

“Proverbs 16”

Special Presentation

Proverbs 16

The Rev. Ted Wood

September 16, 2022

Ted: Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ we give you thanks for our brother Kevin and sister Sandy his wife. We thank You that these witnesses are sobering reminders of our desperate need for You and our complete inability to be the kinds of people You want us to be. We pray that by this example and the examples of others that we come in contact with, not by coincidence but by divine appointment, that we will see ourselves truly as we are, and of the desperate need we have to be in You and living in You. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Ted: Okay, thanks. Let’s look at the book of Proverbs. And what we will do today reminds us of the ancient practice of the Brave Men, a quarter of a century in the making. So before you sit down now we’ll all stand for the reading of Proverbs 16. This is according to the ESV; we’ll read it altogether.

Don Maurer: I’ll have to put my *New King James* away.

Ted: The *New King James* is not going to work.

Don: Okay.

Ted: You’re going to have to go along with this in absentia.

Don: Okay.

Ted: Okay.

*“The plans 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 spirit.
Commit your work to the LORD,
And your plans will be established.
The LORD has made everything for its purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of trouble.
Everyone who is arrogant in heart
Is an abomination to the LORD;
Be assured: he will not go unpunished.
By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for,
And by the fear of the LORD one turns away 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 great revenues with injustice.
The heart of a man plans his way,
But the LORD establishes his steps.
An oracle is on the lips of the king;
His mouth does not sin in judgment.
A just balance and scales are the LORD’s;*

“Proverbs 16”

*All the weights in the bag are His work.
It is an abomination to kings to do evil,
But the throne is established by righteousness.
Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
And he loves him who speaks what is right.
A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
And a wise man will appease it.
In the light of the king's face there is life,
And his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.
How much better to get wisdom than gold;
To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.
The highway of the upright turns aside from evil;
Whoever guards his way preserves his life.
Pride goes before destruction,
The haughty spirit before a fall.
It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good,
And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
The wise of heart is called discerning,
And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it,
But the instruction of fools is folly.
The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious
And adds persuasiveness to his lips.
Gracious words are like a honeycomb,
Sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way to death.
A worker's appetite works for him;
His mouth urges him on.
A worthless man plots evil;
His speech is like a scorching fire.
A dishonest man spreads strife,
And a whisperer separates close friends.
A man of violence entices his neighbor
And leads him in a way that is not good.
Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things;
He who purses his lips brings evil to pass.
Gray hair is a crown of glory;
It is gained in a righteous life.
Whoever 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.”*

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Ted: Just one chapter of Proverbs; I think Sig chose it because today is the 16th. How was the experience of reading through 33 verses? Did it strike you as long?

Jim Hamilton: Yes.

Ted: Slightly.

Brave Man: There’s a lot in there.

Ted: There’s a lot in there. And that’s the thing that struck me as I looked at this more carefully, and Sig said that’s what we would be doing. And I was saying, gee whiz, we could have stopped right at verse 6 and not gone on further. But you’re going to see the questions on the back. And I would give your attention to those. I don’t remember this, but in the past before the days of the Bruce Bickel era we would take a proverb and then we would answer these questions:

Which verse stands out to you? (We would pick up to three verses.) Why are these verses important to you? Picking one verse, what do you think the verse is saying to you given your life’s circumstances? And how are you going to apply these verses to your life? Or as Bruce Bickel would say, what are we going to do with what we just learned? I urged Sig to remove that last question because I really don’t like applying Scripture to my life. *(Laughter)*
(Unclear)

Okay, I was just joking about that. But anyway, take these questions; pick something out. Let’s just start this discussion. Yes; go ahead.

Brave Man: I like verse 31.

Ted: You like verse 31. Let me remind us:

*“Gray hair is a crown of glory;
It is gained in a righteous life.”*

Okay; that’s good. I think for those who don’t have hair as they get older, they probably haven’t led a righteous life. *(Laughter)* I have to add exposition, right? Okay, what else? Let’s get serious.

Brave Man: Well actually I was going to say that as I look at verse 31, I look around and I see a whole lot of people who have a lot more gray hair than I do.

