greeks. And that's where Augustine picked it up because he was very much into Greek philosophy before he became a Christian.

If you look up Augustine in an encyclopedia, one of the things they'll say is that he is credited with kind of merging Greek thought and Christian thought together. And so there is this idea that everything that happens is determined by God.

And there are actually at least three verses in here, maybe more that some might point to. And we'll look at those and consider those in kind of a critical manner and see what do these things actually teach.

So we're going to actually start. Let's just start in verse 1, and we'll see how far we get. Hopefully, we'll get through to the end. But Proverbs 16, verse 1, Now, this is one of those Proverbs that when you first read it, it's not clear what it's saying.

[2 : 4 1] It's kind of difficult to understand. And if you read commentaries on this, you'll find that there's lots of different approaches to how to understand this. It's much disputed. So we're going to actually spend some time here and really try to understand what this is saying.

There are two interpretations that I've heard that I don't think really fit. One is that men should make preparations to speak, to share.

But ultimately, God is going to be the one who gives you the words to speak. Jesus actually taught this when he was, as we were studying through the Gospels, he taught his disciples, Well, actually, you don't need to prepare.

When the time comes, God will give you the words to speak. But as we talked about in, as we were studying through the Gospels, that was for a specific era, time period of the Tribulation, in which God was going to supernaturally work in the lives of those believers.

But typically, if you don't prepare, you're not going to have anything to say. And so I don't think that is the, I don't think that's what's being spoken of here.

[3 : 53] The other approach to this is, well, every time somebody speaks, God's hand is involved in bringing those words to pass. And that's that view of divine determinism, that everything that happens is being determined by God.

So no matter what you say, good or bad, God's ultimately the one who is controlling your speech. I don't think that's the correct view either.

I think what's being communicated here is that, hey, everybody makes plans, right? Everybody makes plans for their life, what they want to do, what they want to accomplish in life.

But the answer of the tongue is a reference to getting good counsel. Here it's talking about an answer, right?

And what comes before an answer? A question, right? And so the reference here is, hey, if you're making plans in life, the appropriate thing to do is not to just make plans without any kind of consideration of what is the wise thing to do, but you should ask for counsel.

[5 : 03] And when you ask for counsel, you get back wisdom. Hopefully, right? Not always. It depends on who you ask. But as another proverb says, in a multitude of counselors, you ask multiple people.

You might get some good advice and bad advice, and hopefully you're able to discern the difference. But I think what's being communicated here is that we make plans, and we ought to get wisdom.

We ought to get counsel from others or from books, from the scriptures on those plans. Again, the answer, but the answer of the tongue, the answer of the tongue, the wise counsel that we might get, that is from the Lord.

Proverbs 15, verse 28, also uses that same kind of phraseology. It says this, The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

So a wise man will study to know how he ought to answer when somebody asks him a question. But here it says that answer is from the Lord. But what does that mean?

[6 : 11] Does that mean that every time somebody gives you counsel, that it's from the Lord? No, but the idea is, is that getting wisdom from counselors, that concept, that idea, that approach, is a godly one.

It's something that the Lord approves of. It's from the Lord. For example, you are interested in starting a business, and your idea is a great one.

There's many flavors of ice cream, but I came up with a new one. Bacon-flavored ice cream. Doesn't that sound amazing? Everybody loves bacon, and everybody loves ice cream.

Put those two together, and we can have an amazing business, right? But a wise man, before he starts his business, will ask counsel from those who have experience in business, right?

And you might ask the question, here's my idea. What do you think? And a wise man will answer, and he'll say, well, do you really think there's a demand for that?

[7 : 18] When you start a business, you should do a little bit of market research and find out, is this something that people would really be interested in? And maybe this isn't a good idea, a good business idea.

And you see, that answer from the tongue, that is from the Lord. It's not that the Lord put those words in some kind of prophetic way, that these are oracles from God, but getting wisdom from wise people, that answer of the tongue, of wisdom, that is from the Lord.

Let's move on to verse two. All the ways of man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit.

And this, in a way, ties to the previous verse, because it's talking about the ways of man and then the ways of the Lord, or the way of the Lord.

You know, we tend to judge ourselves and judge others differently. We give more grace to ourselves. We look at our own lives through rose-colored glasses.

[8 : 26] We might say that so-and-so is picky, but I have discerning tastes, right? We might say, oh, that person is rude, but I'm just, I have a direct personality.

We justify even some of the most vile actions man can do. I think of American slavery in this country. And some of the reasons why, even Christian believers gave to why they owned slaves.

