

Proverbs 25-02-19b

Let's pick up our study now in Proverbs chapter 16, and we have seen this Critically important skill that we want to develop Which is to pay attention to our heart Look at what stems from it by setting in order the heart God will superintend our mouth our Conversations what we say the answer of the tongue will be in God's hands Pastor we used to listen two years ago used to say frequently God uses prepared people What does it mean to be a prepared person? We prepare our hearts We Order our priorities and our goals and our values in the light of what God is Expecting we've seen this in our 2nd Timothy chapter 4 study where we are to look ahead to the appearance of the Lord Jesus and his kingdom where he will judge and That should guide us give us the plan for Ordering our hearts. It's hard to do because we live in a mundane world There's Just stuff that everybody has to do you've got to figure out meals you get to figure out clothes You got to figure out transportation have to figure out where effort is going to go and what order? We're going to do things in how we are going to be where we need to be doing what we're supposed to do Finishing what we need to finish hitting marks meeting deadlines Keeping people satisfied who are supervising us or have expectations or who depend on us and Anybody can do that any Godless unbeliever and that same pastor who said God uses prepared people also used to frequently say If an unbeliever can do it. It's not the Christian way of life If you're doing things the way unbelievers do it that is not the life to which we have been called We may end up Performing the same activities and Accomplishing the same ends.

It is the way we do it and The prepared heart is one where the Holy Spirit can bring to our mind and activate these Wonderful truths of Scripture that we have learned together over many months and years That distinguishes us Maybe as man looks on the outward appearance They can't immediately tell that we are a believer, but over time it ought to make a difference We should be remarkable For our patience We should be abnormally at peace when a normal person Would be losing their heads we keep ours We should have strength and courage in situations that would daunt an unbeliever we should have focus and resolve and a purpose in What we do that comes from the expectation the confidence that the Lord Jesus is coming and this momentary light affliction is Working for us an eternal weight of glory It counts Job wanted to vindicate himself and he was righteous in his own eyes and this whole time talking with his friends He was busy trying to convince them that it wasn't his fault Instead of Turning their attention to God in heaven and Reflecting faith and confidence All the way through the dialogues Job talks to his wife and says though. He slay me yet. Will I trust him? but most of Job's responses throughout those 30-odd chapters are Self-vindication I've been kind to the poor I have taken care of my family I have Done these things with integrity and I have not defrauded I have not wronged I have not been a rascal in any of my and he spends his whole time Looking at himself as righteous Any unbeliever can do that If an unbeliever can do it it is not the Christian way of life.

What are we here to do? You Are not your own you are bought with a price therefore Glorify

God in your body Glorify God in your way in your answer of the tongue in your steps This was Job's mistake and that's why Job is Instructed at the end of that letter to go and offer sacrifice For himself and for his three friends. Who does he not have to sacrifice for? Ellie who? Ellie who doesn't need sacrifice so fascinating. I love the book of Job but this is our word for answer to set in order to arrange and We usually have some sort of thought behind an arrangement You've got files Do you arrange them if they're financial and you're paying bills? Do you? organize your files by Month of the year.

Here's my January bills. Here's my February bills Here's my March bills and the ones I paid the ones I received and I've marked it and it's month by month That is an order. That is an arrangement.

I can go back and find what I did in a given month or Do you organize them by? Destination here's what I paid to Amazon Prime, here's what I paid for my internet. Here's what I paid if I am repaying a loan and so you organize it by Destination of payment. This is my electric bill.

This is my water bill. This is to whom I pay it and if I need to know what happened with my electricity in any given month I Could use either arrangement I could go back to December here's how much I paid in my December file or I could go to my verdigris Valley electric co-op Folder and find it there. It isn't that one is necessarily better than another in in a lot of cases But have an order if you just throw bills into a big pile and then you got to find out what happened back in December there is no order and You waste time and you get frustrated and you can lose stuff and lose track of stuff and you can inadvertently fail to pay Because there is no order and structure we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are to reflect order arrangement and Most importantly we are to prepare and set in order and have a plan in our hearts this involves consistent Bible study and this is something we do together and I'm so grateful that we together meet Wednesday by Sunday by Wednesday by Sunday and we are consistent We have other things other times we can listen to recordings we can read books we can consult devotionals we can crack our Bible open and and have the adventure of discovery for ourselves, but consistency and a plan and a purpose is so important some people do it by a radio broadcast and you listen to J. Vernon McGee or or Any one of a number David Jeremiah and Chuck Swindoll Signed my diploma.