Ted: Yeah.

Brave Man: So what does that mean?

Ted: Okay; a very good question. This morning I actually thought about that verse. So what does that actually mean? I mean, I’m looking at everybody with gray hair; some have no hair.

Bishop Rodgers: That means we’re balding. *(Laughter)*

Ted: But that’s an interesting question. And I think it really applies to a lot of things. So did you have some thoughts you wanted to lead with?

Brave Man: No, other than that I might be the youngest person in the room.

Ted: You are?

Brave Man: I am. I only know how to be 45. And I look at my kids and I’m like, why don’t they understand that? Well, I have a 15-year-old who has never been 45. And if you have more experience bridging that gap from where you’re at to don’t make my mistakes,--

Ted: Yup.

Brave Man: That’s why we have Proverbs, right? Don’t make my mistakes.

“Proverbs 16”

I mean, the difference between your age in your son’s life is equal to the difference between your age in my life, right?

Brave Man: Right.

Ted: Just think about that. I was sent by my company to England. It was a wonderful assignment. I mean, I got paid extra money to be there. They gave me a car and a house. *(Unclear)* I told you about the fact that I complained to the company that I wasn’t getting paid enough to be there. Well I banked almost all of my paycheck because the only expenses I had were food and rent. And then I still had an attitude of ingratitude. And so I would not have the same attitude today, three years later. So that would be an example. Okay, Don; please.

Don Maurer: #1, I think that we have to realize that these proverbs are general principles. All of the word of God obviously is for our instruction. They are general principles, not absolute statements that can apply all the time.

Ted: Are you saying that this verse does not apply to you?

Don: Yes; I’m bald. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Well that’s the point. I thought you were going to develop that.

Don: It’s also important to realize this, and this might be a translation issue. In the ESV it says, *“It is found in a life of righteousness.”* In the New King James there is the word *“if”* in italics. So it says:

*“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory
If it is found in the way of righteousness.”*

Ted: Yeah.

Don: I can think for example of Vladimir Putin. He’s getting up there in age, and I don’t suspect that his head is a crown of glory in the spiritual sense, because he is certainly not what I would consider to be a man who lives a life of righteousness.

Ted: Okay; I have a number of thoughts on this. Thank you, Don. Any other thoughts? That’s a good question, because this is a proverb that we often joke about. But what do you think that means? What’s the application of that?

Don Bishop: I take it as looking on the hair.

Ted: Okay; looking on the hair.

Don: The hair of old-aged men is wisdom.

Ted: Yeah.

Bishop Rodgers: The elder has great wisdom.

Ted: Elders bring wisdom. Now we’re living in a society today that does not honor and respect wisdom, especially hard-gained wisdom. You all know that my wife and I are Anglophiles. So I’ve been glued to the set on the funeral and everything that is taking place when the casket and the coffin is brought into Westminster Hall, and the Westminster choristers break out into Psalm 139. I mean, it was profound! Everything has a meaning.

And yet we read of individuals with some status in this country talking very disrespectfully about the Queen. I was thinking this morning. The younger generation loved Princess Diana. They had a huge coverage. And yet I was reading this morning even online folks who say, “Why are we doing so much coverage of the Queen? I mean, I can understand it in England. But why are we doing it in the commonwealth countries like Nigeria and America? I mean, the Queen is really no big deal.”

“Proverbs 16”

And yet they wanted to honor Diana. But what did Diana do? I mean, Diana was a very troubled person. She lived a short period of time. And there was all kinds of disruption in her life.

But the Queen was just steadfast. And that’s why they honored her, because she stuck it out for seventy years, just to stay stable and to keep the country on a stable course. And I just thought, there is wisdom compared to lack of wisdom as it seems today.

I was at a big fundraising conference. And they had a speaker, a young woman. And I thought she was clever; I thought she was arrogant. And she said that it was time to get rid of those who are “male, pale, stale and frail.” And everybody laughed.

Bishop: Wow!

Ted: Yeah; they thought it was very funny. I was very upset about that; I found that very offensive. I mean, what have I lived for all these years anyway, if not to gain some kind of insight into these things? And they said I was overreacting.

