

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

February 26, 2017

Bad Company Corrupts Good Morals

by Frank Himmel



The Apostle Paul warned, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Most commentators view this statement as a proverb, noting that the Athenian poet Menander used it four centuries earlier. Regardless of its origin, this wise saying expresses a practical reality, one we would do well to keep in mind.

The Scriptures often caution against associating too closely with those given to bad conduct. For example, Proverbs 22:24-25 says:

Do not associate with a man given to anger;
Or go with a hot-tempered man,
Or you will learn his ways
And find a snare for yourself.

While it is appropriate to apply Paul's warning to people engaged in wrong behavior, contextually that was not his point. The bad company in view was those who held to doctrinal error; specifically, that there is no such thing as resurrection from the dead. The warning is therefore against too much companionship with, or too much listening to, proponents of error. Because what we believe matters and wrong beliefs

usually lead to wrong practices, the influence of false teachers can be just as disastrous to our souls as that of immoral people.

This danger is why godly parents take a keen interest in their children's education. Some teachers, especially at the college level, are out-and-out propagandists against the Bible, its message, and its standards. Even when there is no intent to destroy faith, a teacher's impromptu remarks or espousal of his or her own philosophy can carry undue weight with young, impressionable minds. Parents must be alert to such influences and ready to counteract them.

Constant opining from friends (particularly from close ones) and coworkers may produce a similar effect. Listening to popular errors day after day can wear us down if we do not fortify our faith with steady reminders from God's word. Modern societal attitudes—which deny there is such a thing as truth and suggest everyone is okay—pose a special danger.

More than a few preachers have fallen prey to the devil by spending too much time reading books and commentaries written by men who do believe the truth.

The problem in our text was church members who held to error. Elders must be judicious about whom they ask to teach. They must be alert to Bible class comments or casual conversation that reveals distorted views. Correcting such is part of guarding the flock.

Be careful what you listen to. ■

Work in Quiet Fashion

by Frank Himmel

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul urged those brethren “to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you” (4:11). Some did not do that, so in his follow-up letter he wrote, “For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread” (3:11-12). What did the Apostle mean when he said to work in quiet fashion?

Some expositors think quietness is in contrast to being busybodies. “It is an excellent, but rare union, to be active in our own business, yet quiet as to other people’s” (Matthew Henry).

Many commentators link the Thessalonians’ idle busybodies problem with their erroneous ideas about Jesus’ second coming, especially the notion that it was imminent. These authors often suggest quietness is in contrast to the Thessalonians’ agitated state: “settle

down and go to work.” James Moffatt rightly says compliance with that directive would solve a great many congregational problems!

A third idea is that working with quietness refers to not disturbing the quietness of the community by sponging off others. Verse 12 of 1 Thessalonians 4 supports this view: “so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.” A similar connection is made in 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9.

In our day another application comes to mind: get to work without making a big deal about it. Some act as though it is unreasonable to expect them to consistently work and make their own way, then live within their means. They seem to think society or churches or families owe them. Everyday workplace challenges—from getting up and going on mornings you don’t feel your best to less-than-perfect coworkers or customers—are magnified as almost catastrophic ordeals. The pay is never enough and the work is always too hard or too mundane. As a result, steady, long-term work eludes this group.

All these points have merit. In every sense of the phrase, work in quiet fashion. ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Chris Brooks	Chris Brooks
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Steven Turner	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Bruce Williams	TBD	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Mark Clifton	Mark Clifton	
CUP	Josh Baucom	Josh Baucom	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Wilson		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Singing	Adam Gibson
CLOSING PRAYER	J B Williams	TBD	Bruce Williams