

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 18]

Proverbs 16:1 [NIV] *“To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.”*

God wants us to use our minds, to seek advice and wisdom from His Word, the Christian Bible, in the forming of those plans. The final outcome of those plans is in the hands and power of the eternal, all powerful, Creator God.

This is a partnership that the Creator God desires to have with His created children, **not** just now but for all eternity.

There are certain prophetic scriptures that excite me in that they seem to point towards this eternal partnership with the Creator God and His created children.

Isaiah 51:16 [King James] *“And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”*

“Plant the heavens,” what does this mean? Are all the billions of stars and possible planets around them the future job that we will be part of with our Creator God, Jesus Christ?

Isaiah 65:17 [King James] *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”*

Create new heavens?

Isaiah 9:7 [King James] *“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*

The increase of the rule of Jesus Christ will **not** have an end.

Eternal life sounds very exciting when we meditate on such scriptures, **not** a dull moment in our lives beyond human death and the resurrection!

Proverbs 16:2 [NIV] *“All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.”*

People can rationalise anything if they have **no** standards for judging right and wrong. We can always prove that we are right.

When we read this Proverb in conjunction with the previous one we need to ask certain questions before we put into action what we are planning to say or do.

- a) Is what I plan in harmony with God’s Truth, the Christian Bible?
- b) Will it work under real-life conditions?
- c) Are my motives those that would be pleasing to the Creator God?

Ignorance, pride and self-flattery render us poor judges of our own conduct and motives.

Proverbs 16:3 [NIV] *“Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”*

There are different ways to fail to commit fully whatever we are doing for the Creator God.

Some people only commit superficially, saying the project they are involved in is for the Lord, but in reality it is being done for their own pleasure or prestige.

Others give God temporary control of their plans, only to take back control when things stop going the way they expected.

Others commit a task fully to God, then put forth **no** effort themselves, wondering why the task is **not** successful.

The balance is trusting God as if everything depended on Him, while working as if everything depends on us.

Our activities and plans will be **no** less our own for being totally committed to God, only they will be less burdensome and more likely to succeed!

Proverbs 16:4 [NIV] *“The LORD works out everything for his own ends, even the wicked for a day of disaster.”*

God allows evil, prompted by Satan, to exist in the world to prove to all humanity what life is like when God and His way of life, are **not** influencing what we are doing and saying.

James 1:13-15 [NIV] *“When tempted, no-one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*

God does **not** want to have as His created children robots, so He gives every human being free choice and some people choose to be and do evil. [**Joshua 24:15; Hebrews 11:24-26; Deuteronomy 30:19-20**]

Colossians 1:16 [NIV] *“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”*

All things, including human beings, are created for Jesus Christ. To become His bride. [**Revelation 19:7-9**] To be friends with Jesus Christ. [**John 15:14-16**]

Proverbs 16:5 [NIV] *“The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.”*

Pride is one thing that God hates, for it cuts a person off from being helped by God, or used by God.

Lucifer was used by God until pride caused him to rebel against God and became Satan. [**Ezekiel 28:12-17**]

A proud person is placed in the very worst company in Proverbs.

First of seven abominations. [**Proverbs 6:16-17**] Those who will be destroyed. [**Revelation 21:8; Proverbs 6:18**] Something that is evil. [**Proverbs 8:13**] Linked with shame. [**Proverbs 11:2**] Causes contention. [**Proverbs 13:10**] Linked with foolish talk. [**Proverbs 14:3 – King James**] Will demote a person. [**Proverbs 29:23**]

Pride is an inner voice that whispers *“my way is best.”* It is resisting God’s leadership and causes us to think we are able to live without God’s help. Whenever we find ourselves looking down on other people we are being influenced by pride. Only when we eliminate pride can God help us to become all He desires we should be.

Proverbs 16:6 [NIV] *“Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.”*

Through the mercy and faithfulness [or truth] of God in Jesus Christ, the sins of believers are taken away and the power of sin is broken. When a person fears God they are prompted to avoid sin.

