

## EXERCISE ONE: SETTING CONTEXT

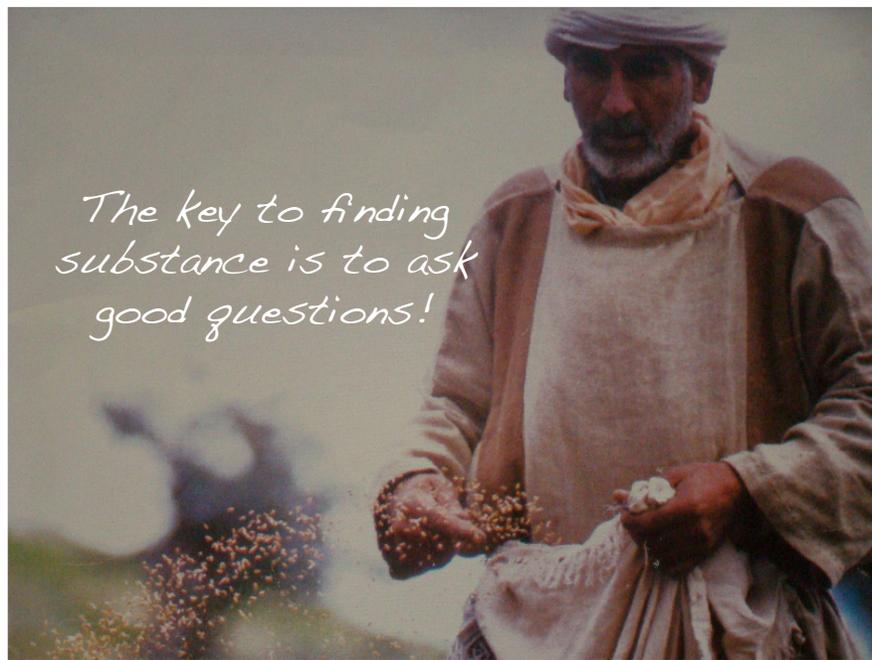
### Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

*The next several pages break down Proverbs 16 into sections, and the accompanying videos will guide you as you apply these skills to your own study. You will want to follow along with each page of this workbook as you listen. This is “hands on” so feel free to experiment and find your own style. Enjoy your discovery process!*

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**Watch the DEEPER #3 video now as you engage exercise one.**

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*The key to finding  
substance is to ask  
good questions!*

## A LOOK AT A BOOK

It is always advantageous to overview the section or book in which a passage is located. As you encountered earlier in our God Story Portal, the Eight Great Epochs contained overviews for each of the books of the so-called Old Testament. The Deeper Series will give you a chance to consider such overviews for all 66 books in more detail.

Notice that Proverbs has three main messages regarding wisdom. This is one way to see the flow of the entire book. The handwritten notes under the overview display another way to outline Proverbs. Either way, chapter 16 falls into the category of intense, serious advice - and claims to be the Voice of wisdom. (You will need to read chapters 7-9 for more clues into who She is!)

Such a "big picture" should be consulted whenever possible to set the context for every passage. The entire bible is the God Story. Each part of the God Story - whether "old" or "new," prophet or letter, each is woven into the greater story. All scripture should interpret itself. This should keep all "teachers" subject to the authority of the scriptures - if we are indeed noble-minded men and women!

What do you think will be the benefit of in-depth examination of a chapter of Proverbs? Take the time to note each of the passages listed within the overview chart below in your bible. What do you learn about the book of Proverbs and the placement of chapter 16 in the document?

# A look @ a book: Proverbs

## PROVERBS Wisdom Above

Wisdom to be Acquired	Wisdom is Superior	Wisdom's Voice
1:20-25,32,33	3:1-12	10:1; 29:7-9
1	2-9	10-31

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. 1:7

1-6 Dear Son  
 7-9 Two Women  
 10-18 Two Ways  
 19-24 Serious Advice  
 25-31 Advice of kings

## encounter the reference

### What is here?

- good questions: observed and asked
- word pictures and metaphors
- repeated words and phrases
- related entities and ideas
- transitional word: time, location, etc.
- conjunctives, contrasts, comparisons

## TOOL #1

### Critical reading skills help answer the question “what is here?”

If I am to understand any passage in the scriptures I must be willing and able to **ask questions**. By extending my inquiry through questions as I mediate and study, I expand the borders of my heart and mind. Every verse should literally evoke a minimum of 20 good questions - plenty of fuel for the experience of meditation.