Don Bishop: No.

Don Maurer: Yet if liberals are offended that’s terrible.

Ted: Whether or not they’re liberal, I’m just saying that the whole culture demeans wisdom, the gray hairs. We pay a price of this. You know, we arrive at this age, and then it’s kind of like God’s cosmic joke, because when we finally arrive at this age and have some wisdom, you say, “I got it,” and then you die. It’s just that when we finally start to see how life fits together, and what’s important and not important, and what to worry about and not to worry about, we die!

I mean, when I was younger and when I was in my 40s I worried about all the wrong things. And now I still worry about a lot of those things. But I realize that it’s really not worth it; it’s just irrelevant, the things that the world says are important.

Anyway, those are my thoughts on that. I think that speaks to the whole thing with the Queen and her funeral and what she stood for. She was not the Prime Minister. She was not the Parliament. She did not control the laws of the country. But she set a standard. I think that’s one good reason to have a monarch by the way, as well as a president—the president and a monarch—because the president is the head of the government, and the monarch is the head of the state. And you can hate Trump, but if you love the Queen it still means that you’re proud of the leadership of the country. But that’s another question altogether; I don’t want to get off on that.

But that’s an excellent question. We do not honor and respect wisdom earned the hard way. We honor and respect the most clever and novel things that come down the pike. Okay, that was good; thanks a lot. Any other thoughts on that? Sorry; I broke into sermon/lecture #3432; I apologize.

Don Maurer: Go for it.

Ted: Yes, Bishop?

Bishop: I liked verse 4.

Ted: 4, okay.

*“The LORD has made everything for its purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of trouble.”*

Don Maurer: Me too, Bishop. *(Laughter)* Thank you.

Bishop: You’re welcome.

Don: I was going to bring that up.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Yeah. What did you like about that, Bishop?

Bishop: Well, it celeb rates the sovereignty and the wisdom of God. And you can rest in that. There’s a lot of evil in the world; there’s a lot of pain. And here we find out that God even has a purpose for that.

Ted: Yeah.

Bishop: Nothing is too great for the Lord to cope with. And it drives you back to texts like “Have no anxiety; your heavenly Father knows that you need these things; He’ll provide them.”

Ted: Right.

Bishop: He takes care of the birds. He takes care of the lilies. He’ll take care of you.

Ted: Yeah.

Bishop: And that’s been true in my life.

Ted: Okay. Keep going.

Bishop: I’ve had enough going. *(Laughter)*

Don Maurer: We appreciate your wisdom, Bishop.

Ted: He’s earned it the hard way. You know, I always respect and listen to you as those who pay their dues. I always like to hear what they have to say. “The LORD has made everything”—everything—“everything for its purpose.”

Ron Baling: I use that as an argument. You hear atheists complain about the evil in the world. There are theologies that say that God never wanted to have the Fall.

Ted: Yeah.

Ron: And I say to them that without evil you really can’t recognize good as supreme. And the second thing about evil is this. If there is no purpose in evil, then God is evil. Is there a purpose for suffering? There has to be a purpose for it.

Ted: He kind of steps aside. “Oh, this is messier than I thought it was going to get; I’m just going to take a nap.” God says, “I’ll watch TV now.” *(Laughter)* Or as it says in the contest of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, “Maybe your god has gone aside. Maybe he has stepped aside to relieve himself.” *(Laughter)* Maybe this is above his pay grade.

Okay, what other Proverbs? Which verse stands out to you? Think of one. Why are these verses important to you. Pick one verse; what do you think that verse is saying to you, given your life’s circumstances. Just pick one; pick a verse, any verse. I mean, there are lots of them. Go ahead.

Rich Clark: I don’t have my glasses, Ted, so I can’t see well. It says something like, “Blessed is he who rules his spirit; It is better than he who captures a city.” Something like that.

Bishop: Yes. It’s down there near the bottom.

Rich: 32.

Ted: Verse 32:

*“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
No?”*

Rich: No, that’s good.

Ted: Okay, go ahead.

Rich: Well, I struggle with anger.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Yeah?