Proverbs 16:7 [NIV] *“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.”*

If we put our energy into pleasing our Creator God, it may cause even our enemies to respect us. Even if it doesn’t we haven’t lost anything, for we are still pleasing God, the only One who truly matters.

If the Creator God is for us, what can we fear? [**Romans 8:28-29**]

Proverbs 16:8 [NIV] *“Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.”*

A small estate, honestly come by, in the end will be better than a great estate that is ill-gotten.

Link this Proverb with **Proverbs 15:16** we find that a wealthy person invites problems from people who envy them. This Proverb is also a continuation of thought on **Proverbs 16:7**.

Proverbs 16:9 [NIV] *“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”*

This is linked to **Proverbs 16:1** adding that God directs or establishes this person’s path in life.

This should be our prayer to God. [**Psalms 119:133**]

This was the confession of the prophet Jeremiah. [**Jeremiah 10:23**]

Proverbs 20:24 [NIV] *“A man’s steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?”*

Only the Creator God can know of all the circumstances we will face in life. [**Isaiah 46:10**]

Proverbs 16:10 [NIV] *“The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth should not betray justice.”*

If we apply this to human rulership we have difficulties for it leaves **no** room for human weakness or error, with its positive tense.

But if we apply it directly to Jesus Christ as the returning King of Kings [**Revelation 19:16**] we have **no** problems.

If we view it as referring to human judges then we look on them as appointed by God [**1 Peter 2:13-16; Romans 13:1-7**] and we submit to them even if their sentences do **not** harmonise with the teaching we find in God’s Word, the Christian Bible. [**1 Peter 2:18-21**]

Proverbs 16:11 [NIV] *“Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.”*

Some weights and measures were in ancient Israel standardised by royal authority and were so inscribed, [**2 Samuel 14:26**] but some corrupt traders would have two bags of weights, one for buying and another for selling.

Because of such corruption this Proverb gives the authorisation of weight and measures to God. [**Proverbs 11:1; Proverbs 20:10, 23**]

This fair trading is so important to the Creator God that it was incorporated into the statutes given to Israel through Moses. [**Leviticus 19:35-37**]

No amount of rationalising can cover dishonest business practice.

Honesty and fairness are **not** always easy, but they are what the Creator God demands. Any unfair practice is living a lie and that is doing the work of Satan. [**John 8:44**] There is no “middle ground” as far as God is concerned.

Proverbs 16:12-13 [RSV] *“It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him that speaks what is right.”*

In context I feel that the “they” in **v13** is the people over whom the king rules and the “him” is the king.

This fits in with the guidelines that the Creator God gave to Israel for the king they wanted to rule over them instead of God Himself through His prophets and priests.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 [NIV] *“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, ‘Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,’ be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are not to go back that way again.’ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.”*

This is the only way that the king and the throne can be established, but also it must be applied to all leadership and rule.

Proverbs 16:14-15 [Living Bible] *“The anger of the king is a messenger of death and a wise man will appease it. Many favours are showered on those who please the king.”*

These two Proverbs can be applied to all leadership and rule.

Most of us possess power over other people in some measure, to bring misery or happiness. In this role we also can play the role of a petty tyrant by misusing that authority.

The charter of rulership is raised to a higher level by the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 20:25-27 [NIV] *“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave’”*

Jesus Christ brings a new perspective to leadership. Instead of using people we are to serve them. A real leader has a servant’s heart and mind. Servant minded leaders appreciate others’ worth and realise that they are **not** above doing any job that they expect those under them to perform.

Proverbs 16:16 [NIV] *“How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!”*

This is the same theme as is given to us as Godly Wisdom in **Proverbs 8:10-11, 19**, again placing a high value on Godly Wisdom. A major part of its value is the joy and satisfaction we receive when we apply it to our lives.

