

Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 13, Life with God, Proverbs 16:1-22:16 Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome to another deep dive. We're going to be cracking open the book of Proverbs. Oh, nice.

Specifically, we'll be looking at chapter 16 today alongside Dr. Konkell's recent lecture series on it. Yeah, it's a great chapter. It is.

You know, for something written, what, thousands of years ago, Proverbs just feels so surprisingly relevant to, well, everything going on in 2025. It really is fascinating how these ancient writings, you know, they seem to just tap into, like, those timeless struggles that we have, those human struggles, isn't it? Totally. And today we're tackling themes like how to navigate the government, the never-ending quest for work-life balance, and, oh yeah, pride, you know, that age-old battle with pride, which, something tells me, we've all been there.

Oh, yeah, for sure. But let's start with Proverbs 16.1, the idea that we can try to craft our words carefully, but ultimately God determines the impact. It makes you wonder about free will, doesn't it? It does.

That's actually, you know, a really key question that theologians have debated for centuries. You know, just, does this proverb imply, like, a deterministic view, you know, where our words are preordained? Or does it suggest, like, a more nuanced understanding of God's sovereignty, where human agency still has a part to play? Ooh, good point. So it's not just about, like, letting go of control over how people react to us, but maybe, like, the bigger picture, like, how much of our plans are really in our hands? Exactly.

It kind of reminds me of Dr. Konkell's point about, you know, the farmer analogy. Like, no matter how diligently the farmer plans, right, you still have things like the weather and market demand completely outside his control. Perhaps it's like a call to surrender our anxieties and to kind of put our trust in a higher power, even when things feel uncertain.

So it's not just about me accepting that my perfectly worded emails might still get ignored. There's, like, a deeper level of trusting in God's plan, even when things feel chaotic. Precisely.

And then that theme of self-awareness continues into Proverbs 16.2, where it talks about examining our hidden motives. You know, even seemingly good deeds can stem from, like, less than pure motivations, like seeking recognition or manipulating outcomes. Oh, yeah, totally.

Have you ever caught yourself doing something good, but then realizing the reason behind it wasn't so squeaky clean? Like, it's almost like we can fool ourselves into thinking we're

acting altruistically when there's something else lurking beneath the surface. Absolutely. And, you know, I think it's a very humbling realization.

And it's one that Proverbs is encouraging us to confront. It's not enough to just do good. We are called to examine why we do good.

You know, it's that introspection, that willingness to confront, like, our own shadow selves that leads to genuine righteousness. Wow, that's deep. Makes you think twice about those selfless acts.

So let's shift gears a bit to a topic that's always a hot-button issue: government. Proverbs seems to have this surprisingly nuanced view on it. It acknowledges its necessity, but it also points out its potential for, well, let's just say mishaps.

Yeah, indeed. You know, I think Dr. Konkel even went so far as to compare government to a monster in his lecture. Oh, wow.

Which might seem like a harsh label. But then when we look at the countless instances throughout history, right, of government corruption, oppression, abuse of power, maybe the analogy isn't so far-fetched. It makes you think about that balance of power, right? Proverbs 16 point children says good government favors good people.

But good is such a subjective term. What might seem good to one person could be viewed as tyrannical by another. Right.

That's the challenge, isn't it? Trying to define good government. It's kind of like this ongoing societal debate. I mean, Proverbs doesn't offer any concrete solutions, but I think it does prompt us to critically examine those in power and to advocate for justice and righteousness in the public square.

So this kind of ties back to that humility we were just talking about. If we're constantly checking our own motives, maybe we can also be more discerning about the motives of those in power. Speaking of checking ourselves, Proverbs 16.18 brings us face to face with pride, that old nemesis, you know, pride comes before the fall and all that.

It's a cautionary tale that's as relevant today as it was back then. I mean, human history is just, you know, littered with examples of individuals and empires that have been brought low by hubris. You know, this proverb reminds us that humility is not weakness, but it's actually a source of strength and wisdom.

It's so easy to get caught up in our accomplishments and think we've got it all figured out, only to have life throw a curveball at us and remind us that, well, we don't. I remember this one time I was. Now, hold on.

Hold on. While personal anecdotes can be illuminating, let's try to delve a little deeper into the implications of this proverb. Like, what does it really mean to embrace humility? How does that shape our interactions with others and our understanding of our place in the world? You're right.

