

Proverbs 14:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Analysis

This sobering proverb warns that subjective feelings ('seemeth right') are unreliable guides for life's most important decisions, as the end is death—not merely physical death but spiritual ruin. The repetition of this exact verse in Proverbs 16:25 emphasizes its critical importance. It directly contradicts the modern maxim 'follow your heart,' insisting instead on objective truth and divine wisdom as life's foundation.

Historical Context

Israel constantly faced temptation to adopt surrounding nations' religious practices that 'seemed right'—fertility cults promised prosperity, military alliances promised security. The prophets repeatedly warned that these seemingly wise paths led to death and exile.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What decisions in your life feel 'right' but may not align with God's Word?

2. How can we test whether a path truly leads to life or merely seems right in the moment?

Interlinear Text

שׁ	יְדֻכִּי	יְשָׁר	לְפָנַי	אֶיֶשׁ	אֶחֱרִיתָהּ	יְדֻכִּי
There is	a way	right	which seemeth	unto a man	but the end	a way
H3426	H1870	H3477	H6440	H376	H319	H1870

מָוֶת:

of death

H4194

Additional Cross-References

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

Proverbs 12:15 (Parallel theme): The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Galatians 6:3 (Parallel theme): For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Romans 6:21 (Parallel theme): What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

Luke 13:24 (Parallel theme): Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Proverbs 30:12 (Parallel theme): There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

James 1:22 (Parallel theme): But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Ephesians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

