

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Monday, January 26
Reading: Proverbs 16:1-3, 9, 33

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and He will establish your plans.*

Is God sovereign over all or do people have freewill to choose? The biblical answer to this question is “YES!” The Bible teaches that God is in complete control and yet people are responsible for the choices they make. Proverbs 16 gives us some insight into this truth. It teaches us that God is...

SOVEREIGN OVER HUMAN PLANS – These verses are not saying that it is wrong to make plans. It is saying that as we prepare and plan we must remember that ultimately God is in control of their outcome. We should plan what we will say (16:1) and what we will do (16:9), praying for God’s guidance and direction. When our ways are right “the Lord establishes [our] steps.” This last word is actually singular in Hebrew implying that every step is “ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23 NKJV). “[God] wants us to use our minds, to seek the advice of others, and to plan. Nevertheless, the results are up to Him. Planning, then, helps us act God’s way. As you live for Him, ask for guidance as you plan, and then act on your plan as you trust in Him.”¹

SOVEREIGN OVER HUMAN MOTIVES – Verse 2 tells us that our ways always seem right to us. However, our reason and thinking have been warped by sin. Our motives may not always be as pure as we think. Many try to hide selfish motives behind their good deeds. But God is not fooled! He sees the motives and intentions of our hearts. We should always ask ourselves if what we say, do, and think is in line with God’s Word and pleasing to the Lord.

SOVEREIGN OVER CIRCUMSTANCES – There is no such thing as ‘chance’ with God. One way people in the ancient world determined what to do was to cast lots. Israel’s high priest had two special stones called the Urim and Thummim that were used to determine God’s will (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21). This may seem like a random way to make decisions, but God controlled the outcome (16:33). It was not a 50/50 chance of getting it right. It was acting in faith in God’s sovereignty. The last mention of casting lots is in Acts 2 when the apostles were deciding who should take the place of Judas among the Twelve. The Holy Spirit had not yet come so this was appropriate. Now with the indwelling of the Spirit in every believer we no longer need this method of decision-making. The Spirit will direct when we follow His leading.

What should be our response to all this? Proverbs 16:3 is one of the rare commands found in the book. To “commit” means to roll over. It is the picture of rolling something into someone else’s hands. “[It] means that I have to let go. This doesn’t mean that I don’t work hard and lay plans; it does mean that I actively give that work and those plans into the hands of the Lord...God’s way is often not what we envisioned. And yet, walking in relationship with Him, fearing Him, we find the path opening ahead of us, step by step.”²

¹ Life Application Bible Notes: Old Testament-Proverbs, p. 1028

² Kathleen Nielson. Proverbs for You, p 131