Rich: I have a temper against my family; that’s something I struggle with. When I read verses like that it’s so very encouraging.

Ted: Right.

Rich: To press on, to struggle, to fight to control that temper.

Ted: Right.

Bishop: You need to read 29:

*“A man of violence entices his neighbor,
And leads him in a way that is not good.”*

Don Bishop: When you’re as old as Rich, you’re aware of that. *(Laughter)*

Ted: I’ll bet he knows that. *(Laughter)*

Rich: I don’t get violent.

Ted: He knows that he’s a man of violence and he entices his neighbor; he understands that. *(Laughter)* You know, what do you think that anger is all about? I’m not trying to get psychological, but I think anger is rooted in a uniquely basic human psychology, which I think is the need for justice. And you get angry because you can’t affect justice; you can’t make it right for you. So you’re going to make it right.

Bishop: Or for others.

Ted: Or for others. You can always kind of slide it off. Oh, I’m not really angry for myself; I really have this righteous indignation on behalf of others. I won’t trust that; I think Jesus was the only One that had righteous indignation for the benefit of others.

I remember that I was at a march for life a number of years ago. And you know that after you do the march you go and visit your Congressman. And we went and visited the senator from Pennsylvania that switched parties. It was Arlen Specter.

We went to Arlen Specter’s office and we wanted to see him. And his staff came up and they said, “Well you know, he’s not here”—this kind of thing. There was a woman in that group that started yelling at the staff and calling them names and using obscenities. I mean, this was supposed to be a basic Christian march of some kind. She went after that staff member. People were telling her to calm down. She wouldn’t calm down.

Well, at that time we were going to Northway. I think they emphasize all the gifts of the Spirit, including demonic possession. *(Laughter)* So I went to her and I said, “I rebuke you in the name of Jesus! I rebuke you; you leave this woman!” I just put the power of Jesus on her; I probably wouldn’t do that now. But I did that at that time. And she looked at me and she said, “Are you crazy?”

I said, “No, you’re crazy.” *(Laughter)* And I looked at her, and she put her head down and walked away. But her anger was so great for what? For murdered unborn babies? Maybe; probably not. At its root it probably originated with some kind of anger on her part, and she was displacing that so that she could be righteous. Maybe she couldn’t be righteous with her personal anger. But she certainly could be righteous on behalf of the abortion of unborn babies. Yes?

Don Maurer: And what complicates things too is that the Bible commands us in Ephesians 4 to “be angry and not to sin.”

Ted: Right.

Don: And so I think that there is such a thing as righteous anger; I just don’t know if I have that 99% of the time.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Right. 99% of the time it's better to be quiet. And Rich, I think you might say *“whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty.”* Is that where we are?

Rich: Yes.

Ted: “And he who rules his spirit.” I think over time that you've matured and gotten better at that. Would that be a true statement?

Rich: I would say yes.

Ted: I think that has probably happened to you. I don't experience you as an angry person. But then I've never seen anybody cut you off in traffic. *(Laughter)* Or your wife raining on your parade one more time. I was listening to one of those financial guys in the office while I was having a meeting. He said, “My wife had to rain on my parade.” So you've got a great idea. “No, that won't work!” *(Laughter)* Ohhhh! Michael, go ahead.

Michael Rush: I was going to say that, you know, in all seriousness, sometimes we don't take some of this stuff seriously enough. We hear the Scripture say, “Be slow to anger.” We know that the Word says to be slow to anger, slow to speak and quick to hear. And you know, a lot of times people's anger does not come with any seeming consequences, right?

Ted: Yeah.

Michael: And I'm specifically addressing the church here. You know, this past period of years here in the United States there has been a lot of turmoil and a lot of division.

Ted: Yes.

Michael: And I'm seeing people who were in the church who absolutely, absolutely should know then to govern their own anger, thoughts and tone.

Ted: Preach it, brother, preach it.

Michael: It's been very disappointing. I grew up fighting—not on the streets, but I was a fighter.

Ted: As in a boxer?

Michael: The martial arts.

Ted: Martial arts.

