Proverbs 16: The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man. Verses 1 and 9 reflect the same thought.

***Proverbs 16:1*** states,

> “The plans of the heart belong to man, But the ***answer*** of the tongue is from the Lord.”

***Proverbs 16:9*** states,

> “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”

The point is that everyone makes plans. It may involve the different things a person plans to do for the day, the path a person plans to take for his/her life, or what will be said in a presentation to a company meeting.

But the outcome of every plan is dependent upon the Lord God’s decision. How many people have said, “I never dreamed my life would turn out this way!”

**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**

James Marsden wrote in **James 4:13-16**,

> *“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’*; whereas *you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”*

Yes, each person has the free will to make plans, and such actions are not discouraged by the scriptures. But God is always in control. Any person that believes otherwise is foolish.

## Proverbs 16: The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man

The thought in verse 2 follows very closely with verse 1,

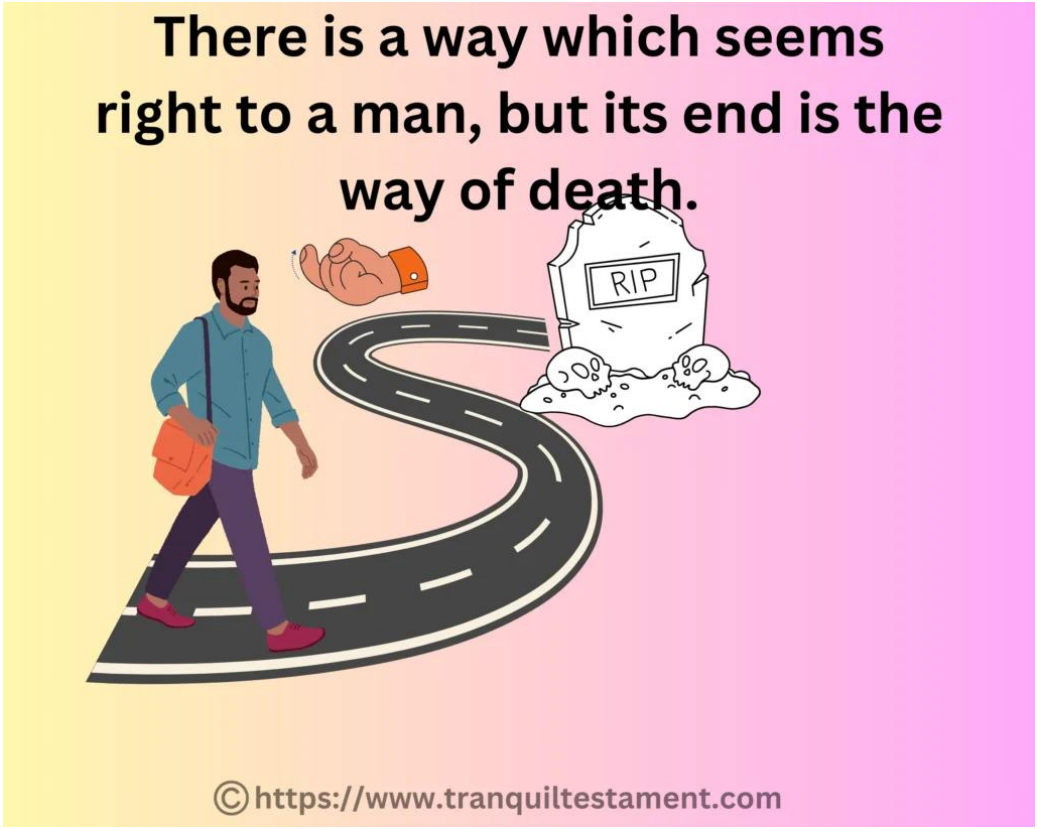
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“All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.”
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How many people have deluded themselves into thinking that their sinful or evil actions are good and honorable?

A person may perform many acts of generosity and support good works, but what is the motive behind those actions?

Is the person a good, righteous person, or is the person using these public activities to build and support a public image when the spirit and soul of that person is dark and evil?

**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**


There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.
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Verse 25 states,

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“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”
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Other people may not know the motives of a person, but the Lord God always knows. There is no thought or motive that is hidden from Him. Each person must live his/her life understanding that there will be an accounting for the plans and actions taken.

Even for a good person, good intentions are not enough, because no one can meet the demands of the Lord God. But through the mercy and grace that comes from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, sins can be forgiven, and the Way can open to a future that is literally eternal blessings and joy.

