

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 21:1-15

1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.

3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.

5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.

7 The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just.

8 The way of the guilty is crooked, but the conduct of the pure is upright.

9 It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.

10 The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes.


11 When a scoffer is punished, the simple becomes wise; when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.

12 The Righteous One observes the house of the wicked; he throws the wicked down to ruin.

13 Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

14 A gift in secret averts anger, and a concealed bribe, strong wrath.

15 When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 21:1-15


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There are decisions to be made every single day. Some are big and some are small. Some are easy and some are difficult. Some lead to great things while others lead to less than great things. Some are avoided while others are not. Some become hard-wired; we don't even notice when they are made. Some require deep thought and consideration. But what if we found that every decision was small, easy, led to "great" things, avoidable if not, and just shy of hard-wired with no deep thought at all? Would we consider our days blessed for not having to think? Would our hearts be glad to find that every decision is the right one because it led to "great" things? How proud could we become in our ability to decide?

Contrastingly, what if every decision was big, difficult, led to more difficult things, unavoidable, and required immense thought? Exhausted comes to mind. What about cursed? Probably not blessed. But could the result be any different? How proud could we become in our ability to decide? Much more possibly as the difficulty rises. But here's another bit of food for thought: what if you saw what your decisions would bring before they were made? Difficult circumstances become avoidable and great things would always be attainable. On that we could likely agree. But the most important question to consider is to whom is the difficulty avoidable and to whom are the great things attainable?

Verse 2 above says that "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart." What is "hard-wired" within us becomes the motivating factor in all of our decisions; and it is a question that is deeply considered whether we notice or not, and that is, "how am I going to be affected?" Deep on the inside is where we process this question and deep on the inside is where the Lord "will bring to light the things now hidden...and will disclose the purposes of the heart" (1 Corinthians 4:5; verse 12 above). Knowledge of what may come brings with it a grand responsibility to make decisions according to that knowledge. The believer in Christ should know what lies ahead, and with that knowledge the question deep inside should not be, "how am I going to be affected?" but instead be, "how do I affect others?" It is the Lord who weighs and the Lord who will disclose. The closer we are to Him, the more clearly we will see.

There was once a man who saw his end;
a glimpse of the future that would soon begin.
Rolling leaves from bare trees and withered grass from sprigs past;
picture a reminder that his life would not last.



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Beneath gray skies he looks back to no discernible path;
Barren and empty have all his days passed.
With a tick and a tock, forward he must go;
To where, to what, he does not know.

With empty hands he approaches two gates;
There are figures behind them lying in wait.
Despair sets in as he's gripped with fear;
One gate is shut, his way is made clear.

At once he returns with his life in his hands;
He plans to do different, to change what he can.
Determined and focused he grows in knowledge;
Strength and respect is where he pays homage.

He quickens his pace; he's restless and yearning,
Consumed with understanding, but never learning.
Toward endless pursuits to find the other door,
He has searched and searched but can look no more.

There was once a man who reached his end;
utterly broken as eternity begins.

Let's call him Lost who seeks to change his end. He looks to himself, to knowledge, and the thoughts of men. Decision after decision, only focused on him, never knowing the only decision that mattered was deep within.

Questions:

1. Does your life resemble that of Lost? If so, what steps can you begin to take to change that?
2. If you were to consider decisions that you've made within the last week, how much of those decisions centered on how you would be affected versus how others would be affected?
3. Think of what you keep secret. Now think of the truth that the Lord "will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart" (1 Corinthians 4:5). How should that knowledge affect what you keep hidden?