

# Keep Going Away

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The book of Proverbs is replete with good sound practical information—information which tells us how God would like us to live. For instance, in Proverbs 4:14-15, the scribe of God admonishes that we, “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil. Avoid it, pass by it, turn from it and pass away.” What sound advice! Simple. Profound. Stay away from evil.

It’s a logical assumption that if we are going away from evil we are becoming less and less likely to be influenced by it. Let’s look at that for a few minutes. A person who keeps going away from evil is one who:

**Keeps going away from evil thoughts.** A person who has not occupied his mind with evil thinking will not be a party to evil deeds, for “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). It should be obvious that a person who controls his mind necessarily controls his actions. A glass that is filled with milk cannot be full of tea at the same time. The same is true with regard to the mind. If it is filled with choice spiritual inclinations and thoughts, there is no danger that it can be filled at the same time with evil ones. To keep going away from evil thoughts is to face in the direction of spirituality, to think about things that are true, honest and just—to think about things that are pure, lovely, of good report—things that are virtuous and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). Run toward the right things and you’ll get to the right place.

**Keep going away from evil words.** Words have great power. They can edify or they can destroy. The man who can control his words rids himself of considerable difficulties. Actually, if we would be wise, we would learn to be quiet. If we were less inclined to express how we feel about every little matter, we would have far fewer problems. As James says, “behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth” (James 3:5). One fellow explained to me like this: “We sometimes just throw our minds into neutral and let our tongues idle on.” Many of our woes are brought on by not staying away from evil words. Illicit stories, cursing, gossip, false witnessing—none of these things would last very long if they were left unexpressed. “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding” (Proverbs 17:28). But “there is a time to speak” also (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Even then, the wise man will choose wise words to use in his speaking. We must learn to run away from evil words.

**Keep going away from evil companions.** Run with the wrong crowd and you run the wrong way. “Evil companions corrupt good morals” (I Corinthians 15:33) is indeed a wise saying. It has ever been the case that when we run after the people of the world we are influenced by them. To whatever extent we run after the world and those that make it run, to that same extent we destroy possibilities for good influence. How could

it be otherwise? How sad it is to see Christians lounging in the favor of worldliness, thinking all the while that they are not being unduly influenced. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap" (Galatians 6:7). Sow to the world, reap worldliness. It's that simple. Furthermore, when we run away from evil companions and their worldly ways we make a way to influence bad people for good.

**Keep going away from evil religions.** Not all religions have the approval of God, and it takes only a casual reading of the word of God to see that not everything done in the name of religion is done with the authority of God. "Preach the word," Paul told the young preacher... for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after they own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth..." (II Timothy 4:3-4). False religion is evil religion. We should avoid it at all costs, run from it, pass it by. It cannot do for us what need be done. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). There is no other way to go.

It's hard to run away; but run away we must. Let us divest ourselves of evil thoughts. And evil words. And evil companions. Let us look for the oracles of God in everything we say or do. In short, let us "shun the very appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22), and set our eyes on heaven.