The bible is filled with **word pictures and metaphors** to help create or recreate context. If I am to “rise up on wings of eagles” I would do well to follow this picture into wingspan, kind, home, flight, eyesight, and habits of the bird in order to capture the nuances of the teaching that lies before us. What does the metaphor or word picture amplify that helps explain the context?

**Repeated words and phrases** are worth noting within a book or passage from the bible. Each can indicate the main point of a passage, as literal argument or spiritual principle. Ten mentions of the word KING in the space of five verses can be a strong indicator of what God is trying to get across in a passage.

**Related entities and ideas** can help establish the flow of an entire chapter or even a complete bible book. A discussion of wisdom as a woman in one chapter and then a conversation about “an excellent wife” twenty chapters later can accentuate the goal of a teaching.

**Transitional words** such as “in the boat:” and “on the shore” can do much to amplify the movement of the characters in a passage. The location where something occurs is sometimes very revealing.

**Conjunctives, contrasts, and comparisons** hold principles up to scrutiny by setting elements side by side. A foolish man and a wise man are quickly comparable when held up to the clarity of the Word of God. The word but, and, or therefore can indicate a critical transition in an argument or encounter. A contrast brings out differences. A comparison accentuates similarities.

**Each of these tools allows us to move beyond reading, to critical reading, to meditating!**

## EXERCISE ONE: ENCOUNTERING THE REFERENCE

### Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16.1-6

The plans of the heart belong to man, ?

**But** the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

3068. Yhvh (i.e. Yehovah or Yahveh)  
the proper name of the God of Israel

1 Co 4:5

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the **LORD** weighs the motives.

Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,

Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 16.5-7 *James 4:6*

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;

Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,

3374. yirah, rom 3372a; a fear: awesome,  
extreme reverence(5).

And by the **fear** of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,

He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. *Relationships*

Proverbs 16.8-11 *Proverbs 30:9*

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;

All the weights of the bag are His concern. ?

*What do my plans have  
to do with my tongue?*

## **critical reading & good questions**

### **What is here?**

- Who: principle and involved characters?  
What: is the immediate issue?  
is the extended issue?  
are His purposes?  
When: time of day and year  
Where: location and location changes  
Why: what precipitates it?  
(practically and spiritually)

## **TOOL #2**

### Crucial questions that help gather information and “set the context.”

Tool #1 overviews specific **critical reading** questions. This next bank of questions (tool #2) transitions us into the arena of **exposing meaning**.

#### **WHO**

It is critical for us to put ourselves in the sandals of each of the characters in a passage. Even those who seem to be “on the sidelines” may give us insight into the circumstance before us. Who is the focus of attention and why have they been singled out? What part does each person play in the teaching or drama that is before us? With which character can I most identify?

#### **WHAT**

What are the conditions that brought about this circumstance? What is in play? At risk? What are the possible outcomes or conclusions? What could possibly be the greater purpose involved?

#### **WHEN**

When did this occur? How does it related to the events which precede or follow it? Are there any special circumstances that impact the timing of the situation?

#### **WHERE**

Where does this occur? Why this city? Why not in Jerusalem? Why in the wilderness? Why in this town?

#### **WHY**

What purposes are behind this situation? Why does it occur in the passage where it does? Why is each person involved necessary to the story or teaching?

**This second bank of questions gathers information to answer the question “what did this situation mean to the original recipients/participants?”**

## EXERCISE ONE: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

### Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

#### Proverbs 16.1-6

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 clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.

Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,

Even the wicked for the day of evil.

*WHO?*

*One who fears.*

*One who is proud.*

*WHAT?*

*This is how we  
build strong lives!*

#### Proverbs 16.5-7

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;

Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,

And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,

He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

*WHAT?*

*This is how we  
escape evil!*

#### Proverbs 16.8-11

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;

All the weights of the bag are His concern.