**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**

Verse 4 states,

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“The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.”
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The Assyrian Empire was one of the most brutal empires of the ancient world. The Assyrians swept down on the northern nation of Israel and destroyed it. A few years later, the Babylonians would do the same thing to the southern kingdom of Judah.

The coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Church occurred during the brutal time of the Roman Empire.

One may wonder why God allowed such evil to triumph for a time? The answer is found in the first part of the verse *“The Lord has made everything for its own purpose…”* Assyria was used as the instrument of God’s judgment against the northern nation of Israel.

The citizens of northern kingdom had been repeatedly warned of the consequences of their sin, and those warnings had been ignored. The result was their destruction from which they would disappear from history.

The Babylonians were used in the same way for the sin of Judah. But there was a difference here. God had promised that all would not be destroyed. A faithful remnant would survive. The people would to taken into captivity for 70 years, and then they would be allowed to return to their land and eventually resettle the destroyed city of Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Because of their captivity, the Jews

would never again turn to pagan worship.

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**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**

Although both Assyria and Babylon were used by God as instruments for His judgment, but both were evil and paganistic peoples. While their plan of conquest was used by the Lord God, the motive behind their actions were condemned and they also were destroyed as judgment for their sin.

The Roman Empire was also brutal and corrupt. The military might of the empire kept the peace and quickly ended any opposition with deadly efficiency. Yet, Rome had enacted laws that were applied throughout the empire.

While many governmental officials were corrupt, those laws provided stability and relative peace throughout the empire. For the first time in history, people could easily travel to various places within the empire.

The New Testament record of the life of Jesus Christ and the establishment and spread of the early church occurred during the “Pax

Romana" or the Roman Peace. Even during the trial of Jesus, Pilate initially turned to Roman Law to state that Jesus was innocent.

Only after pressure from the mob and the potential threat to his position did Pilate relent. After the Church was established, Christians were able to spread out and carry the Gospel much faster than would have been possible in earlier ages or in more modern times.

While the political stability of Rome was used by God to bring to fulfillment His Plan of Redemption, Rome was pagan, brutal and eaten up with immorality and perversion. Therefore, God's judgment fell on Rome as well and it was destroyed. God can use individuals, nations, and empires to complete His purpose, but if that person, nation, or empire does not submit to His Will, there will be an end of evil when facing the wrath of the Living God.

**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**

Proverbs 16:20 states,

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"He who gives attention to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord."
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Jesus said that

> He is the Light of the world.

James described God as the “Father of Lights”. John wrote in John 1 that Jesus is “*the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world*.”

Life can be a maze of problems, trials, danger, threats, unexpected crises, illnesses and many other things. The Word of God describes the world as a dark place. So, how can a person make his, or her, way safely through the obstacles of life?

The best way is to shine a light, and illuminate the problems. Now, sometimes it will be impossible to avoid different problems and trials, but with a light, a person will be better able to face and overcome those trials.

That is what is promised to any Christian that studies and applies the principles found in the Bible. The true light of God’s Inspired Word will show the dangers and traps of life; and will either show a safe path around the trap or prepare that person to be able to handle and

overcome the obstacle. Verse 20 promises that a person will “find good” if he/she focuses on the Word and trust the Lord.

How many traps have been set by the devil that never happen because a Christian follows the path God has laid out! How much heartache, how much anguish, how many tears and pain never occur?! Indeed that person is blessed!

**The Plans Of The Heart Belong To Man**

Verse 31 states,

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“A gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness.”
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This does not mean that everyone with gray hair is righteous! History contains countless paintings and photographs of gray-headed men and women that were scoundrels, criminals, murderers, and truly evil people.

No, this statement includes the requirement that such a person has lived a life of righteousness. Today, if a younger Christian sees an older Christian who has lived a faithful life, then that older brother or sister has a wealth of experience dealing with life.

It is unfortunate that today, people in this society tend to dismiss an older Christian because they are not familiar with the latest technology. But the spiritual nature of life has nothing too do the things of society.

How people live has remained unchanged from the beginning in the Garden. Desire, revenge, murder, lying, stealing are all easily recognizable today. An older Christian has faced many of those challenges and has prevailed!

Some of the strongest pillars of faith and best sources of knowledge are good, faithful older Sisters in Christ. But when that person has finished his/her race, then that great source of knowledge is gone. How many have wished that they could talk to an “Older Brother” or an “Older Sister” just one more time?