

# There Is A Way

Proverbs 14:12; 16:25

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.<sup>KJV</sup>

**Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. His wisdom didn't come naturally, but it came *supernaturally*. The Bible tells us that **“God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. ... For he was wiser than all men ... And he spoke three thousand proverbs” (1 Kings 4:29-32)**. Of all the proverbs that Solomon spoke there was *only one* that he repeated *twice*, and that is the focus of our message today. We are told that **“there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”**. Why is this proverb so important?

As humans *what we believe* will always manifest itself in the way we live our lives. If you believe a certain thing, you will always behave in a certain way. Advertising executives have known this truism for years. When you watch a commercial on television the advertiser is trying to get you to believe in his product. If you *believe* that a certain product is best then you act out that belief by *purchasing* the item. I was in a fast food restaurant the other day when I saw a wonderfully beautiful fillet fish sandwich. The bread looked so pretty, the fish and lettuce so enticing, that I quickly changed my mind and ordered the sandwich. When I got it and unwrapped it it

looked *nothing* like the advertisement. The lettuce was wilted, the fish greasy and half slid off the bun, and gobs of mayonnaise oozed out of the side. The advertisement did its job, for it led me to purchase the sandwich. Behavior followed belief, but the reward was far from that which had been promised.

From the very beginning of human history Satan has understood us better than we understand ourselves. The devil and his demons know that our behavior always follows what we believe, so he is always enticing us to believe the wrong thing. God told Adam **“in the day that you eat of it, thou shalt surely die”**. Satan came back with an alternate advertisement when he stated **“Indeed, has God really said ...” (Genesis 3:1)**. While Adam believed that eating the forbidden fruit would lead to death he continued to serve God by cultivating the Garden of Eden. When Adam turned from believing God to believing Satan's lies this **way** led him – and all creation – into spiritual death. What you believe will always be manifested in what you *do*. Believe wrong and you will be stuck with the consequences – and those consequences can lead to much more than a soggy fish sandwich!

When I was in the military there were two incidents that particularly come to mind to illustrate this. When I was a young airman we were practicing *night maneuvers* with our fighter aircraft. On night maneuvers a fighter aircraft is traveling at very high speeds *in the dark of night*. The instrument panel is the pilot's eyes. It tells him where's he going, where the ground is, and where the other aircraft are. One pilot rolled his aircraft 180 degrees,

held it, then pulled back on the stick to gain altitude. There was only one problem with this: the pilot was flying inverted, with his head and cockpit closest to the ground. When he pulled back on the stick he actually drove himself – and his plane – into the ground. He thought his actions would send him heavenward, but his way led to death.

On my last day in service just before I retired our base was preparing for an “Air Show”. The base commander was flying a large B-52 bomber with a full crew on board. As he brought the aircraft over the runway he banked the aircraft hard left in a “high g turn”. As the left wing came close to the ground it came in contact with some power lines, causing the plane to cartwheel and break apart. The pilot believed he had clearance, his belief was mirrored in his behavior, but his belief was wrong. Several men died as a result of the **way** the pilot chose. **There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

There are many people today who believe – like the first pilot – that their actions are moving them heavenward. They think “I'm a good person, I don't hurt anybody. I go to Church every now and then and throw a little money in the plate. I'm a good provider for my children, and nothing I do is *that* bad. If anybody deserves to go to Heaven then I certainly do!” These poor people fly through life upside down believing that they are right side up. Rather than ask the Owner of Heaven how they can enter into His Presence they continue to ignore their conscience and the Word of God until it's too late. They refuse to **“call upon the Name of Jesus, and be**

saved” (Acts 2:21).

Though this is tragic, the greater tragedy is those who believe that their actions hurt no one but themselves. I have heard this type of person say “it’s MY life, and I can do what I want to with it. I’m not hurting anybody but ME, so leave me alone!” But look at our text once more: **“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”** A bad belief always brings with it **the ways (plural) of death**. Bad beliefs leading to bad behavior never effects just ME, but it effects those AROUND ME as well. The pilot of the bomber in my illustration didn’t just kill himself when he hit the power lines – he killed his crew as well! I failed to mention earlier that one of the crew was retiring the same day I retired, and his wife and children stood on the runway waiting for him to return. Their last memory of a loving husband and father was a fireball of twisted wreckage at the end of the runway. The pilot’s bad belief hurt more than just that pilot, just as a parent’s bad belief hurts more than that parent. We do not live in a vacuum, and our actions do effect others!