And they would say things like, well, the African savage can't handle freedom, so I'm actually doing him a favor. Those were actual answers given. But here it says, even though all the ways of man are pure in his own eyes, it says this, but the Lord weighs the spirit.

You see, God, his scales are just. When he weighs things, he doesn't do it relative to others. It is a standard, an eternal standard, based on his design of us and the world that he created for us.

And he will weigh our hearts according to that fixed standard of righteousness, not judging us. Like, it's easy to do ourselves, right? We judge ourselves in comparison to other men.

[9 : 45] And typically, when we do it, we pick other men who are especially dishonest, hard-hearted, evil, because it makes us look better. But instead of doing that, we ought to look to the Lord, to his word, to know what is truly pure.

It is not wise to judge ourselves by others. There's a saying. Have you ever heard this one? It goes like this. Do what you think is right.

Have you ever heard that? And that on the face of it sounds good, but in reference to this passage, when every man, that his own ways look pure in his sight, it doesn't, that saying doesn't come across in the same way.

In fact, if we look in the book of Judges, one of the themes of the Judges, and this phrase is used over and over again, it says, every man did what was right in his own eyes.

And does what follows, does what come after that phrase, is it righteousness and holiness and purity and godliness? No, it's a bunch of evil and rebellion.

[10 : 59] Men doing right, what is right in their own eyes, is many times evil. Instead, we ought not to do what we think is right. As believers or really anybody, we should take the time to look to God's word, figure out what is right, even if we're confused about it, and do that.

Not do what we think is right. Our hearts will sometimes even deceive us. And just another note on this verse before we move on to the next one.

From a grace perspective, you know, every man, what this is communicating in this verse is that every man wants to appear good to others and even to themselves.

They want to feel good about themselves. They want to think that their whole life is pure. They want to appear righteous before others. But what grace teaches us is that we're not righteous.

We're not. We are sinners. We're not nearly as good as we ought to be. But grace also teaches that if we humble ourselves, God will, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and what he did, if we're willing, he will credit to us his righteousness.

[12 : 20] And so then, we don't have to pretend that we're pure anymore. We can just accept ourselves, our failings, for what they are.

And stop putting up the charade. Stop putting up the pretense. And we can allow the light of God's law, the light of God's word to shine brightly on our lives and expose any impure and any ungodly thing.

And it's okay. It's okay because our righteousness is not our own. It's a foreign righteousness. It's one credited to us. So, let the light come.

Let the light expose any dark way in us, anything that's not of him. Because the foundation of my life isn't my own works. It is the work of Christ that he accomplished for me.

Verse 3. It says this. Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established. When you make a commitment in your life to follow the Lord in everything that you do to live your life to the fullest for him, then you provide these safety constraints for your life.

[13 : 40] Your thoughts, your ideas, your plans, they will all be established on a sure foundation because your life is committed to doing what is right, what is godly, what is pleasing to the Lord.

You've got the right motivation. So your thoughts, your plans will be established. Verse 4. The Lord has made all for himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

Now this sounds kind of scary. And going back to this view of divine determinism, there are some who have taught, and I think it's a horrific idea, idea, that God chooses some people to elect, to predestine to heaven, to eternal life with God, and others that he creates, he predestines them to a life and eternity in hell, to that day of doom.

Is that what this is teaching? Many people have pointed to this scripture and taught that. Here's what I think that Solomon is teaching in here. You know, God is the creator.

He created all of us. And because he created all of us and everything that exists, it all belongs to him. Everything belongs to the Lord.

[15 : 08] The flowers and the trees and the rocks and the hills and the valleys and the mountains, the horses and the cows, the lions, the grasshoppers, the honeybees, everything that we see around us belongs to the Lord.

Do you know what else belongs to the Lord? You do. And I do. We belong to him. He owns us.

And so, the Lord has made all for himself. But some people are not interested in the Lord. they want to live life their own way according to their own dictates.

They want to make their own plans apart from him. They want to live independently of the Lord. But here is what this proverb I believe is saying.

That even the wicked who want to reject God, who want to live their life apart from him, who do not want to be owned by him, they don't get to make that choice.

[16 : 18] They still belong to the Lord. And even though the Lord allows leeway in life, he allows people to reject him, to make evil choices opposed to his wisdom and his righteousness.

But they don't get to choose an option that God has not offered. And God has offered this. He says, choose you this day whom you will serve. I set before you life and death.

And there's those two choices. And there's not a third option. Well, there's kind of a third option in a way, right? Choose life, choose death. He says, hey, you can choose Christ. Of course, that is the way of life.