Michael: And you learn very quickly that your anger will get you hurt.

Ted: Yes.\

Michael: And you've got to stay calm, because you can't learn in an angry state. You have to admit your jealousy in an angry state.

Ted: Yeah.

Michael: And it is arrogance to think that your anger needs to be held up higher than other people's thoughts, rights or opinions. So it's been disappointing, because we read. Like you said earlier you were joking about how we read this thing that's not supposed to apply to you. *(Laughter)* So we don't take this stuff seriously enough. And there have been times when I selfishly wished that people could receive the consequences of what they were putting out, because it might be a good lesson. Sorry.

Ted: No, you're right. And we have to remember that as Don said, most, 99% of your anger, is self-righteous anger. And we think we can say it and get away with it because it's a righteous cause. But the Scripture in many places warns us against that.

And that's an excellent point. And you see it in a debate. The person that gets angry has already lost the debate; that's the fact of the matter. The person who gets angry in martial arts has already lost the match.

Michael: And more than that, and most important of all, it does not glorify the Lord.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: No. It says that God really doesn't have the final say. I need to jump into the gap and do something for God. And we will lambaste theologies that say that we need to add works to faith. We say those are awful things; you are saved by your faith. Yet we think that we need to jump in and do some more for God or else God is going to drop the ball.

I mean, that's always the concern, isn't it? In our worries and anxieties and the anger in reacting to that, we say that maybe this time God will drop the ball. Maybe it's like what Elijah said to the prophets of Baal. Maybe God is gone. Maybe He has left the scene: maybe He's off the stage. Maybe He'll come back. But in the interim I've got to fill in for Him.

Michael: Yeah.

Ted: Yeah. I mean, that's true. We've seen this, and it's justified in their own minds. It's a great wickedness. Yes?

Michael: On the other side of that, exercising what he says here is effective. It's not effective because I say it is; it's effective because it works.

Ted: Yes.

Michael: If you practice it, it does have tremendous benefits.

Ted: Yes. And by the grace of God we can reflect Christ's life.

Brave Man: Of course. It's a controversy to think about verse 18: *“Pride goes before destruction.”* And I don't know how you can find a way to sort this out. But when you see people who are really angry or passionate, is it really their agenda, or is it God's agenda? And so I think it's good to be passionate about something that you care about; I find this even in myself. Sometimes I don't know what is important. Is it really that important for me, or is it okay if I can let it go? Sometimes I see this in my family. I honestly struggle a lot to know when my decisions are sound. What am I putting my decisions in? If I have something that's holding me back I know that I can be passionate about it. And I find myself going back to Scripture a lot because if I find something there that is solid and grounded then I can be confident in that.

Ted: Yeah.

Brave Man: That's a big deal to me.

Ted: That's good. Bishop, were you going to say something?

Bishop: I was just trying to think. I was talking to a lady who had been a teacher. And she was describing the situation today in many schools, where the teacher is no longer permitted to discipline the students. It must have been an incredible experience to have all these young fallen kids doing their thing. And you can't send them to the principal. So I got angry because it's unrighteous.

Ted: Yes, it is.

Bishop: Now if I speak in that anger then I'm not going to do anything for it. But it seems like a righteous thing, even though I know my own righteousness is always mixed with evil; I have to be careful. But it does happen to you.

Ted: Sure.

Bishop: When you say this you just say to yourself, “That is not right!”

Ted: Yeah. Well, I'm angry about Kevin's cancer.

Bishop: Yeah, right.

Ted: But if I stay there I can't do anything for Kevin or his miserable condition.

Bishop: That's right; you can't stay there.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: I can't stay there. I mean, if we got upset about all of the things that were going wrong in this world, we would be unhappy and upset all the time.

Bishop: Absolutely.

Ted: And there are people who live that way. And I don't want to be one of those people.

Bishop: Oh, no.

Ted: I mean, we talk about the schools or business situations. But I just think about marriage. I think oh, Diana did it again! (I hope they're not recording this.) *(Laughter)* And I store that up. And then when I get to the place where I can really give her a good shot it comes out. And after I find that I say it, that was a really stupid thing to say, and it was not good. And then I have to apologize afterward.