I don't remember his name, but there are those who have regular radio broadcasts, and they are wonderful expositors of the Word of God and They come on at a certain time It's during your drive, or it's in the morning when you're getting ready turn them on and listen It's a wonderful pattern of life, but we are to be consistent and be orderly To keep ourselves fed to keep ourselves in prayer to keep ourselves looking outward in in intercession for others and To be objective and not subjective when that happens God will bless our conversation and God will bless our steps that's what we see in this outside wrapper and We have to be looking constantly for that objective outside standard in verse 2 the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes We are quick to declare ourselves not at fault Whatever happened that wasn't me The Lord weighs the spirits and this is again, where am I directing my eyes Job is in verse 2 a Job his ways were

pure in his own eyes and He had a lot of justification and vindication for that there was a lot he could point to that he was doing right But the wrath of Elihu descends on Job because he didn't move to verse 2 B It is the Lord who weighs the spirits, and it's not what is right in my eyes I need to look at myself from God's perspective. I am here to be of use To be of value to be something that reflects God and his plans and his purposes it isn't about me. It is about the Lord Well then you come to verse 3 We've already seen that our words Can be superintended by the Lord the answer of the tongue if we prepare our heart We've already seen in verse 9 that if we use our prepared heart to make our way forward in life God will direct our steps So you've got the words and the steps now look at verse 3 Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established before you undertake today's task list before you get in the car to go to work before you Move into the list of things to be done in the house Before you sit down at your computer and open up whatever software you're using to get these things done stop and Pray Stop and think Before every single Bible class I have ever taught in my life across these years just as I begin I Stop and Pray the verse that says let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be Acceptable in thy sight.

Oh Lord my strength and my Redeemer the one who bought me the one who? Strengthens me. I want the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart to be acceptable in God's sight This is going to be a result of preparation I can't Scatter myself to the winds in in Earthly tasks and earthly thoughts and then come to God in prayer and say let my my words and thoughts be acceptable in your sight I can come to God and ask him to bless the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart because I Have prepared I have set in order my heart and put myself in a position I have met the condition to where God can answer that prayer with a yes Do you see the difference Having acceptable words and thoughts doesn't come by prayer. I Put myself in the position of having that prayer that they be acceptable in God's sight.

I Meet that condition by preparing I can claim the approval of God That he will find my thoughts and words acceptable because I have Done what I need to do to make them acceptable. There's not sin intermingled. I've confessed those sins I've claimed God's cleansing grace The my words can be acceptable in God's sight because I have spent time preparing them I Don't want to have to back up to the throne of grace and say Lord Please overcome my complete lack of preparation and my stupidity and not stopping and thinking and cleansing my heart And now I'm trying to do something That is a part of my spiritual responsibility and I am unprepared.

You can only pray the prayer Let these things be acceptable in thy sight if you have used God's provision to qualify for the answer to that prayer and this is true of every single thing we do that's why this is so practically important For God to bless us we have to avail ourselves of his provision his grace and follow his instructions So in verse 3 commit your work to the Lord your works Don't commit them to crossing it off the list Well got to get the laundry done got to get the lawn mowed got to get the car oil changed I've got to contact this person and correct this Misunderstanding or this this I need to make an appointment. I've got to get something on the schedule. I'm gonna call I'm going to communicate.

I'm going to Circulate I'm I've got to get these things done. And the reason I am doing it is it's got to be done If I don't get the oil change my car may fail Wrong Stop any unbeliever can do that unbelievers do it every day Can I commit the making of a plan to go to Valvoline and get my oil changed committed to the Lord How would I do that? What does that look like to commit this this one of my works to the Lord? I Look at the sticker in my car. I've met the mileage or the time need need fresh oil in my truck How do I commit that work to the Lord Well, I can start thinking through my My truths that I know why do I have this truck? What do you have that you did not receive every good and perfect gift comes from the Lord the Father of lights God has provided transportation for me.

I am a steward of one of the cattle on his thousand hills It's his truck it's his Provision he has given it to me to use To serve his purposes. I Am a steward I am a servant given charge it's like being in the Marine Corps and you're driving a Jeep or a Humvee or a six-by a Five-ton whatever it may be It's not your vehicle, but you are responsible to use it in the service of the organization and the mission It's not my truck. It is a truck.

God has put under my care So if I'm going to do a good job of caring for this piece of provision, I need to change the oil. I Get the oil changed as unto the Lord Thank you for this truck Help me keep it in a good state of repair Properly maintained so that it will serve your purposes and it will take me where you would have me to go and to be and to work and to serve I Appreciate this provision you didn't just give me any old truck. You gave me a wonderfully nice truck.