Those who humble themselves before God, that will lead to a life, to eternal life, to eternal peace. But those who reject God, that will lead to eternal death and destruction.

So God owns everything. He owns all people, both the righteous and the wicked. He owns the righteous, those who humble themselves before him for the day of glory.

[17 : 28] But he also owns the wicked for the day of doom. Verse 5. Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

Though they join forces, none will go unpunished. Here is a verse about pride, and there are many proverbs about pride, all of them negative.

You know, today we use the word pride in positive ways. We say, oh, I'm so proud of my kid. People have bumper stickers on the back of their car. My kid is a straight-A student or an honor roll or whatever.

And you know, you're proud of your children. children. The Bible never, ever once, and somebody can correct me if I'm wrong if you know of a Bible verse, but I've never seen in the Bible anywhere a reference to pride that is positive.

It is always negative. And the idea of pride typically in the Bible is that you are thinking of yourself more than you ought to. And I think specifically in this proverb, it's a reference to a pride regarding God.

[18 : 31] I don't need God. I can live life on my own without Him. And so everyone, proud in heart, everyone who doesn't think that they need God is an abomination to the Lord.

And people think, I don't need God. I can just gather all kinds of, I can build a kingdom for myself. I can build an array of forces, build armies, build even a nation.

And they think that will bring them safety. And men can do pretty amazing things on their own without God.

But those accomplishments that they make are for not, they are for nothing. In the end, each and every proud heart, their end is destruction.

I think of the story of the account of the tower of Babel. Remember, early on in the book of Genesis, right after the flood, and all these men, they were building up a tower, and God, He saw what they were doing and they were accomplishing something amazing.

[19 : 42] But He put a stop to it. They were doing it without Him. And many people over the history of the world have built empires. The Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, all the Chinese dynasties, rich and powerful empires, and even America today, right?

The most powerful, the wealthiest nation in all of the world. But none of our national accomplishments, the high rises that we've built, the rockets that we send into space, our military prowess, none of that will mean anything when we stand before God on that last day.

You can't say, wait a second, but I'm an American. That's not going to fly. Each of us, individually, we need to humble ourselves before God.

And nations ought to do that as well, right? Corporately. You know, I was heartened recently. We've got a new administration and I think it was in the last week or two, I can't remember exactly when this was, but there was the first cabinet meeting for the new administration and all the cabinet members, and it looked like there were several dozen, were in this room and some clips were shared and they started the cabinet meeting with prayer.

Did anybody see this clip? Yeah, I see a few of you. And I just wanted to share this because this really was heartening to me and it really fits in with this verse. Scott Turner was the secretary who gave the prayer.

[21 : 32] He's the secretary of HUD Housing and Urban Development, but this is how his prayer, when he says this, Father, the Bible says that blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

Father, today we honor you in your rightful place and thank you for giving us this opportunity to restore faith in this country and be a blessing to the people of America and we pray in our meeting that you would be glorified in our conversation.

In Jesus' name, amen. Wow. That was a prayer and I've heard, there have been many prayers in the White House in the past, right?

and some of them better than others, but this is a prayer that really is a humble prayer before God and I'm sure there are people in that room that maybe don't have the humble hearts that they should, but wow, what a heartening thing to me to see that kind of humble prayer made towards God and if all of our leaders would have that same humble heart, man, things would be so different today and change drastically in a short amount of time.

We'll pray for that as we pray for our leaders. Next verse, verse 6, in mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.

[22 : 58] You know, there are people who have built a habit of evil in their lives. They have a past, they have a history of doing wickedly and they might resign themselves to their lot in life as being an evildoer.

They might say, I've already set the trajectory of my life. Maybe they are a drug addict or a drunk or a womanizer, whatever it might be, a cheat.

They might say, it's too late for me to turn towards what is right and what is good. But here is what Solomon says in this Proverbs.

In this Proverb, in mercy and truth, atonement is provided for iniquity. God has provided a way. This is in the Old Testament, remember? But even at that point, there is something provided now, it's insufficient, it's incomplete.

Remember what the atonement was provided in the Old Testament? It was the animal sacrifice. Imperfect. It didn't do the job completely.

[24 : 06] But it was a temporary thing. It really typified something that was coming in the future. And really this, I think, points to the future when Jesus Christ finalized that atonement, made a perfect atonement, one that did not have to be done ever again.

And so God, throughout all of history, his heart has been to atone for the sins of the world, to provide a way that anyone can ask for forgiveness and find a way to reform their lives, to become a child of God, to become godly, to turn from their wickedness.