Don Maurer: *“I wish that all men were like I am.”*

Transcriber's Note: 1 Corinthians 7:7. *(Laughter)*

Ted: “But if you're unable to control yourself—“

Transcriber's Note: An allusion to 1 Corinthians 7:9.

Don: Exactly.

Ted: I was one of those out of control. It will make you despair about your own salvation if you think a lot about it and don't let God have the final say in all of this. You will absolutely despair. And I think that sometimes we need to throw our congregations into despair so that they get sobered up, and see the issues of trying to sort everything out. Don't worry; it's going to be okay. No, it's not going to be okay; it's going to be catastrophic. But God does have the final say in this.

Okay, what other thoughts? What other topics? Chuck?

Chuck Mathe: I was just listening to what the bishop said about no discipline in schools.

Ted: Yeah.

Chuck: I went to a Catholic grade school.

Ted: Oh yeah.

Chuck: What a testimony. There was not only disciplined there. But if you were disciplined there, when you got home your dad disciplined you.

Bishop: That's right; that's true.;

Ted: They did a great job.

Bishop: You were in trouble in both places; I knew that.

Ted: Yes, Don?

Don Maurer: Here's another thought on anger, and it's been touched on here already. We live in a society that is just saturated in anger.

Ted: Right.

Don: The divisiveness, the politics, the whole thing; it's almost at a fever pitch like I've never seen in my lifetime.

Ted: No.

Don: Who was it? President Reagan back in the day and Tip O'Neill. I mean, they were on opposite sides of the pole. And yet afterwards they could be friends and have dinner together. That's no longer the case.

Ted: Right.

Don: And that just says to me more than ever that as Christians we have to saturate ourselves in the Word and in the truth about God, and realize that God does have the final say.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Right, and encourage each other in that.

Don: Mm-hmm.

Ted: And of course I think that the great culprit for our culture—not that I want to get off on that!—is the amount of knowledge and communication, because everybody’s self-righteous indignation gets broadcast everywhere all the time.

Don: Yeah.

Bishop: You listen to these famous people and how many death threats they get.

Ted: Yeah.

Bishop: I mean, there’s incredible anger rolling around.

Ted: Well, isn’t one of the signs of the end times that knowledge will increase?

Bishop: Yes.

Ted: We’re certainly swimming in that right now; we’re swimming unprecedented in numerous studies. I listen to Jordan Peterson and his guests and his lectures. They can demonstrate that, starting around 2012 or whatever the year was that,—help me out. I’m 74 years old; I have no idea. We began to get the advanced—

Bishop: Communication.

Ted: Communication.

Don Rimbey: Social media?

Ted: Social media; that’s the big explosion. We can see the rise in suicides at that time, and all kinds of other social maledictions took place at that time. So that’s what we’re swimming in, brothers.

And everybody, gird up your loins. I was with a fellow from my church the other day. He had left a nice job. And now he’s 75 and doesn’t know what to do with himself. I think his job is to come into our church and strengthen it, because I said that I think the times and the trials are coming for the future for us. And we cannot get caught up in the way the world thinks.

So the woman is going to Arlen Specter’s office screaming at the staff. Would it have not been more powerful for everybody to get really quiet and have a prayer meeting? I mean, I didn’t agree with Arlen Specter at all. But they chose anger rather than ministering in the Spirit. Okay, what else? What other questions do we have? Don, go ahead, please.

Don Rimbey: This conversation about anger reminds me of what Bruce Bickel used to say with the little card that he put out. I think one side said, “Feel, then act, then think.” That’s the way of the world.

Ted: Yes.

Don: But we’re supposed to think and then act and then feel.

Ted: Right, yes.

Don: So anger is the emotional response, whereas we’re supposed to move past that and use our brains to think through the process.

Ted: Right.

Don: Remember the card that Bruce passed out?

Ted: You know, this man is really saved. *(Laughter)* He brings his card.

Don: It says what? “Feel, act, think?”, versus--

Ted: “Feel, act, think.” And when you’re transformed, you think, act, feel.

