



# The Nature of God

## Proverbs 15–16

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- God hates wickedness and empty religion.
- Some portions of Proverbs are connected by topic.
- Proverbs 15:25–29, for instance, is about God’s view of the wicked and the righteous.
- Spreading proverbs on the same topic throughout the book created a method of teaching through repetition.

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- In these two chapters, we are looking at proverbs that teach us about the nature of God.
- In the introduction, we were told that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7).
- These verses all say about the same thing – God hates the ways of the wicked but loves the ways of the righteous. He loves all people but hates wicked ways.

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- Hates the sacrifices of the wicked, loves the prayers of the righteous (verse 8).
- Hates the way of the wicked, loves those who pursue righteousness (verse 9).
- Tears down the house of the proud, protects the vulnerable (verse 25).

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- Hates the thoughts of the wicked, gracious words are pure to Him (verse 26).
- Is far from the wicked, hears the prayers of the righteous (verse 29).

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- The contrast of the righteous and the wicked is a consistent theme throughout Proverbs, but these verses in particular show how God relates to these two groups differently.
- God says that He rejects the sacrifices, prayers, and songs of His people because their hearts and their behavior don't match their "religion" (Amos 5:21–23). He calls their offerings "vain" (Isaiah 1:11–15) and "unacceptable" (Jeremiah 6:20).

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- The Israelites categorized the Gentiles as “wicked” and themselves as “righteous” because they were covenant people.
- In the time of the prophets, they treated His presence in the temple like a good luck charm instead of actually living out God’s law (Jeremiah 7). But God’s prophets made it clear that His view of righteousness wasn’t about their status as His people but about their hearts, which was revealed in their behavior.

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- They worshipped false gods (not loving God) and oppressed the vulnerable (not loving others).
- God told them that instead of offering sacrifices and prayers, they needed to “remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression” (Isaiah 1:16–17).

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- Jesus also condemned empty religion and said that what matters is the heart.
- Our heart is where our actions come from (Matthew 15:1–11), Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah in the process.
- James said true religion shows itself our actions, the way we care for others, not our religious rituals (James 1:26–27; 2:18–24).

# Proverbs 15:8-9, 25-29

- None of us is righteous by our own works; we must take on the righteousness of Christ to stand before God (Romans 3:1–20).
- Proverbs agrees with the rest of Scripture – Old and New Testament – that it's not religious ritual that determines our righteousness but hearts that show a true faith in Jesus.
- It is not our sacrifices or our works that give us righteousness, but His sacrifice and His works (Romans 3:21–31).

# Proverbs 16:1-4, 9

- God is sovereign over all things, including our individual lives.
- We can make our plans, but the Lord is ultimately in control of what happens.
- Scripture tells us that God alone is sovereign over all things (Nehemiah 9:6; Acts 4:24), yet He has also given us free will to make our own choices (Deuteronomy 30:19–20).

# Proverbs 16:1-4, 9

- Where do we see God's hand when evil prevails?
- It is difficult to resolve the tension from the effects of a broken world (sickness, pain, death, sinful deeds of men) and the sovereign hand of our loving God.
- But we can be confident that God works all things out for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

# Proverbs 16:1-4, 9

- Go ahead and make plans, but know that God is really in control.
- If we commit our work to the Lord, our plans will be established (16:3).
- This is an excellent reminder, as we study how to live well through the Proverbs, that as we seek to make God-honoring choices, we can make those decisions in confidence.
- God is in control.

# Proverbs 16:5-8

- God forgives sin and enables His people to walk in righteousness.
- This chapter is the only place in Proverbs where the Hebrew word for atonement (*kaphar*) is used (verses 6 and 14).
- Used three other times in the Psalms (Psalm 65:3; 78:38; 79:9).
- Atonement is much more the language of the Torah/Law, most commonly used in Leviticus. It's not a typical topic for proverbs.

# Proverbs 16:5-8

- Even more significant is that it doesn't refer to the sacrificial system of atonement, but instead to "steadfast love and faithfulness."
- This word for "steadfast love" (*chesed*) is most often used of God's love for His people, the kind of unconditional love that is wholly undeserved.
- It can also be translated "mercy" or "lovingkindness."

# Proverbs 16:5-8

- One OT scholar said that *chesed* is “tantalyzingly impossible to reproduce in English.”
- It’s a fierce, loyal love that expresses itself in unconditional benevolence, even to those who don’t deserve it. It is not a warm feeling; it’s acting in love.
- This is the kind of love that “makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (16:7).

