

RUN, DON'T WALK – Part 2

Proverbs 18:10

10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower: THE RIGHTEOUS RUNNETH INTO IT, and is safe.

We've been speaking to you about the need to run (not taking a casual approach to things; giving maximum effort). Now, our running should never be aimless. We should be running *towards* something. Here we are told that the righteous are running towards the name of the Lord for safety. This, of course, brings to mind the cities of refuge spoken about in the Old Testament.

However, when we examine this story we discover that the people who fled to these cities weren't just running to safety, they were also fleeing from danger!

1 Timothy 6:11

11 But thou, O man of God, FLEE THESE THINGS; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Notice, before Paul tells us to *follow after* righteousness, godliness, faith, love, etc, he tells us to "flee" (run away from) *these things*. What things? The devil? (No, the Bible never tells us to flee from the devil. We are to *resist* the devil.)

FLEE COVETOUSNESS

1 Timothy 6:10, 11

10 For THE LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all evil: which while some COVETED after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, FLEE THESE THINGS;

According to these verses, we're supposed to flee *covetousness* (love of money). Why doesn't Paul simply say, "Don't be covetous"? Why does he tell Timothy to "flee covetousness?" – Because covetousness is dangerous!

1 Timothy 6:9

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which DROWN MEN in destruction and perdition.

The reason we're commanded to *flee* covetousness is because being covetous (being a lover of money) can drown a person in destruction and perdition.

On Wednesday, Elder Hawkins described sin as a *rip current*. (Rip currents are strong undercurrents that flows out from shore. Rip currents can carry you from shore and put you at risk of drowning.) Covetousness (the love of money) has the potential to do the same thing—pull you away from the faith and drown you in destruction.

How can we escape this? Well, you don't escape covetousness by seeking poverty. You escape covetousness by seeking to move in line with faith!

1 Corinthians 6:18

18 FLEE FORNICATION. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

FLY FORNICATION

Again, Paul doesn't say, "Don't commit fornication." He says, "*flee* fornication." Why should we flee fornication? We should flee fornication for the same reason we should flee covetousness—because it's *dangerous*!

1. When you commit fornication you "SIN AGAINST YOURSELF."

1 Corinthians 6:18

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication SINNETH AGAINST HIS OWN BODY.

The word "body" in this verse is the Greek word *sōma*. *Sōma* doesn't merely refer to the body. It refers to the "entire" man. Therefore, fornication is not just a sin (or danger) to the body. It's a danger to the *whole* man!

Proverbs 6:32

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: He that doeth it DESTROYETH HIS OWN SOUL.

We must remember that sex was designed as a way for us to give ourselves "completely" to another person. However, when we give ourselves at the wrong time, we do serious damage to our identity, personality and selfhood.

Song of Solomon 2:6, 7 New Living Translation

6 His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me. 7

Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love UNTIL THE TIME IS RIGHT.

2. When you commit fornication you “JOIN YOURSELF TO THAT PERSON.”

1 Corinthians 6:16

16 What? know ye not that he which is JOINED TO AN HARLOT is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

When we commit fornication we “join” ourselves to that person AND to whatever they are joined to!

Numbers 25:1–3

1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit WHOREDOM with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And ISRAEL JOINED HIMSELF UNTO BAAL-PEOR: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

When Israel committed fornication with the women of Moab, they also “joined” themselves to their god (Baal-peor)! Therefore, the *primary* reason we’re to flee fornication is so we can avoid an even greater sin—IDOLATRY!

1 Corinthians 10:14

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, FLEE FROM IDOLATRY.

FLEE IDOLATRY

Again, Paul doesn’t just say, “Don’t commit idolatry.” He says, “FLEE from idolatry!” And the command to flee idolatry is, as we said, the primary reason we are to flee covetousness and fornication. Both covetousness and fornication are expressions or forms of *idolatry*. Now, we’ve already seen how fornication is a form of idolatry, but what about covetousness? How is covetousness a form of idolatry?

Ephesians 5:5

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor COVETOUS MAN, WHO IS AN IDOLATER, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

How is covetousness linked to idolatry? Well, the word “idolater” means a *worshipper or servant of what is SEEN*. Thus, a covetous person is an idolater because he serves or follow after what they seen! Furthermore, as a covetous person seeks more and more after what they see (wealth, riches), they move further and further away from what they do not see (God, the kingdom of God)!

Now, we should point out that it's possible to commit idolatry without necessarily being covetous or a fornicator.

1 Corinthians 10:7

7 Neither be ye IDOLATERS, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to EAT and DRINK, and rose up to PLAY.

The Israelites were guilty of idolatry, not because of their fornication or because they were covetous of wealth, but because they ate, drank and played. (Now, we should point out that “playing” in this verse is a reference to *dancing*, which at that time was a form of *entertainment*.) How did *eating* or *playing* result in idolatry?

1 Corinthians 10:20–22

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have FELLOWSHIP WITH DEVILS. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we PROVOKE THE LORD TO JEALOUSY? are we stronger than he?

The Corinthians were guilty of idolatry, not because they ate, but because they ate (fellowshipped) with those who were engaged in idolatry. Thus, whenever we fellowship (eat, drink, entertain ourselves) with people who are engaged in an evil practice we are guilty of the same evil AND susceptible to the same judgment!

Romans 1:32

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but HAVE PLEASURE IN THEM THAT DO THEM.

The phrase “have pleasure” means give approval to (i.e. applaud).

Romans 1:32 Holman Christian Standard Bible

32 Although they know full well God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die —they not only do them, but even APPLAUD OTHERS WHO PRACTICE THEM.