

Establishing Our Thoughts

Proverbs 16:3

“Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” – Proverbs 16:3 (Cf. 3:5, 6).

As we have mentioned in other studies, this is one of the more famous, well known and cited of the Proverbs of Solomon. It is also one of the more powerful and instructive of them for believers. It is not that we, as children of God do not already have what this Proverbs tells us in the mind, but it makes it clear and also acts as a kind of promise to us that will enable us to, as the end of the verse tells us, be “...more established” in our service to and walk with our God.

Solomon starts our passage by introducing the idea of the necessity of what he calls “commitment” regarding our works. The verb here, translated “Commit” is a particularly interesting one. It means, literally, “roll,” or “devolve.” It is not used a great deal of times in the OT. One time it refers to “seeking an occasion”. The other times it basically refers to giving oneself over to a given thing or task. When it is negated it can refer to being removed from. All told the way it appears here it is speaking of giving yourself over to the task of pursuing the “works” of the Lord.

“Works” refers to actions or courses of action in contemplation. The word, in the various places in the OT in which it is used can speak of everything from largescale labor to needlework. It is seen referring to general work and more specific works of the hands as well. It seems clear that in this context it is a general reference as the noun is plural. It appears to speak, not of a singular or particular “work”, but rather to all of the “works” to which the believer applies himself.

We can conclude, then, that Solomon starts out this wonderful verse by tells the result of giving ourselves over to, of taking every opportunity that presents itself to us to the pursuit of the accomplishment of whatever tasks and services God commends to us.

and thy thoughts shall be established.” – Proverbs 16:3b

The second part of the phrase, as is frequently the case, starts with a conjunction...“and”. Solomon uses a couple basic kinds of conjunctions:

- A “coordinating” conjunction that ties two things that are related to one another. There is some similarity between the two that needs to be pointed out.
- There is also what is called a contrasting (or contrastive) conjunction that joins two phrases that are anything from slightly to completely the different, even the opposite of one another. In this case the second, the effect on the thoughts is related to the

first, the committing of the thoughts are related to one another in a complimentary fashion in that the second arises out of the first.

Solomon is points out to us that the “thoughts”, which are designs and hopes in connection with those works. Thought can refer to anything from what we know as the words and feelings that move around in our hearts and brains. It can also speak of plans and designs aimed at accomplishing the works mentioned earlier. It is a fairly broad word that can even speak of imaginations, purposes, cunning, inventing or devising, and the like.

The promise is that such, given that we have committed our “works” to the service of God and the pursuit of His deigns shall have a sure basis and result— shall not be frustrated, shall not disappoint in the end. Established addresses a wealth of ideas that have to do with the foundation of a thing or matter. It can refer to a house, a bridge or it can refer to a doctrine, even to salvation itself. They all need a sure “foundation” upon which to be built or to rest. What Solomon is saying is that if one will give themselves completely and energetically to the pursuit of the service of the Lord (in whatever form that take given the particular individual in view); the result with be the solidifying of the foundation upon which their thinking and perceiving of all of life is built.

Just be way of illustration we might cite:

- Eliezer, laden with a heavy responsibility, devolved it upon God, and, under His guidance and blessing, discharged it faithfully and well.
- Jacob, in heaviness and fear, drew nigh unto God, and his hopes were more than realized.
- Ezra, committing himself to God’s protection on a perilous journey, found the hand of God upon him for good (Ezra 8:21–31).
- Nehemiah bespoke the blessing of Jehovah upon his enterprise from the beginning, and it prospered accordingly.
- No important step was taken by the Apostles without being first committed unto the Lord (Acts 1:24; 6:6; 13:3, etc.).

Just thinking of how we ought to pursue application - Responsibility is the price of reason, and cannot be devolved by its possessor upon others. There is a sense in which “every man must bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5). Our spiritual anxieties and duties no brother can entirely relieve us of. Even God does not offer to make us irresponsible. But yet, if I commit the keeping of my soul to Him in well doing (1 Pet. 4:19), surely my best hopes concerning it shall be established (2 Tim. 1:12). And so with all temporal matters. I cannot divest myself of my duties and responsibilities in life, and yet I may cast all my care upon God (1 Pet. 5:7). The key to the promise of our text lies in those words of the Apostle, “in well doing.” As long as I am really striving to “walk in the light,” I may commit my spiritual hopes, and fears, and plans, and purposes, with sure confidence of a safe issue, to God’s hands. And if my spiritual matters, how much more those which concern the present life only? Two things deter men oftentimes from acting upon this advice. Either they are not sure that their plans are according to God’s will, or they deem them too trivial for so august an

Ear. But let me form no plans till they have first been brought in embryo before Him who gives preventing as well as furthering grace. Next, having gained His sanction, let me trust Him as a child its mother, with all that follows. How much needless anxiety might the Christian thus save himself! “*We which have believed do enter into rest*” (Heb. 4:3).

Oh that trust in God may be “the rest of my care, the calm of my tempest,” and the fulfillment of all good desires!
