

Proverbs – A Study of Some Key Passages

Week 4 – Chapters 16-21: Relationships, Pride, and Humility

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Opening Prayer: Lord, help us walk humbly before You and lovingly toward others. Amen. (Week 3
Memory Verse: [Proverbs 15:1](#))

Key Passage #1 – Pride and Destruction:

[Proverbs 16:18](#) “Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before stumbling.”

Teaching:

- Pride causes people to trust themselves rather than God.
- It is the root of many sins.

Discussion:

1. Why is pride so dangerous?
2. What are common forms of pride today?

Key Passage #2 – Trust God's Direction:

[Proverbs 16:9](#) “The mind of a person plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.”

Teaching:

- Christians make plans, but God remains sovereign.
- A Christian prays with this attitude: not my will but Yours be done, and help me to accept Your will for my life.

Key Passage #3 – Pleasant Words:

[Proverbs 16:24](#) “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

Teaching:

- Throughout Proverbs, our speech is presented as one of the clearest indicators of wisdom. Wise words encourage, comfort, instruct, and restore. Like honey, they refresh and strengthen those who hear them.

- This does not mean Christians avoid difficult conversations or never speak words of correction. Rather, even correction should be spoken with kindness, humility, and love. Our goal is always to build others up rather than tear them down (Ephesians 4:29).
- Jesus perfectly demonstrated gracious speech. He spoke the truth, yet He ♦welcomed sinners, ♦comforted the brokenhearted, and ♦proclaimed forgiveness to all who repented and believed.

Discussion:

1. Why are words so powerful for good or for harm?
2. What makes words "pleasant" in God's sight?
3. How can Christians speak truth without being harsh?

Key Passage #4 – A True Friend:

[Proverbs 17:17](#) “A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.”

Teaching: Biblical friendship is faithful, especially during hardship.

Discussion:

1. What makes a godly friend?
2. How can we become better friends?
3. How has Christ shown perfect friendship?

Key Passage #5 – Overcoming Evil with Kindness:

Proverbs 20:22 “Do not say, 'I will repay evil'; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.”

Teaching:

- Our sinful nature naturally wants revenge when we are treated unfairly. The book of Proverbs teaches us to leave justice in God's hands rather than seeking personal vengeance.
- Waiting on the Lord is not weakness—it is an act of faith. God sees every wrong and promises to judge justly in His own time. Christians are therefore free to forgive, love their enemies, and entrust themselves to God's care.
- This proverb points forward to Jesus Christ, who suffered unjustly without seeking revenge. As Peter writes, “...while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return... but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). Through His death and resurrection, and our God-worked godly sorrow and faith, Christ forgives our sins and enables us to forgive others.

Discussion:

1. Why is it difficult to leave justice in God's hands?
2. How is forgiveness different from pretending that wrong never occurred?
3. What comfort comes from knowing that God judges righteously?
4. How does Jesus help us forgive those who have sinned against us?

Law and Gospel:

- **Law:** Our pride often damages relationships.
- **Gospel:** Jesus humbled Himself for our salvation.

Summary of Today's Passages:

1. **16:18** — Humility instead of pride.
2. **16:9** — Trust God's direction.
3. **17:17** — Faithful friendship.
4. **16:24** — Wise and gracious speech.
5. **20:22** — Responding to evil with faith and forgiveness.

Application: Encourage someone who is struggling this week.

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.”

Week 5 Preparation: Read **22 – 29**