

## Lesson 2      9 November, 2014

### The Two Ways

**Lesson Scope:** Proverbs chapters 1, 2, 4, 15, 16, 28

#### Lesson Focus

Since the Creation, man has been confronted with the choice of two pathways in life. Adam and Eve had this choice, and they yielded to sin. Since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, all people inherit the carnal nature at birth. This fallen nature inclines us toward the downward road of the wicked. Trying to walk the pathway of the just in our own strength always ends in frustration and defeat.

The answer to man's dilemma is surrendering to Christ and living under His authority then we find in Him the strength to walk the straight and narrow way. As we diligently read and obey God's Word, it illuminates our pathway to heaven.

Our lesson today portrays the vast difference between the two pathways that mankind is traveling. Here are a few of the contrasts between the two roads: broad—narrow; down—up; confusion—understanding; darkness—light; emptiness—fulfillment; death—life.

Many professing Christians feel they can take a middle-of-the-road approach. They do not want to be in the world, but neither do they want the Scriptural restrictions of the narrow way. Remember that the middle road always merges, sooner or later, with the broad road. It is a challenge to each of us to take inventory of our lives today. Each choice helps to determine our pathway and our final destiny.

Every man chooses to travel the path of the righteous or the way of the wicked. Only those who choose the path of the just can enjoy God's blessings for time and eternity.

**Lesson Aim:** To contrast the path of the righteous with the way of the wicked.

**Theme Verses:** [Matthew 7:13-14](#). Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

## Lesson Text

### Enticement Versus Preservation

[Proverbs 1:10](#) My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

[Proverbs 1:15-19](#)<sup>15</sup> My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: <sup>16</sup> For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. <sup>17</sup> Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. <sup>18</sup> And they lay wait for their *own* blood; they lurk privily for their *own* lives. <sup>19</sup> So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; *which* taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

[Proverbs 2:10-15](#)<sup>10</sup> When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; <sup>11</sup> Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: <sup>12</sup> To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*, from the man that speaketh froward things; <sup>13</sup> Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; <sup>14</sup> Who rejoice to do evil, *and* delight in the frowardness of the wicked; <sup>15</sup> Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward in their paths:

[Proverbs 2:20-22](#)<sup>20</sup> That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous. <sup>21</sup> For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. <sup>22</sup> But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

### Darkness Versus Light

[Proverbs 4:14-19](#)<sup>14</sup> Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*. <sup>15</sup> Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. <sup>16</sup> For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall. <sup>17</sup> For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. <sup>18</sup> But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. <sup>19</sup> The way of the wicked *is* as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

[Proverbs 4:23-27](#)<sup>23</sup> Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life. <sup>24</sup> Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. <sup>25</sup> Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-

lids look straight before thee. <sup>26</sup> Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. <sup>27</sup> Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

### **Death Versus Salvation**

**Proverbs 15:8-9** <sup>8</sup> The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight. <sup>9</sup> The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

**Proverbs 16:2-3** <sup>2</sup> All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. <sup>3</sup> Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

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

**Proverbs 16:31** The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.

**Proverbs 28:6** Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

**Proverbs 28:10** Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good *things* in possession.

**Proverbs 28:18** Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but *he that is* perverse *in his* ways shall fall at once.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Enticement Versus Preservation**

1. What makes sin enticing?
2. List practical helps for victory over temptation.
3. Whom can we safely follow? What can make my life a safe guide to follow?

### **Darkness Versus Light**

4. Contrast the two pathways of life.
5. How can we keep our hearts with all diligence?

### **Death Versus Salvation**

6. Why must we open our lives to the evaluation of God's Word and of spiritual brethren?
7. How can we experience true fulfillment in life?
8. How can we show appreciation for the faithful older ones among us?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Entice (Proverbs 1:10) means "to open" or "make roomy." It also suggests being silly or deluding. Enticement to evil may come from many sources. One source could be the call for personal liberty in doctrine and applications.