You're right. Maybe it's about recognizing that even in our successes, there's always something bigger than ourselves at play. It's not about denying our achievements, but just acknowledging that we're not the sole authors of our own story, right? Absolutely.

And maybe that recognition is actually what opens us up to greater learning and growth. Because, you know, if we're always convinced of our own infallibility, how can we truly learn from our mistakes and grow in wisdom? That's a really powerful thought. Humility isn't just about being modest.

It's about being open to learning and evolving. Exactly. And, you know, that ties directly into the next proverb that we're going to be unpacking, Proverbs 16.25. It's a rather stark reminder that what seems right to us can ultimately lead to destruction.

You know, it challenges us to question even our most deeply held beliefs and to be open to the possibility that we might be wrong. Whoa, that's heavy. Yeah.

It's like a reality check, reminding us that our own limited perspective can sometimes lead us astray. Even with the best of intentions, you know, actions can have unintended consequences. It really underscores the need for critical thinking and self-reflection.

We have to constantly question our own assumptions and be willing to kind of adjust our course when necessary. It also highlights the importance of seeking wisdom from sources beyond ourselves. So it's not just about doubting everything that we believe, but about being open to new perspectives and recognizing the limitations of our own understanding, right? It's about acknowledging that we don't have all the answers and being willing to learn from others.

Exactly. And you know, that continuous learning and growth, it extends to all areas of life. Even something as seemingly mundane as our work.

Proverbs 16.26 warns us that work can easily become a bottomless pit of desire, never really leading to true fulfillment. This resonates with me so much. It's like that feeling of constantly chasing the next goal, the next promotion, the next project, but never really feeling satisfied.

It makes you wonder what we're truly working for. It does. You know, it raises questions about the nature of our desires and how we define success.

Like, are we chasing external validation, or are we actually seeking something deeper, something more meaningful? In today's world, you know, hyper-connected as it is, the lines between work and personal life have become so blurred. It's almost like we're always on, constantly checking emails, responding to messages, striving for that work-life balance. And Proverbs suggests that true fulfillment doesn't actually lie in that endless striving.

But finding contentment and purpose in our labor is a delicate balance and one that I think requires conscious effort and self-awareness. Maybe it's about recognizing that work is just one facet of life, not the entirety of it. You know, there's value in finding joy and meaning in our relationships and our hobbies and our passions outside of our careers.

Absolutely. It's about recognizing that our worth isn't solely tied to our productivity. And that's, you know, that's a really powerful message, especially in a world that often equates busyness with success.

So true. You know, Dr. Conkle offered a really interesting perspective on aging in his lecture. He highlighted Proverbs 16.31, where gray hair is actually associated with wisdom and righteousness, quite a contrast to our culture's obsession with youthfulness.

It really is. It's a powerful reframing, isn't it? What if, instead of seeing aging as this decline, we viewed it as a culmination of all of our experience and wisdom? It's like all those OK, boomer memes you see online, right? But instead of dismissing the older generation, maybe we should be leaning into their experiences, learning from their wisdom. Exactly.

And, you know, that ties directly into another key theme that we see in Proverbs. Patience. Proverbs 16.32 emphasizes that true power lies not in force or coercion, but in patience and self-control.

It's almost counterintuitive in our fast-paced instant gratification culture. We're constantly bombarded with messages telling us to hustle, to grind, to get ahead at all costs. But Proverbs seems to suggest a different path.

Right. It's a call to resist that urge to rush, to force outcomes, to control every little aspect of our lives. True power, according to Proverbs, lies in the ability to endure, to persevere, and to just wait for the right moment.

It's like that saying, slow and steady wins the race. But honestly, in a world obsessed with speed and efficiency, it's a really tough message to internalize. I agree.

But perhaps that's why it's such an important message to contemplate. This has been such an insightful conversation, from rethinking our relationship with work to embracing the wisdom of age. It's amazing how these ancient Proverbs still feel so relevant to our modern lives.

It is. It speaks to that enduring power of wisdom, doesn't it? I mean, these insights transcend time and culture, and they offer us guidance for navigating the complexities of human experience. It's like a roadmap for life.