Proverbs 16:17 [NIV] *“The highway of the upright avoids evil; he who guards his way guards his life.”*

The sincerely Christian person keeps at a distance from every appearance of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 [King James] *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”*

In a sinful world we do this by avoiding tempting situations and concentrating on being light and salt to those we meet with in day-to-day life. [**Matthew 5:13-16**]

Only by living this way can we be safe spiritually.

Proverbs 16:18 [NIV] *“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

The evil of pride is that it opposes the first principle of Godly Wisdom, the fear of the Creator God. [**Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10**]

Also pride is at odds with the two great commandments, love for God and our fellow human beings. [**Matthew 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-31**]

The proud person is therefore at odds with –

Proverbs 8:36 – themselves.

Proverbs 13:10 – their neighbour.

Proverbs 16:5 – their Creator God.

Proverbs 18:12 – resulting destruction may come to them.

Let us **not** fear the pride of others but fear pride that is found in ourselves.

Ironically proud people seldom realise that pride is their problem, although everyone around them is well aware of it. We all need to ask a trusted friend or relative whether self-satisfaction has blinded us to the warning signs of pride.

Proverbs 16:20 [NIV] *“Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.”*

Truth and trust, the combination that will ensure a life that is blessed in many ways.

Truth is found in God’s Word, the Christian Bible [**John 17:17**] but what is being asked of God is more than just an intellectual acceptance but total submission to the One who is truth personified, Jesus Christ. [**John 14:6**]

The depth of this submission is expressed by the Psalmist.

Psalms 2:10-12 [The Living Bible] *“O kings and rulers of the earth, listen while there is time. Serve the Lord with reverent fear, rejoice with trembling. Fall down before His Son and kiss His feet before His anger is roused and you perish. I am warning you, His wrath will soon begin. But oh, the joys of those who put their trust in Him!”*

Psalms 34:18 [King James] *“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”*

God allows circumstances to bring us to this submissive attitude so that we seek Him and put our trust in Him as our only Saviour.

John 5:22-24 [NIV] *“Moreover, the Father judges no-one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him. ‘I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.’”*

It is Jesus Christ who is the judge of all humanity [**2 Corinthians 5:10**] hence our total submission to Him and His words.

When we consider Who and what Jesus Christ is, the very Son of God [**Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5**] our only Saviour [**Acts 4:12**] and the One who has all power and authority [**Matthew 28:18**] as well as being our judge. Our only hope is found in complete submission to His will.

There are times when I have meditated on the person of Jesus Christ, that to “*kiss His feet*” would be presumptuous. I limit my worship to kissing the ground on which He has walked!

Proverbs 16:21 [RSV] *“The wise of heart is called a man of discernment, and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.”*

The application of Godly Wisdom cannot fail to make an impression on other people, even those who are more talented.

Acts 4:13 [Living Bible] *“When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John, and could see that they were obviously uneducated non-professionals, they were amazed and realised what being with Jesus had done for them!”*

Proverbs 16:22 [NIV] *“Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly brings punishment to fools.”*

God’s Wisdom is the “*fountain of youth*” that people spend fortunes seeking and never finding.

When we live by God’s Word, the Christian Bible, the deadly effects of sin are washed away [**Titus 3:4-8**] and the hope of eternal life with our Creator God gives us a joyful perspective on our present life.

The choice is ours. We can be enlightened by God’s Wisdom, or we can be dragged down by the weight of our own foolishness.

Proverbs 16:23 [Living Bible] *“From a wise mind comes careful and persuasive speech.”*

A wise person’s God-given knowledge, always suggests something of value to those who listen. [**Matthew 12:35; Psalms 37:30**]

Proverbs 16:24 [NIV] *“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”*

To say pleasant things to a person when we can, is a simple benefit we may bring to a person, in their minds and hence to their whole physical body.

Isaiah 50:4 [King James] *“The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”*

When we constantly study God’s Word, the Christian Bible, we will know how to encourage others as God encourages us with His promises and love. [**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**]

Job 4:3-4 [NIV] *“Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees.”*

Job’s life was a good example of this ability to encourage others when they are in trials.