I am grateful for it I'm thankful for it. If there's anything else I need to do to it Please bring it to my mind so that I remember to check the tire tread and the oil in the In the transaxle and the seals on the CRVs and the rest of it Oh Lord, help me to do a good job of being a good steward of what belongs to you this is sort of a quick example Every single thing we do Ought to be done to please the Lord Do it heartily do it with vigor with Enthusiasm with purpose with a push toward completion Not 80% done not mostly done, but I left all my tools out. I I got it all done, but There's some of it.

That's not quite done If I'm doing it as unto the Lord it reminds me of being a marine I learned this from my father who was a marine long before I ever got to the actual Marine Corps Finish what you start and If you think you've dug the hole deep enough dig a few more inches If you think you're done, you're probably not so keep going if you think you have painted that well enough Check it over one more time and see what you missed if you're polishing a thing don't settle for it's mostly shiny Make it completely shiny in the Marine Corps. You're not done until nobody can find a way to do it any better If you think you've cleaned a floor check the corners check the baseboards Check everything when you think you're done assume You're not go back and find what you missed and do that If you think you've dusted Get your own white glove and go around and wipe every single thing so that when the white glove inspector comes He's not going to find something If we do it as unto the Lord we won't be satisfied until we have done our very best it's another great hymn our best Give him our best remember in Israel. You didn't find an average animal in the flock to bring for sacrifice you brought the best I Am presenting

this to the Lord It needs to be the very best I have If we are presenting ourselves a living sacrifice Are we going to show up in? Flicks and cutoffs and a t-shirt with a hole in it or are we going to come before the Lord? Dressed like the high priest would dress or like one of the other Levites would dress in the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle or the temple precincts Not spattered in blood not mud around the hem a Spotless white linen garment to come into the presence of the Lord washed and anointed That should be our goal every single day Set these things in order with a view toward How it looks to the Lord that's what it means in verse 3 commit your works to the Lord When you do that when when we make this a priority God will establish our thoughts Sometimes we think you know I just can't control my thoughts.

I keep going back and worrying about a thing I keep going back, and and I'm I'm I have disorderly thoughts I have nightmare scenarios that keep recurring. I get depressed. I I get distracted.

I my my thought life is a mess It's a shambles This is the strategy of the indirect approach we don't try to wrestle our thoughts into submission What does Paul mean when he says take every thought captive for Christ Well go to your promises in the Word of God. What does this say commit your works to the Lord I? Don't know why my mind is is going off in nine directions what I can do is focus on my work and I'm gonna take this you know I've got all of these things. I've got worries.

I've got concerns. I've got what-ifs I'm borrowing trouble from any one of a number of Possible futures it may not even happen, but if it was happen. I'm worried about it.

I'm I'm bringing You know hypothetical future trouble into my presence, and it's destroying my peace How do I fix that? Don't think about a pink elephant don't think about it. You know as soon as you say I don't want to think about it. That's all you can think about Here's the biblical solution to scrambled thinking Commit your works to the Lord You know what I need to do.

I've got to fold the laundry. I'm folding this laundry as unto the Lord if this basket of clothing Belonged to the Lord Jesus, and I was privileged to come into his dwelling and fold this and put it away for him How would I do it? I'm gonna commit my work to the Lord and we will find that God will honor this promise and by focusing on what is at hand Dedicating it to the Lord doing it as unto the Lord and disregarding what people may or may not think We will find that our thoughts are established. They're grounded.

We are back on a solid foundation Peace be still and the storm calms and the water levels out and the wind ceases Our boat will stop rocking and stop swamping When we look to the Lord Just like the storm on the Sea of Galilee What a great promise commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established by him It brings us divine peace Divine stability divine strength divine focus the things that we most Look for in our thought life joy peace patience gentleness faith self-control Don't necessarily come by pursuing them directly They come by being faithful and obedient So we take our works and say how would God have me do this if the Lord Jesus was sitting in a chair watching me How would I act? What would my attitude be?