But instead of giving us turn-by-turn directions, it offers principles for making wise choices and navigating the challenges that we all face. Exactly. And maybe that's the most valuable lesson of all: that true wisdom doesn't lie in having all the answers, but in continuously seeking understanding, reflecting on our experiences, and growing in our capacity for empathy and compassion.

It's a journey, not a destination, right? Absolutely. We're all constantly learning and evolving. And speaking of journeys, I think we've covered quite a bit of ground in this first part of our deep dive into Proverbs 16.

We have, but there's still so much more to unpack, and I'm really eager to delve further into the practical applications of these timeless principles. Absolutely. But before we continue, let's take a moment to kind of reflect on what we've discussed so far.

You know, what resonates most with you? What questions has this exploration sparked for you? You know, I'd be curious to hear your thoughts on the idea of surrendering control, which we discussed in Proverbs 16.1. Do you find that concept liberating or unsettling? Ooh, that's a great question to ponder. And you know what? It leads us perfectly into the next part of our deep dive, where we'll explore even more profound insights from Proverbs 16. Stay tuned.

We'll be right back after a short break. Welcome back. So before the break, we were talking about that tension between human effort and accepting that some things are just, they're simply out of our hands.

Right. Like that whole commit your work to the Lord thing. Easier said than done, though, right? Oh, definitely.

Especially in today's world where we're just bombarded with messages about hustling and taking control, you know, like we're supposed to manifest our own destinies. Right. It does raise an interesting question about the nature of faith, doesn't it? Is it about passive resignation, or is it about an active trust in a power greater than ourselves? Maybe it's a little of both.

I mean, we still have to put in the work, make plans, but also be open to, you know, the possibility that things might not unfold exactly as we expect. Yeah, I think you're right. It's about finding that balance between striving and surrendering.

And perhaps that's where wisdom comes in, knowing when to push forward and when to kind of let go. So it's not about sitting back and just waiting for things to happen, but about making wise choices and trusting that even if things don't go exactly according to our plan, there's still a purpose, right? Exactly. It's a perspective that could be incredibly comforting, you know, in times of uncertainty and challenge; it allows us to approach those ups and downs with a sense of equanimity because we know that we're not ultimately in control.

That is very comforting. It takes some of the pressure off. So how does this surrendering control thing, how does that actually play out in our daily lives? Are there any examples that come to mind from Proverbs? Yeah, sure.

Think about Proverbs 16.9. It says, The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. It's very much echoing that theme of divine guidance, reminding us that our plans are ultimately subject to a higher power. So even if we map out every detail of our careers, relationships, our weekends, whatever, there's still that element of unpredictability we have to kind of accept.

Yeah, exactly. I mean, it's not about throwing away our calendars and just living in a city of chaos, but it is about holding our plans loosely, being open to detours, unexpected opportunities. I like that.

It's like a dance. We take the lead, but we're following a partner who might have different steps in mind. I love that analogy.

And it highlights the importance of staying present and adaptable, being willing to adjust that course as we go. It's a good reminder for those of us who like to have everything planned out, like me. So how do we actually cultivate that sense of surrender and trust? Is it something we can actively practice, or is it more of a mindset shift? Probably both.

Practices like meditation, prayer, and mindfulness can help us cultivate that inner stillness and that sense of connection to something beyond ourselves. So it's about quieting the mental chatter, creating space for a deeper awareness. Exactly.

And that awareness can help us to discern when we're holding on too tightly and when we need to loosen our grip and allow things to unfold naturally. Learning to trust the flow of life, even when it takes us in directions that we weren't expecting. And maybe that's where the real adventure lies: stepping outside of our comfort zones, embracing the unknown, and trusting that even in the midst of that uncertainty, there's a guiding hand leading us forward.

Beautiful. We've talked a lot about surrendering control, but what about taking responsibility? How does Proverbs address that? Well, it's an important balance to strike. While we're acknowledging those limits of our control, Proverbs also emphasizes making wise choices and taking ownership of the consequences that come from those choices.

So it's not a free pass to just blame fate or divine intervention for everything. We still have to own up to our choices and learn from our mistakes. Oh, absolutely.

Proverbs 16.17 says, The highway of the upright is to depart from evil. He who guards his way preserves his life. You know, it really highlights the importance of moral integrity, making choices that align with our values.