A successful hunter employs stealth and camouflage to avoid detection (Proverbs 1:17-18). Those who hunt for the souls of men also keep the reaping of sin well disguised by the mask of fleeting pleasure.

Discretion (Proverbs 2:11) is "a plan." To preserve is "to hedge about." Keep means "guard." These three words show that conscious effort is necessary to stay on the path of the just.

Men are quick to rationalize their choices and excuse their conduct (Proverbs 16:2). God judges all men, not only by their conduct, but also by their thoughts and intentions.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Enticement Versus Preservation**

1. The wicked entice the godly to sin, but the righteous continually choose to turn from evil (Proverbs 1:10, 15-19). We might not each be vulnerable to the same temptations, but each person has some weak spots in his character. It does not matter to Satan whether he ensnares us in pride, greed, envy, or impure thoughts; any of his snares will hold us firmly if we allow them to.

We must daily depend on God for strength to be victorious over temptations. We must read God's Word and continue "instant in prayer." We must also limit our exposure to the social life of the world, especially by avoiding their eating places and communication networks.

2. The wicked eventually destroy themselves as they allure others into the net of sin (Proverbs 1:17-19). "Greedy of gain" (Proverbs 1:19) could include unsanctified desires for influence over others or for gaining selfish, carnal pleasures from them. Those who deliberately mistreat others experience the hardening of their own heart and conscience. Inevitably, the wrong treatment they give others "comes home to roost." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

3. Godly wisdom and discretion guard the righteous in times of temptation (Proverbs 2:10-12). It is imperative to immerse ourselves in Bible reading, Bible memorization, and diligent prayer. By staying close to

God and His people, we have abundant resources to live victoriously. We must understand our own insufficiency against the enemy. Our help is in God.

We cannot avoid all temptations, but we can limit the nature and frequency of temptations by controlling the places we go, the books we read, the company we keep, and the thoughts we entertain.

4. Following the example of the righteous produces stability (Proverbs 2:20-22). Everyone is, in some way, a follower. Who am I patterning my life after? As we pattern our lives after heroes of faith and faithful brethren and sisters in the church, our lives become more Christlike. The apostle Paul admonished us, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

### **Darkness Versus Light**

5. The wicked travel a downward spiral of darkness, but the righteous walk the shining path of true fulfillment (Proverbs 4:14-19). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). Without a proper fear of God, mankind gropes in moral and spiritual darkness. The Christian finds answers in God's Word for all aspects of life—marriage, child training, finances, preparation for death, and so forth.

One who thinks he can safely experiment with the way of the wicked is only fooling himself. He will be swept downward into a whirlpool of darkness. Our spiritual life depends on shunning evil and turning from it.

6. Only those who carefully guard their heart and their life will reach heaven (Proverbs 4:23-26). A guard determines who may enter a building. You and I must carefully screen the sights and sounds that enter our hearts. We must also choose what thoughts we allow our minds to dwell on. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). The responsibility of guarding our hearts is probably our primary battlefield throughout life.

### **Death Versus Salvation**

7. The wicked are under God's wrath, but the righteous enjoy His favor (Proverbs 15:8-9). No matter how pious we might appear to our brethren on Sunday, we will be an abomination to God if our lives do not exemplify Christ and His Word throughout the week. If we serve God faithfully each day, He will delight in our prayers and praise. Then we can experience the peace and joy of living in His favor.

8. Those who justify themselves are deceived, but those who trust the Lord's evaluation are established (Proverbs 16:2-3, 25). We naturally feel that we are doing things about right. But we dare not trust our own evaluation. We must allow our lives to be molded by the principles of God's Word.

God's evaluation of our lives may come to us through the input of faithful brethren. We also need the safety of a Scriptural church discipline to guide our lives aright.

9. Prestige and wealth bring emptiness within, but righteousness offers a true reward (Proverbs 16:31; 28:6, 10). Solomon possessed the ultimate of prestige and wealth, yet he testified, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." The only true happiness to be found issues from a life of submission to God and service to our fellow men. As we follow God in simple faith and obedience, we experience true fulfillment. The gain or loss of earthly wealth does not change this inner joy.