What would my diligence level be would I get it almost done and then run over to? text somebody or see what the latest thing is on the news or would I finish it and Look at him and see if he's nodding well done good and faithful servant Enter into the joy of your Lord a Good and faithful servant enters into the Lord's joy Because a good and faithful servant commits his works to the Lord When you look at the Corresponding verse remember this is a chiasm So what does verse 3 correspond to we've already seen that 1 and 2 correspond to 8 and 9 so verse 3 is going to correspond to verse 7 right Proverbs is so Beautifully Formed it is like a jewel with facets look at verse 7 when a man's ways, please the Lord notice Commit your works to the Lord when your ways Please the Lord he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him This isn't just human enemies or even physical enemies Your own mind can be your enemies worry and fear can be your enemies Satan roaming the earth seeking who may devour can be an enemy Ensure that our ways please the Lord and whatever is attacking us Whatever is assailing us. Whatever is causing us concern and a defensive dark approach Turns into peace put verse 7 with verse 3 Crystal clear this is how to do it Have the fruit of the Spirit How do I do that? Here's how? Can I dedicate what I'm doing to the Lord? You always see books that are dedicated to somebody a guy writes a novel and on the First few pages it says dedicated to so-and-so We can we can put that dedication page on the most trivial tasks that we may have the most mundane function that we perform and I Can sweep the heck out of that floor I can Cut the heck out of that firewood. I can Change the heck out of that oil because I recognize that these things are Opportunities that God has given me he put me in this place in this time with my skills my capabilities my resources Others who depend on me others on whom I depend God arranged this story problem with all of its factors, and I am solving for what would please the Lord X is What does God desire? What does the Lord require of you? Oh, man? What you do should be fair do justice What you do should be merciful I? Love what is a mercy to others? What is a a benefit to others what doesn't give them what they deserve, but what God wants them to have I? Don't want what I deserve.

I want God's grace Do justice love mercy and walk in humility with the Lord if he's going in this direction That's the direction. I'm going if he wants to see and do these things. I am walking in humility with him What does the Lord require of you? Oh, man? Do justice love mercy walk humbly with him.

It's a requirement, and if we don't meet the requirement the promises Can't be fulfilled So three goes together with seven So what would you expect in verses four and six verse four says the Lord has made everything for himself Stands to reason right the problem is remember this he has made everything for himself Everything to accomplish his purpose. What has God made he has made the light and the darkness and he separated them there's day and there's night and That creates a choice Paul says in Thessalonians We are not of the light or of the darkness that the day of judgment should overtake us like a thief We are in the light in the day. We are sons of light Jesus said work while it is day because the night is coming when no man can work So God has made both and it creates an opportunity for us to choose The Lord has made all for himself even the wicked for the day of doom I don't have to fret myself because of evil men.

I don't have to rail and shake my fist and lose my peace because Bad things are happening on the national news or the International Front or somebody is opposing what I think is good and right and you know They're slowing down that which ought to be embraced and and is good for the country and for its citizens and good for the world in general and people are being obstreperous and throwing wrenches into the machinery just to slow it down because they disagree and I my blood starts to Elevate in temperature and begin to boil and Fret not thyself because of evil men God isn't fretting himself and he's got the power to stop it The flood came when God was ready for it to come Israelites went into the land of the Amorites when their iniquity was full because it served God's purpose the Pharisees put Jesus on the cross and God let them the two witnesses of Revelation are going to prophesy and bring down fire from heaven and then they are going to lose their defense and be killed by their enemies and those enemies and those who Oppose and hate them are gonna dance in Joy and glee and mock and deride and leave their slain bodies in the street It's God's purpose it's God has made everything for his purpose and when we see things that we think are awful and So off-putting especially in our own lives Why is this happening to me? Why can't I get out of this situation? Why can I how I'm Job? I don't think I deserve this. I've been faithful. I've been obedient.

I've kept short accounts. I've Soaked my heart in the Word of God and look at this circumstance Are you Job? righteous in your own eyes and Eli whose wrath is going to come out in a couple of chapters of Lord Jesus Christ anticipating speech or do I look to the Lord and Recognize that The Lord has made everything for his purpose He has a purpose He doesn't have to be bending himself to my purpose and my expectation and my satisfaction and my happiness. I Submit to him think what a different book Job would have been if Job had constantly answered his friends with God is in his heaven and we don't have to understand what he is doing Job doesn't get there until about chapter 40, but he does get there and it's for our benefit the Lord has made all for himself even the wicked for the day of Doom the day of judgment and in the same way that you look at enemies Physical enemies being at peace and that is that is a representation.

