

Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 13,

Life with God, Proverbs 16:1-22:16

6-min. Video Overview

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You ever have one of those days, or one of those years, where you feel like you're doing everything right, but things just keep going wrong? Or you wonder why your best-laid plans so often just go sideways? Well, turns out people have been wrestling with these exact questions for thousands of years. Today we're diving deep into one single chapter from the Bible's great book of wisdom, Proverbs 16. We're going to unpack it using some analysis from Dr. August Konkell to see what timeless advice it holds for our very, very modern lives.

Ok, let's get into it. So here's how we're going to break this down. We've got five key themes.

First up, we'll look at that constant tug of war between our plans and, well, a higher purpose. Then, we'll get into the hard truth about our own motivations. After that, we'll touch on a surprisingly relevant take on government, explore the danger of a path that only seems right, and finally, we'll flip the script on what true strength really looks like.

Alright, so let's kick things off with that feeling we all know so well. We make our plans, we set our goals, but at the end of the day, we're living in a world we can't fully control. This first section tackles that tension head-on.

And right away, Proverbs 16 hits us with this huge question. I mean, we love to think we're the sole authors of our own story, right? But this ancient wisdom suggests, hey, maybe we're co-authors at best, working with a force that's way beyond our direct control. And it frames this whole problem in such a fascinating way, through communication.

Dr. Konkell points out that you can spend ages, literally ages, planning the perfect thing to say. You craft the message, you get it just right in your head, but the actual outcome, what the other person really hears and understands, that's often a totally different story. And this just nails the core idea, doesn't it? There's always this gap between what we intend and what actually happens.

We can control the preparation, sure, but we don't control the reception. It's a powerful reminder that even with something as personal as our own speech, we aren't fully in the driver's seat. Dr. Konkell has this brilliant analogy of a farmer.

Think about it. A farmer can do everything perfectly – get the best seeds, work the soil tirelessly, have flawless technique. But they can't make the sun shine, they can't make the rain fall, and they can't stop a sudden frost.

After they've done all their work, they have to simply trust a higher power for the harvest. And here's the key – this isn't about being passive; it's about doing your absolute best and

then entrusting the results. And that idea, it flows right into our next big theme – self-knowledge.

Because if we can't even fully control the words coming out of our own mouths, what does that say about our ability to really understand the complex motivations buried deep inside of us? Okay, this is where it gets really honest. Proverbs 16:2 basically says that all our ways seem pure and right to us, but the Lord is the one who weighs our motives. I mean, think about it.

Why do you do the good things you do? The truth is, our motives are almost always a mixed bag. There's the noble reason we tell ourselves, and then there are the deeper reasons – maybe a little bit of pride, some insecurity, a desire for approval, things we might not even see in ourselves. The proverb says a divine perspective sees the whole unfiltered picture.

So the point here isn't to make you feel bad about yourself. Not at all. It's that humility is the absolute starting point for real wisdom.

True self-awareness only begins when we can admit, hey, maybe I don't have all the answers about my own heart. Okay, so from our own inner world, the chapter kind of zooms out to the external world of power and politics, and its perspective is incredibly nuanced and, you know what, it's still super relevant today. Dr. Konkel calls the biblical view of government a love-hate relationship.

On the one hand, it's absolutely necessary. Without it, you get chaos. It provides structure.

But on the other hand, the scriptures don't pull any punches. They're brutally honest that concentrated power is dangerous and that governments often become the worst offenders. So the wisdom here isn't just that government is good, or that government is bad.

It's that we have to engage with it critically, recognizing that we need it for order while always being vigilant against its potential for corruption. But it also holds up this beautiful ideal. The goal of government, its highest purpose, is to be like a gentle rain, something that brings life and flourishing and peace to its people.

That's a powerful standard to hold our leaders to. Alright, this next section has one of the most famous and frankly most chilling verses in the entire book. It's all about the profound danger of just relying on what feels right to us.

And we've all been there, right? You've got a plan, an idea, a direction that just feels absolutely, undeniably correct. It makes perfect sense in your head. You're completely convinced it's the right way to go.

And there it is. There is a way that seems right to a person, but its destiny is the path of death. Whoa, let that sink in for a second.

Now this isn't just talking about physical death. It's talking about a path that leads to destruction, to ruin, to profound loss. It's this stark warning against the arrogance of our own unexamined gut feelings.

Now to make this real, Dr. Konkel uses the modern example of a workaholic. Hard work. That seems like a good path, doesn't it? But he explains that when work isn't just about the work itself, but about trying to feed a desire that can never be satisfied- for more money, more status, more security- it becomes a tyrant.

A path that seems so right becomes a totally destructive force in your life. So if our plans are fragile and our own wisdom can lead us astray, where do we find real strength? Well, this final section totally flips the script on what most of us think about power, success, and even getting older. What does power look like to you? For most of us, we think of force or control, maybe coercion.

But Proverbs argues that true power, the greater power, is patience. It's the ability to control yourself, not just control other people. The proverb puts it this way: better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

Just think about that for a minute. The greatest victory isn't conquering some external enemy, but mastering your own internal world, your impulses, your reactions. That's real strength.

And this wisdom even changes how we view life itself. I mean, look at our culture. We are obsessed with youth and terrified of aging.

But Proverbs offers this radical counter-narrative. It says gray hair isn't something to be ashamed of. It's a potential crown of glory.

It's a sign of a life lived with integrity, one that's accumulated real wisdom. It's supposed to be an honor, not a curse. So we end right back where we started.

We make our plans. We use our wisdom. But this ancient chapter is a powerful reminder that our control is limited and our judgment is flawed.

And it forces us to ask a much deeper question. When all your carefully constructed plans fall apart, what's your ultimate foundation? What or who is left to trust? That's the timeless challenge of Proverbs 16.