

CHAPTER 2

How to Get On and Stay On the Right Road

Life can be thought of as a journey. Every person must travel through life on a trip that begins at birth and ends at death. It is important to make sure that we are on the right road.

How can I know the right road when there are so many streets and turns and twists? How can I find the right road? How can I stay on the right road?

Proverbs is a very practical book. It deals with everyday life and living. It gives us real help *right where we live* (right where our feet touch the road). It helps us in our walk through life and with such practical matters as these: companionship, eating, the use of the tongue, eyes, laziness, family relationships, riches, gossip, work, love, sex, self-control, anger, foolishness and many other practical topics that relate to life here and now.

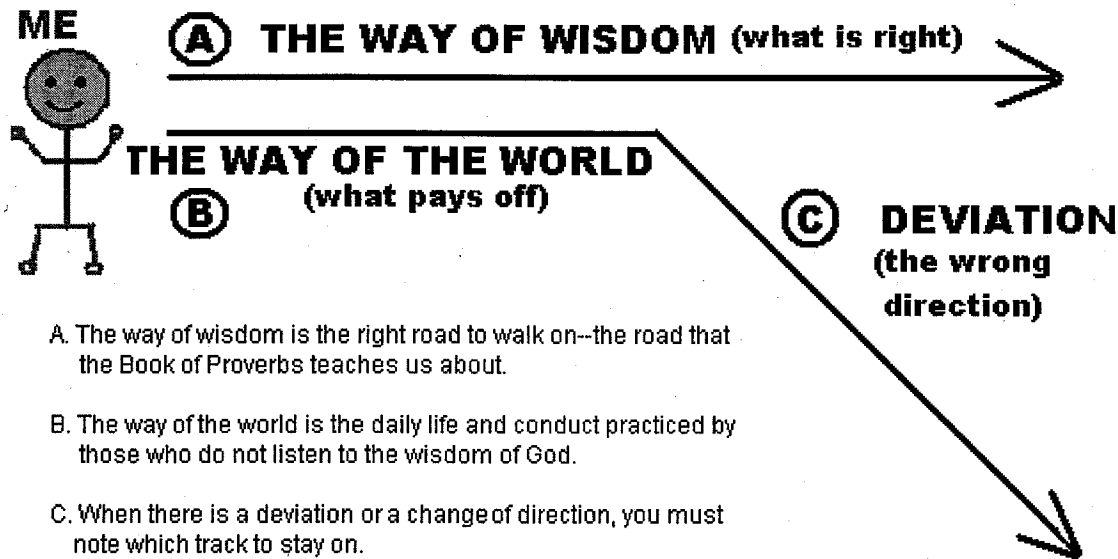
There are basically only two roads in life. There is a right road and a wrong road. There is a straight road and a crooked road. There is a road of life and a road of death. There is a road that the wise travel on and a road that fools travel on. There is a road that **SEEMS** right (Proverbs 14:12) and there is a road that **IS** right (Prov.12:28).

In the book of Proverbs the word "WAY" is used to describe a road. We do the same thing in our language. We might ask for directions and say, "Which *WAY* should I go?" By this we mean, "Which road should I take?" We also speak of a highway. Read the following verses and decide what kind of road (or WAY) is being described. If it is describing the RIGHT ROAD put the letters **RR** but if it is describing the WRONG ROAD put the letters **WR**:

_____ Proverbs 1:15	_____ Proverbs 10:17	_____ Proverbs 16:25
_____ Proverbs 2:12	_____ Proverbs 10:29	_____ Proverbs 16:29
_____ Proverbs 2:20	_____ Proverbs 12:15	_____ Proverbs 16:31
_____ Proverbs 4:11	_____ Proverbs 12:26	_____ Proverbs 21:16
_____ Proverbs 4:14	_____ Proverbs 12:28	_____ Proverbs 22:6
_____ Proverbs 4:19	_____ Proverbs 13:15	_____ Proverbs 23:19
_____ Proverbs 6:23	_____ Proverbs 14:12	_____ Proverbs 28:10
_____ Proverbs 7:27	_____ Proverbs 15:9	_____ Proverbs 30:20
_____ Proverbs 9:6	_____ Proverbs 15:24	

In light of these verses, how would you describe the RIGHT ROAD and those who walk on it? How would you describe the WRONG ROAD and those who walk on it? What road have you been walking on? If you are on the WRONG ROAD how can you get on the RIGHT ROAD?

We could also describe these two ways as THE WAY OF WISDOM and THE WAY OF THE WORLD. Sometimes these two roads run parallel to each other, but there comes a point when the way of the world deviates and turns off from the way of wisdom:



How can the way of the world run parallel with the way of wisdom? The wise man follows the way that is right. The worldly man follows the way that seems to pay off (the way which promises to make one healthy, wealthy, happy, famous, etc.). How can these two paths run parallel?