Don: Right.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Yeah. We just need to encourage ourselves. We’re all tempted; we’re swimming in this sea of deception and lies, and we just need to encourage each other. Hence, the importance of really strong preaching in our churches—Bible-centered, expository preaching; the absolute, essential nature of that.

There was a ,major church in this area that recently made the decision to start ordaining women in their church. I listened to the 25-minute explanation by the pastor and the theologian and some of the staff members on that. I don’t think it’s a good idea. And if it is a good idea we need more time to implement it, okay? That’s just where I am.

But I was interested in how they came to the decision to do that, after having decades of not doing that. And again and again they were saying, “We feel . . . We fasted and prayed. And as a result of fasting and praying, we know this is a good decision.”

Well you know, you can fast and pray and go right against the Scripture too. We’re kind of swimming in all of this. We have to say, stop; time out. What words are you using to determine where the church is going? Is it that you feel things or that you discerned it, whatever that means? “We fasted and prayed, and that’s why we think this is a good decision.”

And there was precious little reference to the Scriptures! And you may be on the other side of that issue; I understand. I was just struck by the way their decision was made. And that message goes out every Sunday from those pulpits—that that’s the way to discern the truth about God to go ahead. And they would say, “We’re not like the world.” But that gets to be like the world. Any other thoughts? Yes, David?

Dave Wessel: Verse 17:

*“The upright turns aside from evil;
Whoever guards his way preserves his life.”*

Transcriber’s Note: KJV.

Ted: Let me just read that again so everybody can hear it. This is verse 17:

*“The highway of the upright turns aside from evil;
Whoever guards his way preserves his life.”*

Transcriber’s Note: ESV.

Dave: That ties into Bruce’s little card.

Ted: Right.

Dave: “Think, act, feel,” as opposed to “feel, act, think.”

Ted: Okay, what else? That’s just so full of meat, guys. Don, you’ve said a lot.

Don Maurer: I know I have.

Ted: Maybe it’s important.

Don: No; let someone else talk.

Ted: Okay, somebody else before Don speaks. Jump in, please.

Roger Myers: I like 21.

Ted: Let me read that out loud. Verse 21:

*“The wise of heart is called discerning;
The sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.”*

Okay, go.

Roger: So in the situation with my eldest son, he’s back into the house.

Ted: Can you just speak up a little bit?

Roger: He walked away from the faith.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Yeah?

Roger: And there’s plenty for me to get mad and angry, and to scream and yell and stomp about. But it’s not going to be persuasive. So I’m praying for graciousness to deal with the situation, and try to use this thing as a mind prompt to persuade him that this is the way we should proceed from here.

Ted: Yeah. That’s beautiful. I mean, the Scripture is full of sweetness of talk, and precious things here for your son. But you want to make it right. And the way to do that is to lay down the law, or let him see the error of his ways.

I know! We’re in terrible shape! I’m just like you; I’m going through a family situation in my family now. And I just want to (growl!) (*Laughter*) I just want to level the field completely. I want to do that. It’s all I can do to restrain myself, because I don’t believe that God can take care of it; it really comes down to that.

It’s very simple. God’s dropped the ball; He’s gone aside; He’s not here. He has other things to worry about. He can’t do it quite as well as I do. Maybe He doesn’t quite get what the problem is. Lord, maybe You won’t understand what the issue is; I’ve got to clarify it to You, Lord, and clarify it to that person—my son, my daughter, whoever it is. It’s pitiful; we need a Savior so badly; we need a Savior.

Rich: We struggle with unanswered prayer.

Ted: Oh yes.

Rich: I’m in that right now; I’m saying, “Lord, where are You?”

Ted: Yeah.

Rich: It’s the same thing, a family situation. I’m praying for these kids daily—day in and day out, day in and day out. And you see nothing. God, where are You?

Ted: Yes, and you ask yourself that. Well, you can also say to yourself, “Maybe God drops the ball.” I mean, that is an option. C’mon, Rich; maybe God doesn’t really care. (*Unclear*)

Rich: We’re impatient with His timing.

