

## The First Step

When thoughts become words, and words become actions, everyone must consider the consequence of taking that “first step.”

Positively: “Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and *so* continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (Jam. 1:19-25).

Negatively: “their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no justice in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein doth not know peace” (Isa. 59:6-8).

“I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in paths of uprightness. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: Keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, And walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it; Turn from it, and pass on” (Prov. 4:10-15).

Think on these things: “If my step hath turned out of the way, And my heart walked after mine eyes, And if any spot hath cleaved to my hands: Then let me sow, and let another eat; Yea, let the produce of my field be rooted out” (Job 31:7-8). ret