But you know, there are many people, they try to reform themselves on their own. They try to reform their lives without God. And if God didn't offer anything, I guess maybe that would be a noble thing to do, but that's not really how God designed us.

He designed us to need him. He designed us to turn to him. And so the second part of this Proverbs, it says, and by the fear of the Lord, one departs from evil.

If you try to depart from evil without the Lord, it's going to be an epic failure. You might succeed in some areas, but you will not succeed in reforming your life.

[25 : 29] But anyone, especially today in light of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, anyone can just humble ourselves and turn to him and receive that gift, that gift of forgiveness, that gift of the atoning sacrifice.

And all you have to do is ask. It's a free gift, one that is offered to anyone who's willing to receive it. But that gift is not forced on anyone.

So you have to ask. But if you ask, if you fear God, if you turn to him, he will credit his righteousness to you, forgive you of every sin, and you can be on the path to becoming somebody who is good, somebody who follows in godliness according to God's wisdom and his righteousness.

righteousness. Verse 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Now, as I read that, the first thing I think is, well, that's not always true.

Does anybody else think that? And I think that is one of the things we have to take into consideration. We've talked about this before. Proverbs tends to be generalizations, rules of thumb, things that tend to be true but aren't in always every circumstance.

[26 : 51] But I think the idea being promoted here is that when a man walks with God according to righteousness, even those who hate him, who despise him, for whatever reason, maybe it's because of righteousness, maybe it's for some other reason, they're inclined to just leave him be, leave him alone.

He's not an agitator. And there are plenty of exceptions to this rule. I mean, I think even of the words of Jesus when he was talking to his own disciples and he was, in particular, had in mind the coming tribulation.

But he said, if they hated me, guess what? They're going to hate you. And he warned his own disciples about things that were coming to those who hated them, persecution, and even death.

He said, some of you will be killed. That's not being at peace with your enemies, is it? But here's, I think, the general idea and we'll just give an example. You're a Christian and you are in business.

And who are your enemies when you have a business? It's your competitors, right? Those who you compete against. And sometimes, especially in business, it can be quite a ruthless and cutthroat world.

[27 : 59] But if you run your business in a way that is honorable to all men, where you deal fairly with others, even your competitors, you don't try to poach employees from them. You don't try to cheat or lie, you know, spread rumors about your competitors.

I think, in general, again, a rule of thumb, in general, your competitors, those who are your, quote, enemies, will see that. And they will tend to be at peace with you. Not always, but I think that will be a tendency, something that you will see.

But if you act in the same way, right, you don't follow the ways of the Lord, you're the same cutthroat, ruthless, will you ever make peace with those enemies, with those competitors? No, you will always be at war, always be at odds when you don't follow the way of the Lord.

Verse 8, better is a little with righteousness than vast revenues without justice. You know, sometimes, maybe even many times, doing the right thing gets in the way of monetary profit.

Many times, you can make just a little bit more, you can close that big deal, and all you have to do is just tell one little lie. Just cheat, just a little bit.

[29 : 25] Exploit just one or two people. And you can land that big deal. You can gain that promotion that you've been looking for. but, you know what?

In the grand scheme of things, it's better to have just a little bit, to be satisfied with just the wage that you make, the little that you earn, and live with a pure conscience than it is to have the comforts of great wealth but have a hard heart or a guilty conscience.

The same thing I think applies to even nations, right? And I think that might be what's in view here when he talks about justice because a lot of times when the Proverbs specifically talk about justice, it's talking about in terms of the nation.

And so, one of the things that makes me think about is as people go to the polls or election season is in, they will poll the people, they'll survey the voters and ask them, well, what are the number one and two, three things that you are considering when you vote for a president, a congressman, whatever?

What are the things that are top of mind? And can anybody tell me what's the number one thing that always comes to the top of the list? The economy, right? Back during the Clinton administration, some of us were old enough to remember that, there was this phrase that became popular and I still hear it even to this day and it's this, here's what they teach politicians.

[31 : 01] It's the economy, stupid. Anybody remember that? Anybody still hear that around? It's the economy, stupid. The idea is, hey, listen, this is what almost everybody is concerned about, the economy.

And so, as we give our political speeches, we need to make sure that that is at the top of our list of things that we're addressing. And the economy is important and there are things of matters of justice actually, right, that relate to the economy.

when the government is corrupt, when taxes, when citizens, money is being taxed to do all kinds of crazy things as we've been at more and more of those kinds of, of course, many of those things we've known about for years and there have been many other things unearthed recently in our own government.

