

Proverbs: Life with God (Proverbs 16:1–22:16)

Author: Dr. August Konkell | Session 13

Sponsored by Biblealearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Keywords

Proverbs 16, August Konkell, Divine Sovereignty, Human Plans, Governance, Humility, Mercy, Work, Righteousness, Wisdom

Abstract

In this lecture on Proverbs 16, Dr. August Konkell examines the overarching theme of living life with God by exploring how human intentions and plans are ultimately subject to divine sovereignty. He highlights the limitations of self-reliance, explaining that while individuals structure their thoughts and actions, true motives and final outcomes rest in God's hands. The lecture also addresses the divine establishment of moral order, the function and dangers of human government, and the supreme value of virtues such as humility, mercy, and aging righteously. Ultimately, Konkell calls listeners to relinquish their illusion of self-sufficiency and trust humbly in divine providence throughout daily life.

Outline

I. Introduction to Proverbs 16 and the Motif of Life with God

- A. Context within the Solomon collection (Proverbs 10:1–22:16)
 - 1. Transition from stylistic motifs of chapters 10–15 to topical collections in chapter 16 onwards
 - 2. Cohesion and thematic observations regarding specific life topics in Proverbs 16
- B. The overarching theme: Living life under God's sovereign care and knowledge

II. Divine Knowledge and Human Limitations (Proverbs 16:1–9)

- A. The limits of human planning and speech (v. 1)
 - 1. Humans carefully organize thoughts and verbal statements
 - 2. The ultimate answer of the tongue comes from the Lord
 - 3. The disconnect between a speaker's intent and a hearer's reception
- B. Divine evaluation of human motives (v. 2)
 - 1. Human self-perception is inherently flawed and multi-faceted
 - 2. God examines and weighs unseen motives, requiring genuine humility
- C. Trusting God with daily endeavors (v. 3)
 - 1. Agricultural illustration: skill cannot prevent unforeseen crop failure
 - 2. Committing works to the Lord allows human plans to be established

D. Moral order and divine purpose (v. 4)

1. God directs every work and circumstance toward its intended moral end
2. Parallel with Ecclesiastes 3: embracing divine purpose despite human incomprehension

E. Pride, mercy, and peace (vv. 5–9)

1. Pride as an abomination that inevitably brings judgment
2. The essential role of mercy and forgiveness in maintaining society
3. The fear of the Lord turning people away from evil and establishing peace

III. Life Under Governance and Authority (Proverbs 16:10–15)

A. The necessity and danger of government

1. Biblical perspective: government prevents societal destruction and total lawlessness
2. The paradox: human authority frequently becomes corrupt and oppressive

B. Divine standard for justice and leadership

1. Absolute requirement for honesty, divine guidance, and righteous judgments
2. Practical necessity of leaders favoring good and upright citizens

C. Reconciling hostilities and royal favor

1. Wise individuals work to reconcile conflict and maintain societal peace
2. Royal favor compared to gentle, life-giving rain (Psalm 72 imagery)

IV. The Virtues of Living Wisely (Proverbs 16:16–33)

A. Wisdom, prudence, and speech (vv. 16–24)

1. Discretion as a wellspring of life for the prudent
2. Well-chosen, sweet words bringing healing to the soul and body

B. The danger of self-deception and misplaced desire (vv. 25–30)

1. The path that seems right to human eyes leading ultimately to death (v. 25)
2. Unfulfilled appetite driving workaholism and tyrannical labor (v. 26)

C. Righteousness, age, and self-control (vv. 31–33)

1. The honor of gray hair gained through a life of righteousness
2. Patience and emotional self-control surpassing physical power and conquest