

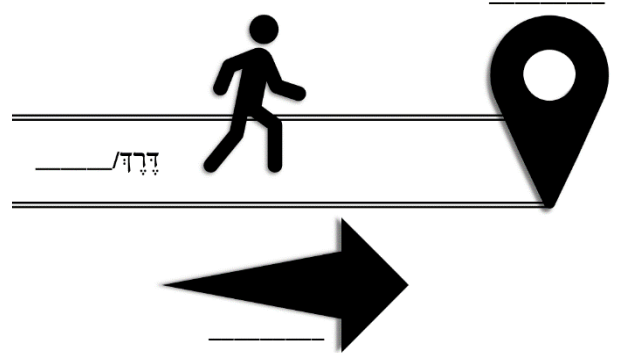
This Is the Way

Proverbs 4:1-27

The concept of “the way” is nothing new. The idea of “the way” or “the path” or “the road” has been talked about for millennia. It did not start with Buddha in India or Confucius in China, although both men and their disciples popularized it. The thought that **how we live our lives** is similar to **how we walk along a path** is centuries older than either of those religious leaders and their religious movements.

We regularly come across the idea in the OT. See Psalm 1:1 and 6, Psalm 139:24, Jeremiah 21:8, etc. for some examples. The Lord Jesus taught people using “the way” terminology before His death. See Matthew 7:13-14 and John 14:3-6. And the earliest followers of the risen Lord Jesus were described as those who belonged to “the Way.” See Acts 9:2, 19:9, 23, etc.

The idea that how we live our lives is like the way we walk along a path helps us to understand our existence. It helps us to make sense of our lives. No wonder “the way” (and “the path[s]”) is often used in the book of wisdom called “Proverbs.” **Consider Proverbs 4:10-15 and 20-22.** Taking the other path(s) takes travelers to death and disaster. Look again at 1:20-33, especially 29-33. We learn in Proverbs that a **d**_____ (way/path/road) has a **d**_____ and a **d**_____.



But we might not think about our lives in that way. We might not clearly understand that that is how it works. We understand how taking a walk, riding a bike, or driving a car works, but maybe we haven’t seen the parallels to living our lives. Maybe we make choices, pursue things, form habits, etc. without thinking about consequences.

The LORD loves us and wants us to think about which road we are taking and where it will end. He shows us the light-filled path which leads to a fully rewarding (blessed) life forever with Him. The LORD shows us the way to life! Parents and other people who fear the LORD and love us do the same.

You are deciding daily which way you are going to walk in your life. How do you make that choice? What is it that you do daily which determines which road of life you are driving down? It is determined by whose words you are listening to (paying attention to/heeding) today. **Look again at Proverbs 4:10-12 and 20-22.**

_____ we are going in life is directly connected to _____ we are listening to in life. It’s clear here that it’s **not** what we happen to hear. It’s what we choose to listen to (pay attention to). It’s what we go after and hold onto in our hearts.

The **s**_____ (teaching, lessons, sermons, etc.), **s**_____ (narratives, metanarrative, etc.), and **s**_____ which we give permission to occupy and govern our hearts determine the direction of our lives. **Those which we buy into lead the way in our lives.**

“Show me your **i**_____**s**. I’ll show you your future.”

We all filter. We filter out messages all the time. The question is, “What are we filtering out?” **Are we filtering out f_____ and letting in wisdom?** Whose messages are you paying attention to?

Things develop on this road we’re on. There is a progression. This habit forming and pattern development can work for us or against us. Good or evil habits can form. Helpful or destructive patterns can develop. **See Proverbs 4:18-19.** “What we choose to dabble in today can turn into an addiction down the road.”

What about **you**? Are you on the road to life or death? Do you need to **stay** or **switch**? Who will get your attention? Who will decide the direction of your life? Will you choose to listen to the LORD **now**?