It's like that saying, character is what you do when no one's watching. It's about making ethical choices, even when they're difficult or inconvenient. Absolutely.

And recognizing that our choices have ripple effects, you know, impacting not only ourselves, but also the people around us. So it's not just about avoiding the bad stuff, but about actively choosing what's good and what's just, even when it's the harder path. It reminds me of Proverbs 16.3. It says, Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.

Sounds like a recipe for success. But does it guarantee that everything will be smooth sailing? I mean, life throws curveballs, right? It certainly does. And I think it's important to remember that committing our work to the Lord doesn't necessarily mean we're going to be immune to challenges or setbacks.

So it's not like a magic formula to avoid all hardship. Then, like, what's the point of committing our work if things can still go wrong? Well, maybe it's about shifting our perspective on what it means to succeed. You know, it's not necessarily about achieving worldly success, but about aligning our efforts with a higher purpose.

So it's more about the journey than the destination of a nation. Finding that meaning and fulfillment in the process itself. Exactly.

And trusting that even in those difficult times, in the midst of adversity, there's a greater plan unfolding. I like that. That really takes the pressure off, you know? It does.

Having to control every outcome. It does. And it allows us to approach those challenges with a sense of resilience and purpose.

Because we know that we're not alone in our struggles. This conversation has really shifted my perspective on Proverbs. It's not just a bunch of, you know, old sayings.

It's like a profound exploration of what it means to live a wise and meaningful life. I agree. And that exploration is going to continue as we delve even deeper into these practical applications.

I'm ready for more. Where should we go from here? Let's shift gear a little bit and focus on the realm of relationships. Proverbs 16 has a lot to say about how we interact with each other, how we navigate conflict, and how we build those strong connections.

Okay. Yeah. I'm all ears.

Relationships can be the most rewarding and challenging part of life. So any wisdom from Proverbs is definitely welcome. Well, Proverbs 16.2a says, A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

It's highlighting the destructive power of gossip and malicious speech. Ooh, gossip. Like a social virus, isn't it? Spreading negativity and just tearing people apart.

It's a good reminder to be mindful of what we say, how our words can impact others, you know, sometimes in very subtle ways. Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, I think it's not just about avoiding, like, outright slander, but it's about cultivating a spirit of kindness and compassion in our communication.

So it's not just what we say, but how we say it, our tone, our intention. Exactly. And that kind of ties into another key principle in Proverbs: humility.

Proverbs 16.18 warns us, Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Right. We talked about that earlier in relation to our own self-awareness.

But how does pride actually play out in our relationships with other people? Well, pride can manifest as arrogance. It could be a sense of superiority, a lack of empathy for others. And, you know, it creates barriers to genuine connection, often leading to conflict and resentment.

It's like that saying: humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less. It's about shifting our focus from our own ego to genuine concern for the other person. Absolutely.

And I think that shift in focus can be really transformative for our relationships. When we approach our interactions with humility, we're more likely to listen attentively, to understand different perspectives, and to resolve those conflicts peacefully. So humility is like the antidote to pride in our relationships.

I think so. Creates space for understanding and empathy. And speaking of understanding, Proverbs 16.20 offers a really valuable insight.

It says, "Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. So, a call to be lifelong learners, basically. I think so, in both our personal and professional lives.

And it suggests that true prosperity doesn't just come from, you know, material wealth, but from seeking knowledge, wisdom, guidance from those we trust. So it's about being open to learning. From mentors, teachers, even those who challenge our assumptions.

Exactly. It's about recognizing that we don't have all the answers, and that there's always more to learn and grow from. Always more to learn.

This has been so insightful. Proverbs is chock full of wisdom about navigating relationships, but it also reminds us of the importance of individual growth and self-awareness. Right.

It's like this beautiful tapestry of interconnected principles. And it highlights that our personal growth is really linked to our relationships with others. So it's not just about improving ourselves in isolation, but about becoming better versions of ourselves within the context of our communities and our relationships.

Exactly. As we grow individually, we contribute to the well-being of those around us. It's like this virtuous cycle of growth and connection.

I love that. We're all interconnected, and our actions have this ripple effect that extends far beyond ourselves. Yeah.

And, you know, that kind of brings us back to that theme of surrendering control. We can't always control the actions of other people, but we can choose to respond with wisdom, compassion, and understanding. Taking responsibility for our own part in the dance.