10. The wicked shall fall, but the righteous "shall be saved" (Proverbs 28:18). The two pathways begin at the same place—a human being with a choice to make. The wicked choose the broad road of self, sin, and pleasure. They stumble blindly through life and finally fall into eternal destruction. The righteous choose the narrow road of self-denial and obedience to God. Their pathway grows brighter and brighter, ending with an eternal home in heaven. Let us continue faithful. "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What makes sin enticing?

Each person has the fallen nature with its bent toward evil. Sin appeals to the flesh, and Satan conceals the reaping. Man reasons that a little sin will not matter. He believes, like Samson, that he can toy with sin and walk away unharmed.

2. List practical helps for victory over temptation.

We must depend on God for daily strength. We must read His Word and obey it. We must limit our exposure to the social life of the world by avoiding their eating places and communication networks. We must guard what we read and what we think.

3. Whom can we safely follow? What can make my life a safe guide to follow?

We can safely follow Christ's perfect example (1 Peter 2:21). The Bible commands us to follow faithful church leaders ( Hebrews 13:7). We can safely follow the heroes of faith as well as faithful brethren and sisters in the church.

My life will be safe to follow as I follow Christ and His teachings, and as I submit to the church and its direction.

4. Contrast the two pathways of life.

The path of the wicked is the broad road, full of perplexity and darkness. The path of the righteous is the narrow road of self-denial and surrender to Christ. God's Word illuminates our pathway, providing direction for every aspect of our lives.

5. How can we keep our hearts with all diligence?

This is a constant, daily challenge. We need God's help. We must guard what enters our hearts and choose what will remain there.

6. Why must we open our lives to the evaluation of God's Word and of spiritual brethren?

The human heart is deceitful, but God's Word discerns its "thoughts and intents" (Hebrews 4:12). Often other people can evaluate our lives better than we can. We must appreciate the help of our brethren; without it, we will lose the way.

7. How can we experience true fulfillment in life?

Grasping after wealth and honor brings emptiness. True happiness results from submitting to God and serving our fellow men. True inner joy can be ours regardless of circumstances.

8. How can we show appreciation for the faithful older ones among us? We should respect them, visit them, listen to them, minister to their needs, and follow their godly example.

### **Important Teachings**

1. The wicked entice the godly to sin, but the righteous continually choose to turn from evil (Proverbs 1:10, 15-19).

2. The wicked eventually destroy themselves as they allure others into the net of sin (Proverbs 1:17-19).

3. Godly wisdom and discretion guard the righteous in times of temptation (Proverbs 2:10-12).

4. Following the example of the righteous produces stability (Proverbs 2:20-22).

5. The wicked travel a downward spiral of darkness, but the righteous walk the shining path of true fulfillment (Proverbs 4:14-19).
6. Only those who carefully guard their heart and their life will reach heaven (Proverbs 4:23-26).
7. The wicked are under God's wrath, but the righteous enjoy His favor (Proverbs 15:8-9).
8. Those who justify themselves are deceived, but those who trust the Lord's evaluation are established (Proverbs 16:2-3, 25).
9. Prestige and wealth bring emptiness within, but righteousness offers a true reward (Proverbs 16:31; 28:6, 10).
10. The wicked shall fall, but the righteous "shall be saved" (Proverbs 28:18).

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Lord, upon our blindness Thy pure radiance pour;  
For Thy lovingkindness Make us love Thee more.  
And when clouds are drifting Dark across our sky,  
Then, the veil uplifting, Father, be Thou nigh.  
We will never doubt Thee.  
Though Thou veil Thy light; Life is dark without Thee;  
Death with Thee is bright. Light of light! Shine o'er us  
On our pilgrim way; Go Thou still before us  
To the endless day.  
—*William Walsham How*

### **Research Guide**

Read the account of the wise man and the foolish man in Matthew 7:21-27. Both men heard God's Word. The defining difference between them was that one applied the truth that he heard; the other did not.