And so, when it comes to economics, there are matters of justice. But our highest consideration when we choose leaders is not what leader is going to make us the most prosperous.

That is not the most important thing. But here's the question we should ask. What leader will make our nation the most just and the most good?

[32 : 14] The current administration, the Trump administration, he came up with, I think, a brilliant slogan, right, and everybody knows, everybody in the whole country and probably the whole world knows Trump's slogan, MAGA,!

Make America Great Again! Right? It's a brilliant slogan and I think, you know, it's good enough on its own. I think anyone should want their nation to be great, to be prosperous.

prosperous. But I've seen other alternative slogans, one that I just love, uses the same acronym. You may have seen the same t-shirt, it says this, Make America Godly Again.

And man, wouldn't that be a great slogan? I know it wouldn't sell as well, not as many people would get on board, it doesn't have the same wide appeal to the citizenry. But that is what we want, right?

You know what? If we never prosper, but we're a just nation, you know what? That is good enough. And you know what tends to happen when you have a just nation, when justice reigns across your nation?

[33 : 22] It tends towards prosperity, doesn't it? That's what we see happen. And so Solomon is saying, hey, listen, if you have to make a choice between justice and prosperity, you know, choose justice, live on, you know, live on meager means, but choose justice.

That is preferable. It's better to be in poverty with a clean conscience than to enjoy the comforts of wealth with a guilty conscience or with a hard heart. Verse 9, a man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

This is another one that it seems like this is saying that, is it true that every step that I take is something that the Lord planned for my life? That doesn't sound right because there are certainly steps that I've taken in my life that the Lord did not direct.

Anybody else agree with that? There are steps that you have taken in your life that the Lord did not certainly direct. And so what is going on here? I think this goes back to what we explained in verse 1.

Right? What does it mean that the Lord directs his steps? This isn't talking about divine determinism. But all men make plans, right? All men make plans for their lives, what they're going to do.

[34 : 43] But if you look to the Lord for wisdom from the scriptures, from reading the wisdom of others, from getting godly counsel, you will find that your steps have direction.

They are not disordered. They are not all over the place. They're not, your steps aren't crooked. They're not on sandy ground. They're on firm ground. Because getting wisdom is from the Lord.

That is God's idea. It's his plan. And so, in a manner of speaking, your steps are directed by him when you seek out wisdom for your life.

An example, you're choosing a career, a job. And so you might decide, you know what? I've seen some of my friends, they sell drugs and it's easy money.

And so you know what? I'm going to become a drug dealer. In that case, are your steps directed by the Lord? No, the Lord is not directing your steps.

[35 : 46] But instead, you look to God's word and you want to honor him and you think, you know what? I like to work with my hands and I'm pretty good at fixing things. I'd like to become a plumber.

And when you become a plumber, it's a way to serve the Lord by serving others. You can honor him. You can deal honestly and justly, help people with their problems and deal fairly with them.

And so when you make those kinds of plans and you consider God's wisdom and his righteousness and what he would want, then in that, then there is a sense in which your ways, your steps, are being directed by him.

It is the Lord's direction and a path that conforms to his will regarding goodness and wisdom. Verse 10, divination is on the lips of the king and his mouth, or excuse me, his mouth must not transgress in judgment.

This is another strange one that many people have found confusing at first especially. What is divination? I guess that's the first question to ask. Divination is typically something spoken of in a negative sense.

[37 : 00] Divination is when you seek for some kind of spiritual guidance, usually without God. I think of mediums, people who try to summon up the dead, or many times I think it's evil spirits, demons, to speak to them or through them.

And the other is what the Bible calls soothsayers or fortune tellers, those who are looking to try to tell the future. getting insights usually from wicked, evil spirits.

There are a couple of times in the scriptures where that term divination is actually used of getting revelation from God. Sometimes kings will ask a prophet, I need God to help me out with my battle plans.

So that also is referred to as divination. But what's going on here? I think this is a proverb for kings.

This is wisdom for kings. And this chapter, by the way, includes many things, I think, specific to kings. But here, I think, is the meaning.

[38 : 07] You know, when a king speaks, people pay attention. A lot of times, people view the king as almost like a divine figure. Somebody with great authority.

And so, they listen to his words as if it was the words of divine inspiration. As if it's the oracles of God.

And so, as a king, you have to keep that in mind. When I speak, people are listening. They're taking everything to heart. And so, when people expect that, when people see that, the king needs to be careful.

His mouth must not transgress in judgment. When you're making judgments, somebody comes and brings a case before you, or you have to make a decision, don't be flippant about it.