The Evangelist Vance Havner said that he went with a friend to a fancy restaurant in a certain big city one day. Like most fancy restaurants the lighting is always very low, perhaps because they don’t want you to see that that fancy thing you’re eating is actually a snail. After a few minutes Vance’s friend remarked “You know, it was dark in here, but now I can see. Isn’t it interesting how we can get used to the dark?” This is what the devil does to each and every person. He entices to evil and to sin, knowing full well that sin is destructive. If he can get us to take

one step into the dark he leaves us alone until we “get used to the dark”. After that, he offers us another temptation, and another, and another, until we discover the terrible truth that **“there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”**. My prayerful intent today is to waken each and every person to the realization that (1) the way of sin is against nature, bringing with it death, and (2) the death that sin brings effects more than just the sinner. But (3) the solution for sin and for death is faith in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

## **1. The Way of Sin Is Against Nature Bringing With It Death**

**FOCAL** Proverbs 14:12 **There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

Look at the first part of this proverb: **“there is a way which seemeth right unto a man”**. What’s wrong with that statement? What’s wrong is that **“a man”** does not determine what is **right** and what is **wrong**. The moral absolutes of right and wrong are based on God, not on our arbitrary opinions! **God is absolutely Right all the time**. The Psalmist said that He is

**Psalms 7:9 O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts ...**<sup>NIV</sup>

The angels of Heaven cry out to Him:

**Rev 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name for thou only art holy:**

God *alone* is inherently holy. God alone is *pure* in His righteousness. No man is able to judge God nor judge His Ways, for He alone is Holy. When God created Adam and Eve He created them *without sin*, innocent and pure. When Adam sinned the Bible tells us that:

**Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

Our way became polluted by Adam's bad choice. His wrong belief effected us all. He brought spiritual as well as physical death on all creation, and brought chaos into the center of what had been peaceful and pure.

Sin – in short – is that which is *unnatural* or that which is *against nature*. It was not there in the beginning. Sin was not crafted into Adam's body by the hand of God, nor was Eve formed from a corrupt rib of sinful man.

Creation was pure and pristine until sin entered in. Man was meant to follow God in perfect and pure life. Adam's failure brought that which is unnatural into God's creation.

How unnatural is sin? The Bible says that:

**Romans 5:21 ... sin hath reigned unto death...**

Sin is not your friend, but it is a *terrible monarch* whose sole purpose is to kill you dead!

If that awful king is not overthrown in your life then it becomes a **way which seemeth right unto you, but the goal of which is to cause your death**. The Apostle warns us that sin is not only a terrible King, but it is a gruesome Master who will demand darker and darker service. We Read:

**Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**

If you **yield yourselves to sin, allowing it to master your soul**, it will always take you farther and farther into the darkness while leading you closer and closer to death.

**Adrian Rogers: “Don't let a little sin in; all hell will break loose”.**

Dear one, you can only serve one master at a time. You cannot serve God as Master and Sin as Master at the same time. The Apostle tells us in another place:

**1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with**

**{God}, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:**

That which you believe is that which you do. And if you walk in perpetual darkness to are not **doing the truth**, but are following after sin and death.

When does sin *not* lead to death? Never!

Sin leads to death – ALWAYS. Unconfessed and unrepented sin destroys life. Though this text is often quoted, it is just as often ignored – though it is true:

**Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; ...**

The way that seemeth right unto a man – but not right unto God – *always* leads to death. We are told in **1 Corinthians 15:56** that “**the sting of death is sin**”. Man's way apart from God's Way leads to death! The Apostle James put it this way:

**James 1:14-15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. {15} Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

**Lust** when satisfied brings forth a child called **sin**, and that child **sin** when it matures becomes **death**. What a terrible family tree sin is! John warns us that “**there is sin unto death**”. If sin is not repented of, if we do not turn from our way unto God's way, then we bring death on ourselves and on those around us.

Sin is unnatural – it is against nature. But let's go a little farther with this subject:

## **2. The Death That Sin Brings Effects More Than Just The Sinner**

**FOCAL Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

Notice that **the end thereof are the WAYS of death**. Sin does not just effect one person, but has an impact on the family and on society as a whole. Common sense proves this. The thief who steals things or the murderer who steals life seeks to gain through another person's hurt. If you steal from a supermarket or a department store that store raises its prices, effecting every consumer. Taxes have to be raised in our country to maintain jails and feed sinners incarcerated for what they have evilly done. The person involved in sexual sin spreads disease through every illicit contact. The parent who abuses drugs or alcohol in the presence of a child teaches that child to be the next generation addict.

**Sow the seed of sin in your life all you will, but don't be surprised to see its fruit spring up outside of your own row!**

The Bible is filled with illustrations that prove this to be true.

**Consider Cain** who, when he carried the wrong type of sacrifice to God, refused to repent though God lovingly corrected him. God warned Cain:

**Genesis 4:7** If you do right, won't you be accepted? But if you do not do right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must master it.<sup>HCSB</sup>

that sin, like a *wild beast*, was **crouching at the door of his life**. God told Cain to **master that sin** before it mastered him. Cain ignored the Lord, and ended up murdering his own brother.

**Consider Sodom and Gomorrah**, twin cities that had become so fallen in sexual sin that God had to take action. God said:

**Genesis 18:20** ... **The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious.**<sup>HCSB</sup>

The sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah caused an outcry to God from the neighboring cities. I suspect that disease had begun to run rampant, killing people with HIV and AIDs as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. God actually destroyed these cities to protect civilization.

