

PathLights

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

July 22, 2018

Flee!

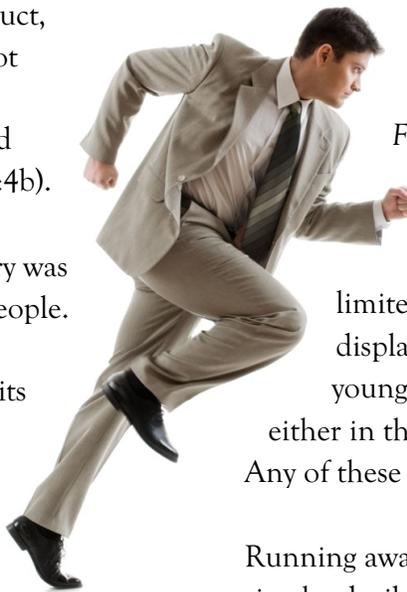
by Frank Himmel

In folklore the hero stays and fights, the coward runs away. But running away is not always cowardly; sometimes it is wise. Why get into a fight that serves no purpose and is one you will likely lose? Long ago the Preacher noted that a live dog is better than a dead lion (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

Consider four times the New Testament writers urge us to flee.

Flee fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18). As in Joseph's case that may require literally running out of a room (Genesis 39:12). In every case it requires controlling our thoughts, keeping our imaginations in check, avoiding sensual conversation and conduct, choosing our associates carefully, and not placing ourselves in situations of temptation. Remember, "fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4b).

Flee idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14). Idolatry was the downfall of God's Old Testament people. It was commonplace in New Testament cities and thus was a temptation due to its popularity as well as its accompanying sensuality. Even in our day some still reverence statues and relics or think that astrological alignments affect outcomes. And of course, it is possible



to make a god of self or of anything else that we put in the place God ought to occupy.

Flee the love of money. "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things..." (1 Timothy 6:9-11a).

Most all of us know we cannot serve God and riches (Matthew 6:24), but sometimes we still try! The love of money is behind all sorts of serious crimes. It is also responsible for a number of troubles in our personal lives: neglected spouses or children, stress and fatigue, distraction from spiritual matters, disregarded opportunities to do good, and worst of all, lost souls. "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (v. 8).

Flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22). What "youthful" lusts was Timothy facing? The list would certainly include things of a sensual nature, but it need not be limited to those. Pride, conceit, or making a display of his own wisdom might also tempt a young preacher; seeking power or prestige, either in the local church or in the brotherhood. Any of these is dangerous.

Running away from temptation is a good strategy. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). ■

Some Facts about Marriage and Divorce

by Frank Himmel

The prophet Malachi pointedly addressed the sins of his day. In chapter two of his book, he turned attention to the problem of divorce (vv. 13-16). Notice these facts about marriage from that paragraph.

Marriage is a covenant. “She is your companion and your wife by covenant” (v. 14). A covenant is a binding agreement. In the case of marriage it is a covenant drawn up by God (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 2:17).

God witnesses our marriage vows. “The Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth” (v. 14).

Time does not alter the marriage covenant. Twice the prophet refers to “the wife of your youth” (vv. 14, 15). Despite any changes that may occur with the passing of time, God still expects people to keep the vows they made years ago.

Divorce is treason. “Against whom you have dealt treacherously” (v. 14). *Treason* suggests the worst kind of betrayal, the violation of a most valued trust. That is precisely what divorce is.

Divorce reveals spiritual emptiness. “But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit” (v. 15). Those who claim to live by the Spirit must also walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). One who divorces a mate is doing the opposite of what God’s Spirit instructs.

God hates divorce. “For I hate divorce,’ says the Lord, the God of Israel” (v. 16). Could He have spoken any more plainly? Why, then, do so many go to such lengths to justify doing what God clearly does not want done?

Divorce is violence. “And him who covers his garment with violence” (v. 16). *Violence* is a remarkably strong term here. Divorce inflicts intense pain, as surely as physical violence does. (In v. 13 the victimized wives have cried enough tears to cover the altar!) It fractures the lives of all involved, including other family members.



Divorce impairs our relationship with God. “He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand” (v. 13). If failure to honor one’s wife hinders his prayers (1 Peter 3:7), how much more would divorcing her! We are self-deceived if we think we can ignore God’s instructions yet continue to enjoy His approval.

“So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously” (v. 16). ■

Service Leaders for the Week		
	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Adam Gibson	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Greg Winget
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Steven Turner	
CUP	Carlos Garcia	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Jason Chandler	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Josh Baucom
CLOSING PRAYER	Kerry Gray	Ian Brown