

Avoid Bad Company

- 8** My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
9 For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.
10 My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.
11 If they say, “Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
13 We shall find all *kinds* of precious possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14 Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse”—
15 My son, do not walk in the way with them,
Keep your foot from their path;
16 For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely, in vain the net is spread
In the sight of any bird;
18 But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.
19 So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;
It takes away the life of its owners.

Reading: Proverbs 1: 8-19

Theme: Concerning bad company

Refuse the way of sin (Verses 8-11)

Scripture is clear, “Evil company corrupts good habits” 1 Corinthians 15:33. The company we keep will affect our behaviour, attitudes and lifestyle. In our reading the writer tells us that sinners will entice us. The literal translation means to, “open the way.” An example of this enticement is Joseph when he was tested in Genesis 39 to sin with Potiphar’s wife. When enticed by sin we ought to adopt the same attitude as Joseph. He fled from the enticement. 1 Corinthians 6:8 says, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.”

The Book of Proverbs describes the world according to its true nature. God warns us that sin is often appears attractive and pleasurable. Sin is like the bate of a hook. The bate is presented as something to be desired, but hides the hook.

The enticement of sinners (Verses 12-14)

James 1:14 says, “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” Sin is a temptation because it targets our desires and weakness. If we do not have a desire for something then sin would not be a temptation. For example, as fallen mankind we have a desire liked and loved by people. So the desire to present the best version of ourselves and to hide our faults is a real temptation. In the example found in Genesis 39 Potiphar’s wife used sexual desire to cause Joseph to sin with her.

The word, “Shoel” is mentioned in this passage. This is a Hebrew word which means, “the place of the dead.” The end goal of the devil is to swallow us up and to destroy our faith, testimony and witness in the world. He does this in many different ways, one is by the company of sinful people. To accompany sinful people is to associate with their behavior.

The Result of Bad Company (Verses 15-19)

This brings us on to the final point in the study. Ephesians 5:11 says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.” The unwise consider the short-term benefits of sin and fail to recognize the long-term consequences. The passage illustrates the foolishness of such thinking. Even a bird knows not to step into an obvious trap. The ungodly do not have the foresight shown by the bird. There have been many people who dabbled in sin and ended up being controlled by sin. The man who gambles occasionally is in danger of becoming a gambling addict. The man who dabbles in street drugs is in danger of becoming a drug addict. The message of the Book of Proverbs in this portion is that sin is like a snowball. At first it seems small and not important, but soon sin becomes a major issue as your very life is in danger.

“He who walks with wise *men* will be wise,
But the companion of fools will be destroyed.”

Proverbs 13:20