It's a figure of speech It's a metaphor for anything that attacks us and is against us the wicked who are made for the day of doom this is whatever hardship and Effect of the fallen world comes into our life God has a purpose he has created the world that makes for this We look at ourselves and think you know, I am no longer in my prime my body is deteriorating my rotator cuffs are not mending and my bones are starting to rub against each other where there ought to be cartilage and God designed the aging process and you can Think the thought that anybody can do young it takes something special to do old Anybody can navigate When they're strong, they're healthy they heal they get over things Quickly and easily there you wake up with a spring in your step and a tiger in your tank now I wake up and the spring is stuck into my muscle somewhere and I got nothing in the tank The tiger is chewing on me But God could have made us young young young young go to glory but he didn't God designed us to wither and fade like the grass and The flower The grass withers the flower fades God designed it that way The Word of our God stands forever so I'm going to focus on the word not on the fading and the withering and I'm going to remember that the Lord has made everything for himself

and I had to be looking at what he is doing what his purpose is and Be humble enough to walk with him and not start saying well, you know Lord I kind of had a different idea about how this ought to go and that corresponds with verse 6 in Mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity Why has God made everything for himself even the wicked and allowing them to be wicked and iniquitous? Because without sin without wickedness without fallenness without the problems that those things bring into the world Without the fallenness and the hardship and the pain and the suffering that this world Contains which God has made for himself. We would not have mercy atonement Provision for iniquity Don't need the solution because I don't have the problem. Why are you handing me a box of band-aids? I've got no cuts or blisters It is the presence of these things By God's will that gives us insight and appreciation for his mercy his atonement his solution for iniquity his answer to hardship and By the fear of the Lord we depart from evil We escape the effects of evil our love for the Lord our fear of the Lord our focus on him is the way of escape the body may be in one situation, but my heart and my mind and my spirit are in the presence of the Lord and The flesh cannot Drag me away from my father in heaven No amount of hardship.

No amount of iniquity. No amount of wickedness. No amount of fallenness in this world Which God has purposely allowed in measured amounts into each of our lives It should never drag us out of his presence or away from the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom The humility that says I will walk with him even if he's going into that dark valley.

I Will fear no evil. He's with me. I'm with him He will comfort me Well that brings you to the center in verse 5 if If we don't Grasp these truths if we don't order our lives and prioritize our spiritual goals in the light of these wonderful truths Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord If someone is an abomination to the Lord Is he going to fulfill any promises? Is he going to send them any peace? Is he going to make any provision? Is he going to reward any stewardship? Pride is rejecting these truths and saying I've got a better plan I'm gonna spend my days pleasing me.

I'm gonna get my tasks done so that others will be impressed with me I'm not going to admit That I'm not great everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord And None will go unpunished individually or in groups hand-in-hand just means even if you find others who think the same way as you and So you have a mutual admiration society you say yeah, yeah, you know we're okay. I'm alright. I'm okay.

You're okay Remember that book Punishment is coming now and at the appearance and at the judgment and in the future kingdoms there will be loss It isn't just self-induced misery so how important is it for us to bring these things on board and Redeem the time take every thought captive for Christ Invest The most trivial of tasks and chores and Activities with divine importance Dedicate them to God well all I'm doing is filling out a form all I'm doing is picking up some groceries all I'm doing Don't think that way Whatever you do Dedicated to the Lord commit your works to the Lord he will establish our thoughts and with established thoughts we have a feedback loop where we go back to verse 1 and We can prepare our hearts because

our thoughts are clear I know how to order my heart. God's going to give me the answer of the tongue. God is going to Help me with my plans, and he's going to direct my steps Because I my life is all about him every relationship every conversation every activity I Am conscious and aware I am only here because God put me here and the only purpose.

I have is to be pleasing in his sight and He will infuse our thoughts our conversations our actions the path and course of our life With his divine power and his divine glory and we will be Qualified for service and function now and in the ages to come what a privilege what an opportunity It's not hard. It is basically a choice to prioritize to view Everything in this light I Don't have to climb a mountain. I don't have to plumb the depths of a sea it is near.

It's in our hearts It's in our minds and We make a choice and God will bless that choice So that is Proverbs chapter 16 verses 1 through 9. I just think I'm gonna carry this around with me Think about it every morning every evening try to revisit it through the day This is what life is about and it's in the Old Testament the Christian way of life Everything that makes it go is right here in this section of Proverbs. Well, we'll continue our study next time Let's close here in a word of prayer Father thank you that in your grace and with great patience and love you have Created us you have carefully Placed us at the right time in history the right place on the earth With the relationships the opportunities the life Circumstances that are a part of your plan and purpose Even the wickedness that we encounter is a part of your plan You will judge it in due course and in due time, but you are using it and working it together for good For those of us who love you and are called according to your purpose We ask that you Through your spirit and in the presence of your word in our hearts will remind us that this is our purpose This is our opportunity so that we can redeem the time we can dedicate each activity each thought to Pleasing you and reflecting your glory. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen