

Day 378 - SATURDAY: March 2nd

Proverbs 15 & 16

Proverbs 15:1-33 NKJV

A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit. A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent. In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble. The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, But the heart of the fool does not do so. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who follows righteousness. Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die. Hell and Destruction are before the LORD; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men. A scoffer does not love one who corrects him, Nor will he go to the wise. A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness. All the days of the afflicted are evil, But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast. Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, Than a fatted calf with hatred. A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention. The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother. Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, But a man of understanding walks uprightly. Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established. A man has joy by the answer of

his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is! The way of life winds upward for the wise, That he may turn away from hell below. The LORD will destroy the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, But the words of the pure are pleasant. He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live. The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil. The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, And a good report makes the bones healthy. The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.

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### **Proverbs 16:1-33 NKJV**

The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits. Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established. The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished. In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil. When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice. A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps. Divination is on the lips of the king; His mouth must not transgress in judgment. Honest weights and scales are the LORD's; All the weights in the bag are His work. It is an

abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks what is right. As messengers of death is the king's wrath, But a wise man will appease it. In the light of the king's face is life, And his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain. How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul. Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud. 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. Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips. Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. The person who labors, labors for himself, For his hungry mouth drives him on. An ungodly man digs up evil, And it is on his lips like a burning fire. A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends. A violent man entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good. He winks his eye to devise perverse things; He purses his lips and brings about evil. The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading program states: “**32. Two Collections (15:1–16:8)**”

"TYPE: A-B ENVELOPE SERIES....This text is, in effect, random repetition...but with recognizable clusters of proverbs. It is composed of two collections, Proverbs 15:1-17 and 15:18–16:8, which parallel each other not structurally so much as in content. Each major collection begins with a word on patience versus the provocation of wrath (Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 15:18), and each ends with 'better sayings' on apparent versus real prosperity (Proverbs 15:16-17; Proverbs 16:8). Between these markers the two collections (here referred to as 'I' and 'II') contain teachings that correspond to one another in remarkable detail. In the following chart, collection I is set forth in its normal order, while units in collection II are set out in an order that corresponds to those in collection I. This does not imply that verses in collection II need to be transposed; it is done merely to make the comparison clearer.... Similarly, this analysis does not dispute that there are other parallels and ties among these verses other than those mentioned here.

### **Collection 1 & Collection 2 Pairings (from original chart in Full email)**

15:1 gentle verses harsh answer; calming versus provoking anger;

15:18 hot-tempered versus patient man; calming versus provoking anger;

15:2-4 chiasmus: use of the tongue (2,4) and divine retribution (3);

15:24-27 chiasmus: life and death (24,27) and divine retribution (25-26);

15:5 foolish son; heeding admonition;  
15:20-22 wise/foolish son; need for advisers;  
15:6 income of righteous/wicked  
15:19 way of sluggard/upright;

15:7 speech of the wise/fools  
15:28 speech of the righteous/wicked;

15:8-9 Lord rejects sacrifice of the wicked  
15:29 Lord rejects prayers of wicked;

15:10-11 severity of the Lord's dealing with people  
15:33–16:7 the Lord's ways of judgments;

15:12-15 accepting/rejecting correction (12,14); cheerful face  
and heart  
15:30-32 cheerful look and heart correction (30);  
accepting/rejecting correction (31-32);

15:16-17 better sayings on true prosperity  
16:8 better sayings on true prosperity;

"Collection II (twenty-four verses) is not only longer than collection I (seventeen verses) but it also contains one verse that has no parallel in collection I (Proverbs 15:23). On the other hand, 15:23 concerns the ability to give an appropriate answer and thus obliquely relates to the lead verses, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 15:18" (NAC).

Verse 1 concerns not only what we say, but how we say it. It is important to maintain calm in most situations, for peaceful

dialogue is usually much more effective in a dispute than screaming. This need not convey weakness for, as Proverbs 25:15 says figuratively, a gentle tongue can break a bone. Regarding the chiasms (concentric arrangements) of the second section here, *The New American Commentary* states: "In the first series (vv. 2-4) a single proverb on God's [omniscience serving His perfect] administration of justice (v. 3) falls between two proverbs on the use of the tongue (vv. 2, 4). In the second series (vv. 24-27) two proverbs on divine justice (vv. 25-26) fall between two proverbs on behavior that leads either to life and prosperity or to the grave (vv. 24, 27). In both sections the middle proverbs reveal that the moral principles that govern the world are not mere abstractions but are actively maintained by God's intervention" (note on verses 15:2-4, 24-27). In verse 24, "grave" (NIV) rather than "hell," as it is commonly defined today, is the proper translation of the Hebrew *sheol*.

The verses of section 6 (Proverbs 15:8-9, Proverbs 15:29) show the importance of proper attitude and manner of life in the worship of God. He will not accept a mere pretense of piety (see also Proverbs 21:27). The *Soncino Commentary* notes on Proverbs 15:9: "As a pendant to what precedes [in verse 8], this verse is of the highest importance, because it clearly defines the final test of a man's religion. The criterion is not his scrupulous performance of rites such as sacrifice and prayer, but the *way* of life he treads and his ardent (the form of the verb is intensive) pursuit of *righteousness*" (note on verse 9).

