

Proverbs Chapter 16 Continued

Proverbs 16:17 "The highway of the upright [is] to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul."

A plain road represents the habitual course of the righteous in departing from evil. As long as he stays on it, he is safe.

We read in the words of Jesus about the way that leads to life.

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:" "Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride [goeth] before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Malachi 4:1 "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Haughtiness leads to hell. A haughty person thinks too highly of himself.

Proverbs 16:19 "Better [it is to be] of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."

We must throw in our lot either with God or Satan. The humble have thrown in their lot with God. The proud have chosen the ways of Satan. All of the wealth in the world would not even be a temptation to go the way of Satan and reject God.

The proud are those who have plundered the poor.

Proverbs 16:20 "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy [is] he."

A person who trusts in God has nothing to fear. He has no reason to be unhappy. An honest business person will not fail, because his customers can trust in him. An honest business and trust in God goes hand in hand. Those who love and fear the Lord will be honest in not only in business, but in everything they do.

Trust in the Lord brings peace that passes understanding. Trust is one step beyond faith or faith to the utmost?

Proverbs 16:21 "The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning."

True wisdom (godly wisdom), is the subject above. Godly wisdom is recognized by others around you and they have respect for you because of the decisions you make. We see in the rest of verse twenty-one that people who speak nice things are listened to more readily. A person will listen and learn more from someone who speaks softly and kindly.

The “sweetness of the lips” is like “words of honey” which reflect intelligence, judiciousness and discernment in speech referring to eloquent discourse from the wise.

Proverbs 16:22 "Understanding [is] a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools [is] folly."

We are told often to hide the Scriptures away in our heart. This understanding that we have stored away will come forth as we need it. It will be like a well that we can draw from over and over.

“Wellspring of life” meaning the advice of the understanding person brings blessing, which the correction offered by a fool is useless.

We are told that when we need it, the Holy Spirit will quicken Scriptures to our memory. I believe that is what is meant by the wellspring here. A fool has no stored knowledge. He has no well to draw from.

Proverbs 16:23 "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips."

In Matthew, we see in Jesus' own words that the lips speak what is in the heart.

Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." The heart is the source of the words that the lips speak.

The heart referred to here commonly refers to the mind as the center of thinking and reason, but also includes the emotions, the will, and thus the whole inner being. The heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech, sight and conduct.

Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words [are as] a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."

We know that pleasant words bring happiness to the listener. Happiness makes anyone feel better.

The honeycomb is an analogy to seek the sweetness of wisdom's rewards.

Proverbs 16:25 "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death."

One of the most dangerous things a man can do is try to do whatever feels good to him. This is the call of the flesh. The flesh life is a life of sin and destruction.

Both the narrow gate and the wide gate are assumed to provide the entrance to God's kingdom. Two ways are offered to people. The narrow gate is by faith, only through Christ, constricted and precise. It represents true salvation in God's way that lead to life eternal. The wide gate includes all religions of works and self-righteousness, with no single way, but it leads to hell, not heaven.

Proverbs 16:26 "He that laboreth laboreth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him."

Most people work to buy food for their table. If a person gets hungry enough, some of the people who do not like to work will go to work just to eat.

This is just saying, Labor is hard and often grievous, but necessary, even for the lazy.

Proverbs 16:27 "An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips [there is] as a burning fire."

This "ungodly man" literally digs a pit for his neighbor as a hunter would for prey and his speech is incendiary.

This, if done by a woman, would be called malicious gossip. The evil this man is telling burns and destroys those he is talking about. He is a false witness, stirring up strife with just an evil tongue.

Proverbs 16:28 "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."

This wicked man twists the truth so that he can cause trouble. He whispers in a neighbor's ear falsehoods about his friends and is not satisfied until he turns them against each other.

The word soweth or "spreads", is the same root word used for the release of flaming foxes in the grain fields of the Philistines. The whisperer is a gossip.

Proverbs 16:29 "A violent man enticeth his neighbor, and leadeth him into the way [that is] not good."

Haven't you known someone just like this? He is probably a drunkard and looking for someone to get drunk with so he will not feel quite so guilty himself. He may even be an adulterer and encouraging his neighbor to commit adultery too.

Sometimes it is no more than talking you into getting into a quick scheme to swindle someone out of their money. The best thing to do is to stay away from this type of person. We learned earlier that when we fellowship with someone, we become like them.

Proverbs 16:30 "He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass."

We are still talking of this evil man of verse twenty-nine. This is saying: keep your eyes wide open, don't fall for his sales pitch. Moving his lips means he talks you into bringing the evil thing to pass.

Proverbs 16:31 "The hoary head [is] a crown of glory, [if] it be found in the way of righteousness."

This calls for respecting elders.

We see the man with gray hair has lived this life and getting ready for his reward in heaven. Getting old is a blessing and a reward of a clean wholesome life. To me the hoary head is saying "you have run the race well, and you are on the last lap now".

Proverbs 16:32 "[He that is] slow to anger [is] better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Ephesians 4:31 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:"

You see, not only are we to be slow to anger, but we are to put anger away from us. The spirit must rule over the body. The spirit ruled by the Lord has eternal life to look forward to.

This scripture is saying that he that is righteous is better than one who is mighty but not necessarily wise. The mighty can overtake and destroy a city or an army, but he that rules his spirit is mightier than he.

Proverbs 16:33 "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the LORD."

This is just saying they could cast lots to settle a matter if they want to, but really God is the one who decides who does what.

The casting lots was a method often used to reveal god's purposes in a matter. The High Priest may have carried lots in his sacred vest, along with the Urim and Thummim.

Proverbs 16 Continued Questions

1. What is the highway of the upright?
2. What gate leads to eternal life?
3. What goeth before destruction in verse 18?
4. In chapter 4 of Malachi, what happens to the proud?

5. It is better to be a humble spirit with the lowly than what?
6. The proud have chosen whose way?
7. Compare trust to faith.
8. The wise in heart shall be called what?
9. In verse 22, what is the wellspring?
10. What does Matthew 12:35 teach us?
11. In verse 24, what are pleasant words compared to?
12. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end is _____.
13. What is one of the most dangerous things a man could do?
14. Why do most men labor?
15. The evil man who speaks evil is compared to what in the mouth?
16. A froward man soweth _____.
17. Whispers can do what to a friendship?
18. A violent man _____ his neighbor.
19. This violent man probably has what sins active in his life?
20. In verse 30, what does moving his lips mean?
21. What do we see in the man with the hoary head?
22. What is the hoary head saying to the author?
23. Someone slow to anger is better than whom?
24. What is meant by lot is cast in the lap