Ted: I mean, in the end, I think--Ted Wood—thinks that there are really two options; let me give you the options. Either God is who He says He is, or He isn’t. And we always have to ask ourselves that question. It doesn’t make you feel any better; you’re still grinding your teeth.

“God, there’s not an answer; You’re not showing up.” I mean, I’ve heard sermons; God’s going to show up, right? I mean, the check is in the mailbox. The check is there. It’s these stories; you know, we all hear them. And then God doesn’t do anything; He’s actually silent.

And that’s where we get to the place where we say, “Well okay, what are the two options? Either it’s not real, or it is.” It’s up to me; where do I want to put it? I don’t like the fact that He’s not showing up and talking. But what other option do I have?

Bishop: You have two options.

Ted: Go ahead, Bishop.

Bishop: There’s the option of having the problem. Or you can have the problem with God in the picture. Either way you still have the problem. (*Laughter*) What you might as well do is to put the Lord in the picture.

Ted: It’s a reasonable conclusion to draw, isn’t it? It doesn’t take a lot of faith to come to that conclusion.

Don Maurer: Monica prayed for Augustine for twenty years.

“Proverbs 16”

Ted: Monica. Was that Lewinsky? (*Laughter*) Monica was the mother of Augustine, who was one of the greatest theologians in church history. And we can thank him for strongly emphasizing the doctrines of God’s sovereignty and election. But he was a real bad guy. He had a live-in girlfriend when he got converted, didn’t he?

Bishop: And he walked away on her.

Ted: What? And then he walked away on her?

Bishop: Yes, when he got converted.

Ted: But his mom prayed for him and prayed for him. And the story goes that he was once sitting down thinking about all this stuff. He was not a Christian, and he heard some children playing nearby. There was a game, and they repeated the words in that game: “Pick up and read, pick up and read.” And he had the Scriptures next to him. And he picked up and read from them, and he was converted.

Bishop: “Make no provision for—“

Ted: “*Make no provision for the flesh, but—*“ I’m sorry; see, there you go. But Monica prayed. You know, Monica probably thought, well you know, the check is going to be in the mailbox, right? No. There are some kids playing next to my son, and they’re playing some silly game that we all know. But the line in the silly game that the kids keep repeating is “Pick up and read.” And it was what caused him to come to Christ.

It’s amazing, isn’t it? I guess God showed up. Actually He did show up in that children’s game while he was sitting there, fairly satisfied with his pagan life.

Okay, anything else? I think we’re just about over. Was that helpful and worthwhile to all of us?

Brave Men: Sure.

Ted: It’s very powerful, isn’t it? I mean, we’re all struggling with it; I’m struggling with it mightily.

Bishop: There’s quite a bit in this chapter about anger.

Don Maurer: And yet—

Bishop: And bad behavior.

Don: And yet the opposite in verse 24:

*“Pleasant words are like the honeycomb;
Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”*

Transcriber’s Note: NKJV.

Ted: Yeah.

Bishop: That’s right.

Brave Man: I think that this idea of is God who He says He is?, and why isn’t He doing something?, if we take those words “pick up and read,” and if we take the passage Christ is saying here, Jesus is who He says He is.

Ted: Yeah.

Brave Man: We believe that by faith. I know that people don’t. But when we do believe that by faith and we’re not going to do that much, do we like that or not?

Ted: Oh, yes!

Brave Man: He says, “*When you pray, pray in this manner. ... Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*” And we get so frustrated. We want that now, but we want it our way.

Ted: Yes.

“Proverbs 16”

Brave Man: And in these prayers, boy,. Do we really take it seriously that He mentions, “Pray this way? Thy kingdom come.”

Ted: Yes.

Brave Man: God wants us to trust that His way is better than ours. Thank you for your wisdom on that.

Ted: You know, that’s so true. When you pray, how should we pray? *“When you pray, say: ‘Our Father, Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’”* God says it; is that okay with you? *(Laughter)*

Anyway, let’s pray. Lord Jesus Christ, in times like this we are struck by our own inability to do and to live and to think as You have called us and given us the grace to do. We pray that You would so convert our lives that we will not only be a witness of Your glory in ourselves but to the world. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.