Job 2:9-10 [NIV] *“His wife said to him, ‘Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!’ He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.”*

Even when Job did not receive comforting words from his own wife, but Job continued to trust the Creator God.

Proverbs 15:25 [NIV] *“The LORD tears down the proud man’s house but he keeps the widow’s boundaries intact.”*

This is a caution to all to take heed that they are **not** deceiving themselves as to the condition of their life, Christian or professing Christian.

Titus 3:3 [King James] *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”*

We must always remember this is how we were in God’s eyes before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Revelation 3:17-18 [NIV] *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.”*

Here were people in a Christian church professing to be Christians but were blinded to their real spiritual condition. [**Galatians 6:3; James 1:22; James 1:26; 1 John 1:8**]

Proverbs 16:26 [NIV] *“The labourer’s appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.”*

Our physical appetite is an incentive for us to work. Hunger makes us work to satisfy that hunger.

This incentive to work to eat is taken away when the state provides, and with this lack of incentive there is a lack of maturing in character.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-15 [NIV] *“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘If a man will not work, he shall not eat.’ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.”*

God considers that every human should work, even if the leadership mishandles the economy so there **no** paid employment for many.

Philippians 2:12 [King James] *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*

Our salvation is dependent on our Saviour Jesus Christ, but that is just being placed on a road that is going in the right direction.

Maturing as a Christian doesn’t come without hard physical and spiritual work, its called study and prayer!

[Please download and study our article, 'Work Out Your Own Salvation' listed under heading 'Salvation']

Other scriptures we need to study on the subject are – **John 5:17; Ephesians 4:28; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 6:28-29; James 2:20**

Proverbs 16:27-30 [King James] *“An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.”*

In these four Proverbs we have four ways in which words are a major part of spreading painful mental damage to other people.

v27 – Abusive or reproachive words uttered in the “*heat of the moment*” without thought.

v28 – Hebrew word translated whisperer is “*nirgân*” meaning slanderer, vindictive gossip. Listed among those who deserve death, [**Romans 1:28-32**]. Problem in church at Corinth. [**2 Corinthians 12:20**]

v29 – Violent is the Hebrew word “*châmâc*” meaning injustice, oppressor, false. Such talk can cause a friend or neighbour to cutting themselves off from the person attacking them.

v30 – Subtlety, Hebrew word translated “*shutteth*” is “*âtsâh*” meaning to fasten. So their main attention is to devise, Hebrew word “*châshab*” meaning to plot, invent or fabricate something that is evil.

Isaiah 32:7 [King James] *“The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.”*

The churl, Hebrew “*kêlay*” meaning a person who withholds the truth. [**Jeremiah 18:12; Ezekiel 11:2; Micah 2:1; Romans 12:18** – NIV]

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

In Hebrew culture, long life was a sign of God’s blessing, therefore grey hair and old age were good.

While young people glory in their strength, old people can rejoice in their years of experience and practical wisdom.

Note the word “*if*”, this is **not** in the original Hebrew but without it the meaning is that this crown is the natural reward, but **not**, of course, the monopoly but result of obedience. [**1 Kings 3:14; 1 Peter 3:10; Titus 2:2**]

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

Success in business, school or home life can be ruined by a person who has lost control of their temper. So it is a great victory in life to control our temper.

James 1:20 [NIV] *“for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”*

This adds a strong argument for temper control and the patience it brings with it. [**Ecclesiastes 7:8; Romans 12:12; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 10:36; James 1:4**]

Proverbs 16:33 [NIV] *“The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.”*

The Old Testament use of the word “*lot*” shows that this Proverb is **not** about God’s control of all random occurrences, but about His settling of matters properly referred to Him. [**Joshua 14:1-2; 1 Chronicles 25:8**]

God’s last use of this method was, significantly, the last event before Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. [**Acts 1:26**]

The Holy Spirit will from then onward be our guide and reveal God’s Will. [**1 Corinthians 2:9-14**]