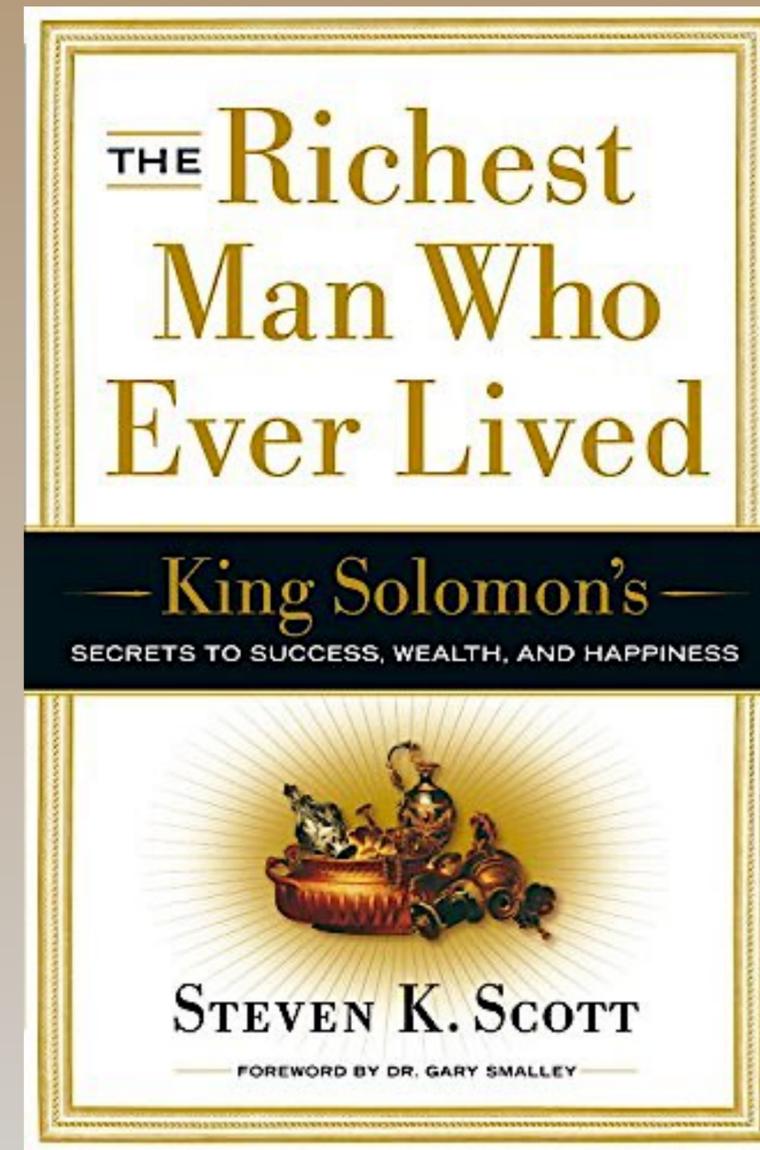
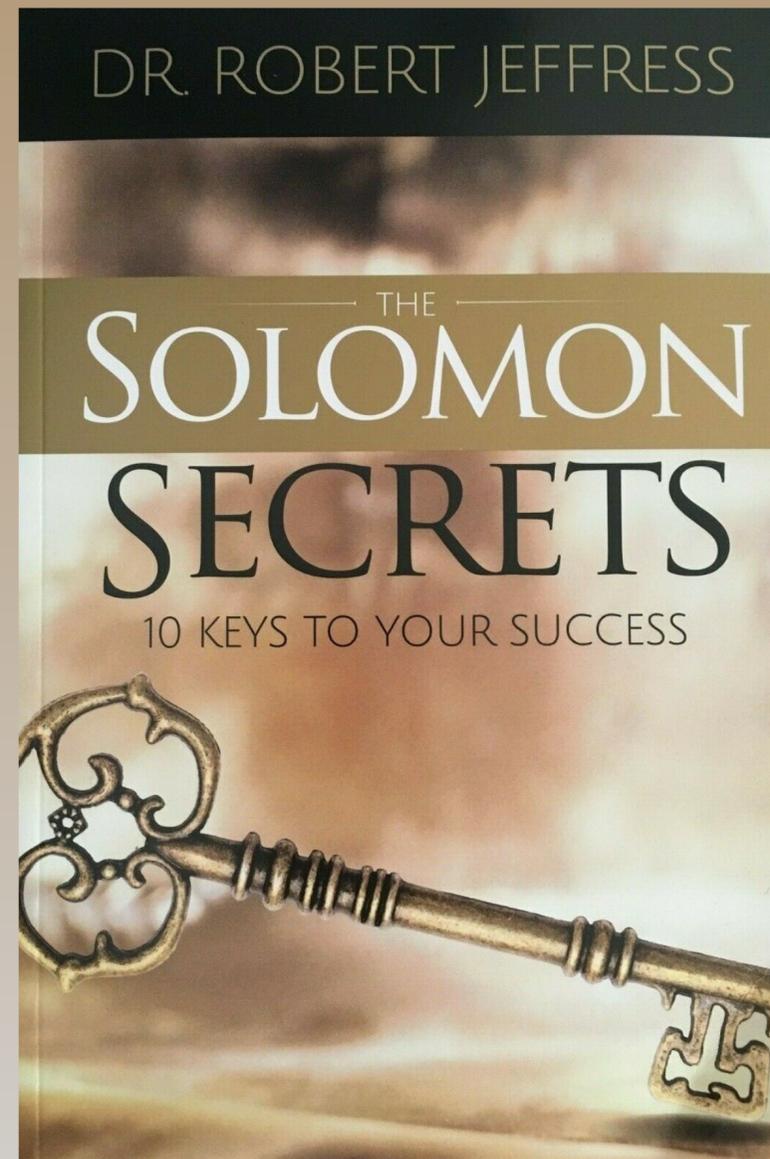
# Proverbs 16:5-8