In verse 11, "Hell [*sheol*, the grave] and Destruction" represent the fate of all people, the coming of death and what lies beyond being a great mystery in ancient times, as it is to most today. If this inscrutable mystery is "before the LORD"—that is, laid out

before Him as within His purview and understanding—how much more is He able to discern the inner heart of human beings, which is not so hidden as the greater mystery.

Verse 20 is similar to the opening proverb of Solomon's major collection, beginning with an identical first colon (10:1). Proverbs 15:22 recalls Proverbs 11:14.

In verse 30, where the KJV and NKJV have "the light of the eyes" (which rejoices the heart), the NIV says "a cheerful look" (that is, from someone else). The Contemporary English Version paraphrases this as "a friendly smile." Compare the "light of the king's face" in Proverbs 16:15.

The verses of what is marked above as section 7 of collection II (15:33–16:7), linked by their focus on how the Lord deals with people, bring to a conclusion the first half of Solomon's core collection. In fact Proverbs 16:4, as the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* points out, is "the middle verse of this section of Proverbs (10:1–22:16), aptly summarizing the Lord's sovereignty over every human thought and action. The verse also occupies the central position in a series of seven verses (1-7) at the beginning of ch. 16—the middle chapter in the book of Proverbs. Each of the seven verses features the name Yahweh [typically represented in English translations as "LORD" but meaning "He Is Who He Is"—the Eternal or Self-Existent One], again stressing his supreme position as Lord over all" (note on verse 4).

While Proverbs 15:28 shows the importance of studying how to answer, Proverbs 16:1 balances this with the fact that human preparation has its limitations. Having done what we can, we must rely on God to enable us to always say what we need to. And He will help us in what we need to say in critical situations (compare Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15).

Proverbs 16:2 shows that human beings are prone to self-deception when it comes to our own motives. "The interaction of the two lines in this proverb suggest that Yahweh is better able to discern our motivations than we are, hence the need for wisdom and instruction in standards outside ourselves" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 2).

Verse 4, the central verse noted above, has seemed to some to say that God has created the wicked to destroy them. The point, rather, is that God has made all to fulfill His purposes and that even those who choose wickedness do not thwart His plan but fit within His purposes, in their case meeting the judgment He has already determined. Of course, God did predetermine that some would meet with destruction in this life (see Romans 9:14-24)—but this does not mean they are ultimately lost. (For a full discussion of this matter, see our *Beyond Today Magazine* article ["Predestination: Are You Just a Pawn?"](#)).

Proverbs 16:5 uses some of the same wording as Proverbs 11:20-21.

Proverbs 16:7, which tells us that God causes the enemies of the righteous to be at peace with them, conveys a general principle. Scripture gives us some examples (see Genesis 20:15; Genesis 26:27ff; Genesis 33:4; 2 Chronicles 14:6-7; 2 Chronicles 17:10). A measure of peace allows God's people to live their lives in service to Him, to their families and to each other. Of course, there are often times when God allows enemies to be actively antagonistic against His people. The proverb must be considered as applying over the long haul of life—and it will find ultimate fulfillment in the age to come.



Continuing in Solomon's core collection (10:1–22:16), we may observe that the second part (16:1–22:16) is made up mostly of synonymous proverbs.

### **33. Three Collections (Proverbs 16:9–17:1)**

"TYPE: A-B ENVELOPE SERIES....[These] proverbs are in a three-fold A-B envelope series, as follows:

"COLLECTION I

"A: Human plans and divine providence (16:9)

    "Nine proverbs (16:10-18)

"B: Better saying on humble circumstances (16:19)

"COLLECTION II

"A': Prosperity through careful decision making and faith in God (16:20)

    "Eleven proverbs (16:21-31)

"B': Better saying on patience (16:32)

"COLLECTION III

"A": Casting lots and divine providence (16:33)

"B": Better saying on humble circumstances (17:1)

"The verses marked 'A' (Proverbs 16:9, Proverbs 16:20, Proverbs 16:33) all concern divine providence over human affairs. The issue in these verses is wisdom in the decision-making process. Whether one makes detailed plans or resorts to casting lots, events and circumstances are all in God's control. As such the wise are cautious but above all put their faith in God and not in human plans.... The verses marked 'B' (Proverbs 16:19, Proverbs 16:32; Proverbs 17:1) all imply that a peaceable attitude makes the position that is apparently lower or less aggressive preferable to one of power. All are 'better' sayings. Set in context with the 'A' sayings, these texts imply that success is not necessarily to be measured by the size of one's bank account. The intervening verses in texts I and II do not correspond to one another (unlike Proverbs 15:1–16:8), but several discrete groups...are apparent in

these collections. Collection III has no intervening verses at all" (NAC).

Verses 10-15 "concern righteousness in government and are organized as a thematic collection. Also the catchword 'king' occurs in every verse except 11, which nevertheless plainly deals with justice in government" (note on verses 10-15).