Be careful about every word that you speak. Your citizens are listening, and they're putting great weight in the words that you speak. So, take care. Of course, this doesn't just apply to kings, right?

[39 : 10] Apply to anybody in authority. Even, I think of parents, a lot of times your kids look up to you as if you can do no wrong, right? Every word that you speak is almost divine, right?

And so, we ought to be careful and not be flippant about the words that we speak to those under our authority. Verse 11. Honest weights and scales are the Lord's.

all the weights in the bag are His work. This is a picture of a marketplace, and back then you would go to a market. Let's say you were selling flour, and you're selling one pound or whatever their measurements were back then, one pound of flour.

And you would have a scale there, right? And you would have a weight that equaled one pound on one end, and then you would take the flour and you would dish it in until the scale evened up, right?

You wanted to make sure you were giving a fair portion. What somebody was paying for is what they were getting. And so, that's the picture being painted here.

[40 : 20] But, what does it mean that the honest weights and scales are the Lord's? Is it that the weights belong to Him?

It says all the weights in the bag are His work. Did He make those weights in some way? I think this is going back to what we explained in verse 1.

You know, the answer of the tongue or wise counsel is from the Lord. In the same way, honest dealings in all of your business is also from the Lord.

When you do what is right in your dealings, in your business dealings, in the marketplace, when you deal fairly with your clients or your customers, you are doing the work of the Lord, and that work is from the Lord.

And that work that you are doing, when you're charging somebody a fair price for good work, that is the work of the Lord. Verse 12.

[41 : 22] It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness. Here, I think, is another proverb for kings.

What is the vocation of kings? What is the job of a king, of a ruler, of a president, of a leader, of a nation? They only have one job.

And that job is justice, to establish justice in the nation. There's nothing else. And how can a king, whose only job is to establish justice in the nation, how can he do his job if he is involved in wicked works, committing wickedness?

His whole throne, his whole reign, is just a farce. peace. I think of America, our nation, we have our constitution, and the very beginning of the constitution we call the preamble.

It says this, we the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, what do we do? We establish justice. It continues on, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

[42 : 45] And all those things that follow are just, I think, subcategories of establishing justice. Freedom, human rights, promoting the general welfare, common defense, providing for a defense against enemies, those are all things related to establishing justice.

There's only one job of a king, establishing justice. But when kings pursue other things, what tends to happen?

Justice tends to get relegated to the sideline when kings or rulers are pursuing other things, or doing wickedly, involved in corruption and bribery.

Verse 13, righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him who speaks what is right. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him who speaks what is right.

You know, a king or any leader has a lot of work to do, and they need to delegate that work to others that they can trust. And so even a wicked king, even a corrupt king, who has work to get done, is he going to find another wicked person, somebody who is dishonest with him, somebody who's going to lie, somebody who he can't trust to do his work for him?

[44 : 13] No. Kings love those who speak what is right. I think about two men that serve kings in the Bible, Joseph and Daniel, right? And they were chosen and put in positions of high authority because they were seen as honest men, men who would do what is right, men who could be trusted.

verse 14, as messengers of death is the king's wrath, but a wise man will appease it. As messengers of death is the king's wrath, but a wise man will appease it.

When a king is angry, look out. Kings have a lot of power, rulers have a lot of power, and they might decide if they're upset with you for whatever reason, that they are going to get rid of you.

And so, don't treat a king's wrath like you would your husband or your wife's, right? Treat it differently. One, don't tick off a king, right?

Don't say something rude. His life, or your life, is in his hands. And if he's already angry, just stay out of the way, or find some way to appease it.

[45 : 28] Send a gift. Give a soft answer, as the Proverbs also speak of. A soft answer turns away wrath. I think about David with King Saul.

King Saul, in the latter part of his life, was angry all the time. And David tried his best to appease Saul. Didn't always succeed, but he attempted to.

Verse 15. In the light of the king's face is life, and his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain. In the light of the king's face is life, and his favor is like the cloud of the latter rain.

You don't want to get sideways with the king. You want to be in his good graces. Because he can do all kinds of things to make your life horrible.

And so, I think this applies to anyone. If you have a boss, anyone who's in authority over you, you want to make them happy. You don't want to... I so amaze people who have a boss, and they're just constantly in conflict with your boss.

[46 : 34] Do you think this is going to work out well for you, arguing with your boss all the time? It's not going to work out well. You want your boss, the king, whoever, somebody in authority, you want their face to shine on you.