- Psalms declares that God is abounding in *chesed* (Psalm 103:8).
- Chesed is used to describe the incredible way God has loved His people throughout salvation history.
- The greatest was offering Jesus for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8).

# Proverbs 16:5-8

- The New Testament says that God is love (1 John 4:8).
- Our God always loves because He is love. We can only love others because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).
- It's only through His boundless *chesed* that we can find atonement and walk in righteousness (16:6).

# Application



# Do You Know Where You Are Going?

- Proverbs 20:18 - “Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.”
- Albert Einstein - train bound for New York City
- Where do you want to be in ten years?
- What would you like your life to look like (financial, vocation, family, lifestyle, spiritual condition).

# Abraham Lincoln

- Winning the Civil War required lots of intermediate steps.
  - Blockading key Southern ports
  - Gaining control of the Mississippi River
  - Rebuilding and training the military
  - Destruction of Lee's army (not capture of Confederate capital)

# Solomon

- Solomon had a plan in building the Temple:
  - He gathered the necessary resources (1 Kings 5:6)
  - He organized the people (2 Chronicles 2:2)
  - He designed the structure (2 Chronicles 3:3)
  - He set a time to begin the project (2 Chronicles 3:2)
  - He completed the project (2 Chronicles 5:1)

# Key Verses

- Proverbs 15:22 - “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.”
- Proverbs 16:1 - “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.”
- Proverbs 16:3 - “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”
- Proverbs 21:5 - “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.”

# The Road Most Traveled

- Noah was not content, he built a boat.
- Moses was not content, he led a revolution.
- Solomon was not content, so he built the Temple.
- Nehemiah was not content, he rebuilt the wall.
- Paul was not content, so “he pressed on toward the goal.”
- God was not content, so He sent His son as our Savior.

# Obstacles to Success

- Proverbs 14:11 - “The naive believes everything, but a wise man looks well to a matter.”
- Oversimplification - Proverbs 1:22 - “you love being simple.”
- Presumption - Proverbs 21:1 - “Do not boast about tomorrow.”
- Superficial appearances - not looking into the manner.
- Laziness and haste - Proverbs 21:5 - haste and poverty.

# Obstacles to Success

- Narrow vision - Proverbs 15:22 - many counselors they succeed.
- Integrity - Proverbs 10:9 - walk in integrity, walk securely.
- Greed - Proverbs 15:27 - greedy bring ruin.
- Arrogance - Proverbs 16:18 - “Pride goes before destruction.”
- Wrong priorities - Proverbs 12:27 - the diligent man.

# Defeating the Obstacles

- Don't be naive when it comes to making wrong choices:
- Proverbs 22:3 - "The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it."
- Proverbs 14:12 - "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."
- Proverbs 14:18 - "The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge."

# Defeating the Obstacles

- Seek outside counsel:
- Proverbs 11:14 - “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”
- Proverbs 15:22 - “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.”
- Proverbs 13:20 - “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

# Application