**Consider the Noahic Flood**, the time when the whole earth was destroyed by God because of man's sinfulness. The Bible says:

**Genesis 6:11-12** The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. {12} And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Sin, like yeast in bread dough, spreads if left unchecked. **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9)**. Once sin infects the family, it spreads outward into society itself. The child not taught the Way of God grows up to follow the **ways of death**.

**The weed of sin, and how it grows:** Parent to Family, Family to Church, Church to City, City to Nation, Nation to World.

Sodom and Gomorrah were infected by first one family then another turning away from God. Once the cities were infected, their infection spread out into the nations. **The end thereof are the ways of death.**

**Consider David and Bathsheba**, a King and another man's wife. What was God's judgment on the sexual sin of David and Bathsheba? The Bible says:

**2 Samuel 12:10-14** Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. ... Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

David's actions of following **the way that seemeth right unto a man** would cause his family great turmoil. The line of David would produce children that would do things that would make a soap opera star wince. The little baby that Bathsheba was carrying would be lost – David's sin would bring death to the innocent. Listen Beloved: The death that sin brings always effects more than just the sinner! But listen, here's the final point:

**The Solution For Sin and For Death Is  
Faith In and Obedience to Christ!**

**FOCAL** Proverbs 14:12 **There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

How to avoid the **ways of death**? The best way is to avoid the **way that seemeth right unto a man**. Go to the Book, the Holy Bible. The Bible tells us of Jesus Christ, who

**John 1:14 ... was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

Do you want to cling to the truth and avoid things that are death? Then cling to Christ. **Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17)**. He loves us so much that He

**“gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a special**

**people, eager to do good works”.**<sup>HCSB</sup>

Jesus Christ

**Galatians 1:3-4 ... gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,**<sup>HCSB</sup>

Jesus died on Calvary to make payment for the offenses that we committed before God. But Jesus Christ rose again so that – once we believe in Him – He can enter into and live *in the framework of our lives*.

A Christian is God indwelt and God kept!

**Man is saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. A Christian lives his life because Christ lives in him.**

Oh glorious light breaking forth, oh wondrous Love that saves! Have you believed on Him and called upon the Name of the Lord for salvation? If so then you can say with all the saints:

**Galatians 2:19-20 ... I have been crucified with Christ; {20} and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**<sup>HCSB</sup>

Jesus Christ gave Himself fully to grant us a *full salvation*. The Christian – saved not by his own works

but by the work of Calvary – has been raised out of the muck of sin to walk in victorious glory. Yes, some believers wander from God at times, but if they are His they will return. The Christian – the true Believer – may wander far away. Yet like the Prodigal Son the True Believer eventually comes to his senses. He awakens to the reality that he is eating Satan's slop when he should be eating God's Manna. He spits out the vile morsels of rotted evil and says,

**Luke 15:18-19 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, {19} And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.**

“**I surrender, Father, I surrender**”. As the son nears home he looks and, there, is that a servant on the hilltop? As he comes closer he sees his Father, the Father Who so loves him and runs to him. The words are on his lips. “**Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in Thy sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son**”. The Father ignores this plea, but instead cleanses the son. New shoes and new clothes replace that which was sodden with the evil of sin. Death is removed, and replaced with life. What a glorious God we serve!

God's solution, o Sinner, is in the person of Christ. Have you called upon His Name? Have you confessed your sinful state before Him, and believed His sacrifice to be your solution? Have you, dear One, surrendered to Him Who gave Himself for you? If you have then rejoice. But if you have not, today is the day to make your life right

with God. Will you come? Will you **bring every thought to the obedience of Christ**” (2 Corinthians 10:5). You will not begin to live until you center your lives in Him and His Holy Word.

**ILLUSTRATION** When we lived in Valdosta Georgia there was one day of the week when garbage was collected. We would set out the cans the night before, trusting in the fact that the workers would empty them the next day. In the exact same way God our Creator removes sin that we confess to Him. When we stop cherishing the sin and put it in the garbage can, the Lord removes both the sin and the death that accompany it. The Bible says:

**1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, {God} is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

When we stop playing with the garbage and set it out (by confession) for God to handle it, He does just as He has promised.

When we call upon the Name of Jesus the Bible promises that:

**Micah 7:19 {God} will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.**

God casts our sins into the depths of the sea. He

promises:

**Hebrews 10:17 {your} sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

How is God able to do this? How is **He Who alone is Holy** able to purge our sins from us? He is able to do that because He Himself paid for our sins in His own Body on the Tree of Calvary.

**1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.**

He paid for our sins so that we could be freed from our sins. He gave us His righteousness so that we can live in righteousness. Every sin you have ever committed is **nailed to the Cross of Calvary (Colossians 2:14)**. And there is yet one more great truth:

**Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**

What a joy it is to be FORGIVEN! Yet, remember this, dear ones. Just like the garbage men in my illustration, God only takes away what I set out. I must forsake my ways. I must forsake **the way that seemeth right unto a man**, and cling to His Way. Jesus said:

**John 14:6 ... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

His Way is the Way of peace. His Way is the Way of victory. His Way is the Way of joy. His Way is the Way of life.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!