Verse 16, and some of these other ones we'll go through, quickly, because we've already kind of had other Proverbs that have said similar things, but how much better to get wisdom than gold and to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver?

Again, searching for wisdom as if treasure, something that is going to change our life for the better, like gold or silver. We should search for wisdom just like we search for gold or silver.

Proverbs 17, the highway of the upright is to depart from evil. He who keeps his way preserves his soul.

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil, and he who keeps his way preserves his soul. Wisdom leads to life. Verse 18, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

- [47 : 42] The next verse we'll read also applies to humility and pride. Verse 19, better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Again, pride is thinking of yourself more than you want, or thinking, I don't need God. It's better to humble yourself before others and before the Lord, even if you're doing that with the lowly, than to be with the rich and powerful and to have a heart of pride that will only lead ultimately to destruction.

He who heeds the word wisely will find good and whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.

The wise in heart will be called prudent and sweetness of the lips increases learning. If you're wise in heart, you will pay attention to the words that come out of your mouth, not only the content but also the way they come out.

The words come out in a manner that is sweet or in a manner that is sour. This is a good proverb for those who teach or preach. People prefer to listen to sweet words, not sour ones, not angry ones.

- [48 : 58] And also even just learning to speak well, right, in a way that it's easy to listen. Some people are harder to listen to than others and when it's hard to listen to somebody, you're not going to learn the things that you're intended to learn.

Verse 22, understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it, but the correction of fools is folly. When you have wisdom, when you have understanding, it's a wellspring of life for you.

But when you correct a fool, it tends to be foolhardy to correct fools. Now, not always, but fools tend to be hard-hearted.

And so, we shouldn't waste too much time trying to correct fools. There's a, I don't know if you call it a comic or a meme that I've seen, and it's a wife calling her husband for dinner.

He's on the computer. Honey, time for dinner. What are you still doing on the computer? And he answers and responds as he's typing. I'll be there in ten minutes. There's somebody wrong on the internet again. Have you ever heard that?

- [50 : 01] And so, there are plenty of fools out in the world, right? Plenty of people who need to be corrected. Many of them won't listen. Jesus spoke of this when he says, don't cast your pearls before swine.

You know, try once, maybe twice, and then move on to the next person. Find somebody who will listen. But don't keep going back to that same fool over and over when they won't listen.

We'll go through these last few more quickly. The heart of the wise teaches his mouth and adds learning to its lips. You know, when it comes to wisdom, it's not just what you think, it's not just what you decide, but also wisdom on how to communicate.

Right? And so wisdom considers, am I communicating well? Am I being tactful in my communication? Verse 24, pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul, and health to the bones.

Verse 25, there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. I think we already covered that in verse two. We always think that we're right. but if we're wrong, that way leads to death.

- [51 : 15] Verse 26, the person who labors, labors for himself, for his hungry mouth drives him on. You know, hunger is a great motivator.

You know, we all prefer comfort, we all prefer rest over labor, right? And so it's easy to just tend towards looking for the easy way out. But when your stomach is empty and there's no food around, you know, that hunger will drive you to serve others, to find a way to earn that food that your stomach hungers for.

Unfortunately, many governments across the world, including here in America, we have these things called welfare benefits, and they're proposed as something good for the world, something good for the nation, but what they tend to do is to destroy that motivation which God intended that our stomachs, that our need to eat, would drive us to do good in serving others, to earn our own way.

Paul says, right, to the church, I can't remember which church it was to, but he said, hey, listen, if there's somebody who's not willing to work among your group, then he shouldn't eat. Don't feed him. If he's not working, if he's not pitching in, if he's not doing his fair share, if he's not contributing to the community in some kind of way to earn a living, to serve others, don't feed him.

He shouldn't eat. Verse 28, a perverse man sows strife. Sorry, I skipped one. Verse 27, an ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire.

[52 : 54] You know, ungodly people will scatter their evil with their lips, telling dirty jokes, ridiculing other people, promoting evil schemes. Verse 28, a perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Those people who create strife, you know, strife will come to you, but sometimes people are just good at creating it, right? They're the instigators. You don't want to be that kind of person, creating the strife, creating the conflict.

Or those whispers, that's spreading rumors. You know what that tends to? Breaking your friendships. relationships. Nobody wants to be friends with somebody who's constantly starting arguments or spreading rumors about people.

Verse 29, a violent man entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good. You know, misery loves company, evil loves company. People don't want to just do evil on their own.

They want company. They want to invite people to join them. Psalm 1 speaks to this and it says, walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners.