Exactly. Knowing we're all connected. Exactly.

Our choices impact each other. Yeah. And as we continue this journey through Proverbs, I think we're going to uncover even more insights about how to navigate those connections with grace and with wisdom.

I'm ready. This conversation has been so thought-provoking. I feel like we've only just scratched the surface of what Proverbs 16 has to offer.

There's so much more to explore. I'm really excited to delve into the practical applications of these timeless principles. In the next part of our deep dive... Can't wait.

This has been such an enriching exploration of ancient wisdom for modern living. It really has. It highlights the fact that the human experience, with all of its complexities, its joys, its challenges, is a shared journey.

Until next time, keep seeking that wisdom, keep connecting with each other, and keep embracing the adventure of life. Welcome back to our deep dive into Proverbs 16. Man, my brain is getting a workout today.

How about you? Oh, yeah. For sure. It's incredible, isn't it? Like, how much there is to unpack in just this one chapter, you know, and how much it still applies to our lives.

Totally. So in this last part, I wanted to circle back to Proverbs 16.31, the one about gray hair being a sign of wisdom and righteousness. I mean, that's like the opposite of what our culture tells us, right? Like, we're supposed to be chasing youthfulness forever.

It really is a different perspective. It's a good reminder, though, you know, that aging isn't something to be afraid of. It's just a natural part of life, a process of growing and maturing.

So instead of spending a fortune on anti-aging creams, maybe we should be focusing on how to gain wisdom from all those experiences, right? Exactly. Think about it, right? Over a lifetime, we gather so much knowledge, so many insights, and those are things that can benefit the people around us and us. It's like they say, every wrinkle tells a story, and maybe we need to be better listeners to those stories.

You know, getting advice from those who've been there before us. Yeah, honoring and respecting our elders, recognizing that they have a lot to teach us. Which ties back to that whole lifelong learning thing, right? Wisdom isn't something you just get overnight.

It takes time. It's a process of constantly growing, discovering, and evolving, which is why Proverbs talks so much about patience, too. Right, and as we've been talking about, true power isn't about forcing things to happen.

It's about having the strength to endure, to persevere, to wait. Which is so hard in today's world, right? I mean, we want everything now. Waiting feels like torture.

It does. It's definitely something that takes practice. Like a muscle you have to work out? Exactly.

Remember Proverbs 16.32, it says, better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. Patience isn't just about giving up. It's a strength, a way to overcome challenges and actually achieve what we're aiming for.

So it's more about choosing to be patient and wise instead of just reacting to everything immediately. Exactly. It's about mastering our emotions, not letting them control us, not trying to force things to go our way, and trusting that things will happen in their own time.

That sounds a lot easier than it is, though. Oh, it definitely is. It requires a whole different way of thinking.

Like instead of wanting things right away, we have to focus on the long game. Right, and that change in thinking can actually be very freeing. It takes away that pressure to always be rushing, always be doing.

It lets us focus on what really matters. So we're learning that some things are worth waiting for. Absolutely.

The most valuable things in life, they take time. And that idea, you know, runs through all of Proverbs, whether it's about gaining wisdom, building relationships, or finding success. Patience and perseverance are key.

It's good to remember that we're not in control of everything. Right. Sometimes the best thing we can do is just trust the process.

And trust that even when things feel uncertain, there's a plan, a bigger plan at work. It might not always be clear at first, but if we're open to it, it often reveals itself in unexpected ways. Matt, this deep dive has been incredible.

We've covered so much. Relationships, government, finding meaning in work, embracing aging. It really shows how these ancient Proverbs are still relevant today.

You know, they offer guidance for all of the challenges we face. It's like we've been having a conversation with the wisest people throughout history. I like that.

Taking their wisdom and applying it to our own lives. That's a beautiful way to put it. And remember, the conversation doesn't have to end here.

Keep exploring Proverbs 16. Keep thinking about it and see how it connects with your own life. What insights did you get from this deep dive? What parts challenged you? What inspired you? We'd love to hear your thoughts.

Remember, wisdom is a journey, not a destination. And Proverbs is a guidebook for that journey, helping us to live with purpose and grace. Thanks for joining us.

We hope you found this as thought-provoking as we did. Until next time, keep seeking wisdom, keep connecting with each other, and keep living your best life.