Consider someone who is in your high school who is a good student, but who does not know the Lord as Saviour and does not really care what the book of Proverbs teaches. This person's goal is to get good grades in school. This person believes that one of the ways to reach this goal is by *hard work* and *diligent study*. Is there anything wrong with hard work and diligent study? _____ Does the book of Proverbs speak well of DILIGENCE or does it speak evil of DILIGENCE (see Proverbs 6:6-11)? _____

Suppose that this non-Christian student tries another method to get better grades. Not only is this person diligent in studying, but this student also decides to cheat on the final exam. This person might think: "Not only does it pay to be diligent and study hard, but it also pays to cheat as long as I don't get caught. Either way pays off and I will be bettering my grade."

When it comes to diligence, we can walk with our non-Christian friend (we can both be diligent, we can walk in parallel lines). But when my friend decides to cheat, is this a deviation from the way of wisdom? _____ If this person is going to cheat then he (or she) will have to do it alone, because I cannot turn off the road of rightness. I cannot and I must not travel down "Cheating Lane."

The following list describes some things that unsaved people might do (because it seems to pay to do them). Put the letter "P" if the thing runs PARALLEL to the road of wisdom (if it is something that Christians can and should be doing also) and put the letter "D" if the thing DEVIATES from the road of wisdom (if it is something that Christians must not do because it violates God's standards of rightness):

_____ I compare prices at the supermarket to make sure that I get the most out of each dollar (and save as much money as possible).

_____ The girl at the cash register gives me too much change so I don't say anything about it (after all, it was not my mistake, it was hers).

_____ I plan ahead for the future (see Luke 16:8--this unjust steward was wise because he planned for the future).

_____ I take a cardiopulmonary resuscitation class in case I ever need to save the life of a loved one or the life of someone else.

_____ I purchase a lottery ticket hoping to win some extra cash.

_____ I take driving lessons to learn to be a safe driver.

_____ I put a dent in a parked car and then drive away without telling anyone or even leaving a note.

_____ I brush my teeth carefully after every meal.

_____ I take illegal drugs occasionally so that I can get my mind off my problems.

Can you think of other examples? Can you think of other things that unsaved people do (because it pays to do them) that Christian people should also do (because it is right to do them)? Can you think of other things that unsaved people do (because they think it pays to do them) that Christian people should not do (because it is wrong to do them)?

Consider again when the way of the world runs parallel with the way of wisdom. Let's use the example of brushing teeth. A believer and an unsaved person may both brush their teeth regularly, but they may have different reasons and motives for doing this. The saved person may do it to glorify God (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 1 Corinthians 10:31). The unsaved person may do it because he is afraid to go to the dentist with cavities. *What* we do and also *why* we do it are important.

The road of wisdom is the moral road (doing what is right and good in God's sight). Wisdom and goodness go together. To be good I must be wise; to be wise I must be good. I need God to be wise and I need God to be good. God created me and therefore I am the CREATURE. The creature (that's me!) needs the Creator for both wisdom and goodness.

How can I stay on the right road and not deviate and get off track? If I try to walk down the road by myself I will get into trouble. It is too difficult to go alone. I need a companion.

Here's an illustration. Suppose a man were walking down a very bad (morally bad) section of a city where WORLDLY and FOOLISH WOMEN would want to call out to him (like the WOMEN described in Proverbs 5:3-13; 6:24-35; 7:6-27 and Proverbs 9:13-15). If he were all alone, he might be tempted to listen to her and follow her and thus deviate from the way of rightness.

Suppose, however that HIS WIFE were walking down the street with him as his COMPANION. Would this make a difference? _____ Would the WORLDLY WOMAN be able to call out to him in quite the same way? _____ Would it be easier or harder for him to deviate with his wife at his side as his companion? _____ With his wife there would it be harder or easier for him to get caught? _____ If you were all alone you might be tempted to do certain things that are wrong and you might even fall to those temptations. But

if your PARENT or your PASTOR were with you as your Companion, would it still be as easy to fall? _____

As we walk down life's road, God wants us to have a COMPANION. What female companion does God want us to have (Proverbs 8:1-12)? _____ If this woman goes with me then it will not be so easy to get caught by the other woman. God offers me a COMPANION to walk with me through life. The WISDOM WOMAN will keep me from the WORLDLY WOMAN.

Suppose you have the WISDOM WOMAN walking by your side as you go down the road. Suddenly you come to a place where the road deviates (one part goes straight and the other part deviates). Where is wisdom going to go? _____ As you are about to turn and go the wrong way, your Companion would say, "Sorry, I can't go that way, and neither should you!" Then you must make a choice: "Should I continue walking with my COMPANION or should I leave her and start walking alone?"

Where does your WISDOM COMPANION lead you (Proverbs 8:20)? _____ If you keep her (retain her) as a COMPANION, then you will be _____ (Proverbs 3:18). God says we should not let her _____ (Proverbs 4:13) but we should E _____ her (Proverbs 4:8). MAKE SURE SHE IS YOUR COMPANION AND NEVER LET HER GO!

How can WISDOM be your COMPANION? Are you listening to WISDOM'S voice and to WISDOM'S call? What WOMAN are you listening to?

WAY OF LIFE

