



Daily Verse and Comment

Proverbs 14:12

(12) There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death.

A Faithful Version

At its heart, [Proverbs 14:12](#) instructs mankind in a vital truth: No truth is clearer, more direct, and more rewarding than God's truth. Nobody else's truth can exceed the reliability of God's truth, and in fact, it is impossible for Him to lie ([Hebrews 6:18](#)). *The Amplified Bible* provides this expansion: “There is a way which seems right to a man and appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.” Yet, no deception is present when [God](#) and His Word are involved.

The word “death” at the proverb's conclusion is a clue that its instruction deals primarily with a choice in any circumstance of whether to [sin](#). Within Proverbs, this verse is only one among many dealing with the human proclivity to make bad choices motivated by devious carnal desires to get the most and best for the self.

We all fall victim to the truth expressed in [Proverbs 14:12](#). Adam and Eve, after being warned directly and personally by God, nonetheless almost immediately did what God had said *not* to do. The urge to satisfy our desires despite warnings exists for us just as it did for them. That we, too, sin after He reveals Himself to us is significant evidence that we truly do not respect and believe God as we should.

A great deal more evidence exists within Proverbs of how deeply pride is engrained in our character, persuading us to forge our way ahead rather than follow the wise counsel of men, let alone that of God. We may not fall into

immediate death, but we do fail to achieve the success we had hoped for through carnal impatience, avoiding hard work, or even sheer hardheadedness because we refuse to follow sound counsel.

[Proverbs 14:12](#) depicts a person following a path on a journey, which applies directly to all of us because, since our calling, we are on the way of salvation ([Acts 16:17](#); [18:25-26](#)). The Hebrew term underlying “right” more specifically means “straight” or “level,” but it also contains moral implications. The same Hebrew word is translated in verse 11 as “upright,” clearly showing its moral connotations.

Notice the strength of the scorn the proverb projects onto the traveler: The first phrase of the verse is singular (“a way”), but in the second phrase, it is plural (“ways”). Since no wise, human counsel appears in the context, it is safe to assume that in this case the counsel comes from God. Regardless, the fool will not listen to His advice.

Thus, as he begins to walk, he perceives a way open before him. This path shows promise of delivering happiness, power, and a long life, despite his being warned that things can easily go wrong in many ways with his preferred choice. Even so, he is blinded by his pride from the lesson God is teaching, which is clear: In God's way of life, there are no shortcuts to success. His instruction must be followed if one seeks to avoid the pitfalls that will arise.

[Proverbs 12:15](#) follows the same basic path of teaching as [Proverbs 14:12](#), reading, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.” The *Revised English Bible* [REB] translates this more strongly in alignment with [Proverbs 14:12](#): “A fool's conduct is right in his own eyes; to listen to advice shows wisdom.” The REB moves the focus from a person merely thinking, which may lead to rejecting counsel, to literal conduct, showing that he clearly rejected the good counsel God made available. Some are so proud that they tend to think of themselves as rarely wrong. In relation to God, the humanist thinks of himself so, always thinking he knows best. Yet, those who really do know God recognize that the humanist is unaware of the weakness of his relationship with God, and thus they know he is foolish.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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