*WHAT?*

*It is a heart issue.*

*WHY?*

*All things are being  
weighed by God.*

## **expose the meaning**

### **What did it mean to them?**

- identify the participants/audience
- investigate the unknowns
- think through the context
- what is the point of the teaching?
- what is the point of the situation?

## **TOOL #3**

Crucial questions that help gather information and “paint the picture” and EXPOSE THE MEANING.

Tool #3 moves us to the next level of meditating. When we paint a picture of “what did it mean” to those who were experiencing the teaching or the circumstance of any given passage, we begin to **see a situation come alive.**

**Who were the persons in the story?** Who was listening to the teaching or the story as it was told? What role does each character play as the situation unfolds?

**Which elements of the passage are unknown to me?** What questions need to be answered in order for me to understand how each character should and will respond?

**How do I recreate what each person was experiencing** within their senses? What details would each see? What sounds would be heard? What smells? What tastes? How would he or she feel at each point in the encounter?

**What is the point** of what is being explained or experienced in the situation? What is the immediate purpose? The greater principle? The application to those inside and outside of the passage?

**Why is the situation useful to God’s purposes** in presenting timeless teaching and examples?

*These are all questions which can help us “expose the meaning” of whatever we are studying in any part of the scriptures!*

# EXERCISE ONE: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

## Meditating on a chapter of Proverbs.

Proverbs 16.1-6

The plans of the heart belong to man,  
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

WHO?

Young children, teens. Those reflecting upon their lives



All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.

Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,

Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 16.5-7

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD;

Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for,

And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

WHY?

Are such strong words used here. What is the big deal?

WHO?

I have never thought about the name Lord God Almighty before.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,

He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

What does this feel like? Look like?

UNKNOWN

Proverbs 16.8-11 I don't know what righteousness means.

Better is a little with righteousness, than great income with injustice.

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

A just balance and scales belong to the LORD;

All the weights of the bag are His concern.

? What in the world does this mean?

What do Kings have to do with living in America?

THIS IS HOW I ESCAPE EVIL!!  
pride is the evil

MAIN POINTS - My world view:

God wants me to pay attention to my heart.

God wants me to reject pride.

I am free to make plans - and submit them to God's direction!

## **enlighten my heart**

### **What does it mean to me?**

- Woven connections
  - Torah - Living Torah - My life?
- Emerging realizations
  - Sifting my world-view decisions
- Spiritual connections
  - How does this help me know God?
  - How does this help me help others?
  - How does this help me know myself?

## **TOOL #4**

Here are several funnels to help me process stories and principles into world view guideposts for how I live my life.

Tool #4 brings us to an exciting part of meditating - especially if we have done some of the hard work of [Encountering](#) the reference and [Exposing](#) the meaning (Tools 1-3). Now we ask questions that relate to our personal spiritual lives. We have laid a [foundation](#) to ask the question “what does it mean to me?” Now it is time to [Enlighten](#) our hearts and continue the process of shaping our personal world views.

### **Woven Connections**

One unknown truth about the scriptures is that there really is no such thing as so-called “old” and “new” testaments. There is only ONE testament! The Law given through Moses was called [Torah](#). The Ten Commandments are the core of God’s Law. They were given to the Jews to reveal who God is, and to give them a pathway to freedom. [Jesus is the Living Torah](#). He fulfilled every requirement of the Law by giving Himself and His blood so that we could find life. As we begin to understand His plan in Messiah (Jesus) we begin to make connections with His plans for our personal lives.

### **Emerging Realizations**

As I begin to understand how and what God has spoken through His Word a new paradigm begins to emerge. Now I have a grid through which I can sift my personal beliefs and values. As I understand His eternal principles (the grass withers, the flower fades - but the Word of the Lord lives forever) I have empirical standards on which to build my life. Wow!

### **Spiritual Connections**

Now I can complete the meditating loop. I have taken the time to observe what is occurring in a passage. I have put myself in the shoes of the original characters and extracted principles which were important to the context of their lives. Now I can ask the two questions most applicable to my life: How does this passage help me to know God? How does it help me to help others?