[54 : 08] People will constantly, always be enticing you to join them in evil. Run away. Verse 30, he winks his eye to devise perverse things.

He purses his lips and brings about evil. This is talking about like shifty behavior. behavior. We, you know, different cultures, we talked about this last week, have different kinds of ways, body language that they use to communicate shifty behavior.

But when you see those types of things, whatever they are, stay away. Run away from that kind of person. Don't have anything to do with them. Their ways are evil. Verse 31, the silver haired head is a crown of glory if it is found in the way of righteousness.

Let me read it again. The silver haired head is a crown of glory if it is found in the way of righteousness. When somebody reaches an older age, right, this is a crown, this gray head is a sign of older age.

But when somebody reaches that age, they have experienced many things. And sometimes people get to that age and they haven't learned anything throughout their experiences.

[55 : 24] But for those who pursue righteousness, they've learned much wisdom. And so their hair becomes to them a crown of glory because of the wisdom that they have gained.

And we ought to look to those with that crown of glory for wisdom when we pursue it. Verse 32, he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who takes his city. Really, this is about your emotions. If you cannot control your emotions, how you feel, then you're not any better.

Or if you can't do that, taking a city is, sorry, let me start that over again. He who is slow to anger, anger, he who controls his emotions, anger or any other emotion, is better than somebody who can overcome or conquer even a city.

Are you somebody who's looking for a promotion at work? Are you looking to run or start your own business? Do you want to be a leader in some kind of arena of life?

[56 : 46] The first thing you need to do is learn to lead yourself, to control yourself, to rule your own spirit, your own emotions.

And then you will be in a better position to manage other people. And then the last verse says this, the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.

This is another one that many turn to to say, hey, listen, this is saying that every time you throw the dice or any other games of chance, everything that is happening with those dice, whatever number it rolls on, God has predetermined what that will be.

And it's an indication, some teach, that everything that happens in life is from the Lord. But I don't think that's what's being taught at all here.

This is a proverb of wisdom of how we should approach life. Even though it sounds like divine determinism or some kind of fatalistic determinism, I don't think it is at all.

[57 : 52] It's a principle of wise decision making. You know, when you have a difficult choice to make, where you need to divide something or maybe choose a person for a job, for example, hey, we're allotting chores to the kids.

And let's say we have two kids and two chores. One is washing the dishes and the other is cleaning the toilets. Do you ask the oldest one, well, what would you prefer? What's going to happen?

They're going to choose the dishes and the younger one, what's he going to do? That's not fair, right? So what do you do? Hey, cast lots. Who's going to draw straws, right? That's one of the ones that we do.

Whoever gets the shorter straw, you're cleaning the toilets. But that's fair, right? And so it eases contentions. Or let's say you have an inheritance between many siblings and you have land, one plot of land.

What do you do? Well, you can try dividing that lot up between the kids, but well, some lots might be nicer than others and some might prefer this better than that. Well, throw dice, cast lots.

[59 : 00] In fact, this is actually what happened with the nation of Israel. When they went into the land that they were given, the 12 tribes, they used lots to decide which tribe would go to which plot of land.

The same thing happened when choosing who would be the 12th apostle to replace Judas, remember? There were two men, both of them were qualified, but you can imagine if somebody made a decision, people would get upset and angry, well, hey, he's my friend, whatever, and so, hey, we're just going to draw straws, cast lots, and whatever the lot falls on, we're going to consider that as a decision from the Lord, not that God is controlling the dice as we roll them.

In fact, just a couple of chapters later, here is another proverb about the casting of lots, and it says this, Proverbs 18, 18, casting lots causes contentions to cease and keeps the mighty apart.

When you have some kind of decision to be made that will cause contention, casting lots is a method of wisdom to prevent contentions, and so, here, the lot is cast into the lap, so you're using dice or some kind of lot to make a decision, but it's every decision is from the Lord.

This is the path of wisdom that God gave us. God is the God to God to to the Lord.

[60 : 27] I know there's a lot there, but did anybody learn anything this morning? Or even if you didn't learn anything, were you encouraged by some of the things that we went over? You know, sometimes, you know, we don't always learn something new when we go through the scriptures, but many times we need to be reminded again, right?

Amen. Let's finish with a word of prayer. Father, we need wisdom, all of us in this room. We need more wisdom each and every day, and we ask that you would be at work in our hearts and in our lives, that we would grow in wisdom looking to you to direct our steps with wisdom from above, not the wisdom of this world, but the wisdom that is from heaven, from you.

We pray and ask these things in Jesus' name, our Savior. Amen. Thanks, everybody.