*Expositor's* notes on verse 10: "This first one teaches that kings must speak righteously in their official capacities.... The first part states that when the king speaks officially, it is as if it were 'an oracle' [NIV]. The word *qesem* is used throughout the Bible in the negative sense of 'divination' [as the NKJV renders it here]; here it seems merely to mean his words from an oracular sentence, as if he speaks for God (see Numbers 22:7; Numbers 23:23...). The effect of this is that his mouth 'should not betray'...justice."

Regarding Proverbs 16:11, mentioned above as the only proverb in verses 10-15 that doesn't include the word

"king," *Soncino* notes: "This verse is misunderstood by the modern expositors who hold it to refer to honest weights and measures [as in Proverbs 11:1]. If so interpreted, it is out of place and has no connection with the group which deals with the subject of a king's obligations, and preference should be given to the Jewish commentaries which related the verse to the Divine origin of justice. [The phrase] *a just balance and scales* [is] an unlikely translation, since *tsedek* [righteous or fair] would have been used instead of *mishpat* [judgment] if the meaning were *just balance* (cf. Leviticus [19:]36). The correct rendering is: 'the balance and scales of justice are the Lord's,' i.e. they are not something arbitrary which each king can manufacture to suit his convenience. They are fixed by God and delivered into the kings keeping to administer fairly.... [Regarding] *weights of the bag*...the

weights to be used on the scales, like the scales themselves, are made by God; the king may not provide his own" (note on Proverbs 16:11).

The "latter rain" in verse 15 refers to the spring rain in Israel. "The spring rain was essential for the full development of barley and wheat; it was therefore a sign of good things to come. Cf. the 'dew' of Proverbs 19:12" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Proverbs 16:15).

Verse 18 shows that pride and arrogance are short-lived. This should be an encouragement in the face of the apparent prosperity of the proud. But it is also meant as a warning to us against self-exaltation (compare 1 Corinthians 10:12).

Verse 21 says that "sweetness of the lips increases learning." The sweetness here corresponds to verse 24: "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb..." The point of verse 21 is that the wise will carefully choose appealing language in teaching others so as to promote learning (see also verse 23).

Verse 25 repeats Proverbs 14:12. We can't just go by what seems right. We must listen to what God has to say. Here "following the proverbs on teaching, this saying also states our need for an external reference point by which we set our course" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on Proverbs 16:25).

"Verses 27-30 describe the man who has evil schemes and are another thematic unity. Verses 27-29 concern the evil machinations of the scoundrel, the perverse man, and the violent man, and v. 30 is a conclusion or commentary on those three descriptions. The winking eye and pursed lips of v. 30 may be taken either as signals among conspirators or as a general statement of shiftiness in the facial mannerisms of scheming people" (*New American Commentary*, note on verses 27-30)—or

possibly "as friendly but deceptive signs; perhaps they are a form of the enticement mentioned in verse 29" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 30).

In verse 32, mastering the self, such as in controlling one's temper, is a far greater achievement than external conquest.

The "lot" of verse 33 is thought by some to refer to the use of the Urim and Thummim by the high priest. Yet it probably refers to the casting of lots in a more general sense, with appeal made to God to determine the outcome. The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* comments: "Here the lot may have been several pebbles held in the fold of a garment and then drawn out or shaken to the ground. It was commonly used to make decisions" (note on verse 33). Jesus' disciples used the casting of lots to make an important decision prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:26)."

[END]

Chapter 15:

Verse 10 – When we step off the path, God can provide gentle correction to help us get back on the path. If we respond, our Loving Father doesn't need to be harder on us. However, for our good, the further we are off the path, God's strong correction of love to return us to the path is necessary. But ultimately, eternal death lies ahead to those who choose to willfully walk off the path.

Verses 16 & 17 – I love the principle these two verses are driving home. You can have a good life full of love, happiness and contentment, living a life in obedience to God, and have very little by what man considers a successful life, or you can have all that this world offers and have a life that is full of strife, emptiness and be unsatisfied with what you have. What do I value, and what do I prioritize?

Verse 19 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “Because he is slothful, he imagines ten thousand difficulties in the way which cannot be surmounted; but they are all the creatures of his own imagination, and that imagination is formed by his sloth.” [END]

Verse 28 – One of the principles we have been seeing over and over through the Proverbs is that the way we do and say things matter. We might say something that is true, but in the way we say it, it may be difficult for others to hear and accept. Our approach matters.

Verse 32 – Instruction and advice is typically for our good. If we aren’t willing to listen to wise instruction and advice, we likely are harming ourselves.

Chapter 16:

Verse 4 – John Gill’s commentary has this to say regarding “even the wicked”: “this is added to illustrate the general proposition in the preceding clause, and to obviate an objection, that might be taken from the destruction of the wicked, against all things being for the glory of God; for even the destruction of the wicked, which is under a divine appointment, is for his glory. It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of Scripture, that God made man to damn him; nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination.” [END]

God’s plan is perfect, and He will be glorified!

Verse 9 – How comforting that inspite of our own efforts to make plans and try to move forward, that those who love God and fear Him, that God works to direct and lead us.