

Playing With Fire

Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

Proverbs 6:27,28

In our modern-day English language there are many idioms, metaphors, and figures of speech that have their origin in the Bible. Phrases like: *the handwriting is on the wall*, *a drop in a bucket*, *go the extra mile*, and *the blind leading the blind* are a few examples that we hear in daily conversations. In today's verse we can see the source of the expression- if you play with fire, you get burned. Obviously, if a person is not careful when working with literal fire, they have the potential for getting burned; but the intent of this verse goes well beyond the dangerous qualities of fire.

The context of this verse in Proverbs is warning against a man being caught in lustful and adulterous situations. Losing focus and surrendering to the temptation of the flesh can burn a man's achievements and reputation to the ground. The truth of this verse can also apply to many other areas of disobeying God's commands. When a person starts to stray from diligently following the Lord, the commandments can seem restrictive rather than protective. Deuteronomy 10:13 states that the commandments are meant for our good. How many times has a young person fabricated a story to avoid being found out in wrongdoing, only to find themselves in even worse trouble when the truth is revealed. By not telling the truth they get "burned". The Scriptures are replete with examples of people who disregarded God's commands only to find that their choice had dire repercussions. The most obvious being Adam who directly violate God's warning and caused not only him but all the following generations to suffer from his disobedience. Or Achan, hoping to gain financially from the spoils of Jericho, totally disregarded God's warning. Achan's greed of what was forbidden brought much trouble to him and many others. The end of Solomon's life was filled with regret and bitterness because he had forsaken the very wisdom that had been granted him by God. Marrying countless wives, many of whom were idolaters, brought a negative influence that impacted succeeding Israeli kings for generations. These are just a few examples of people in the Bible who dabbled in forbidden areas and later found themselves burned.

Since *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*, we can take these verses and accounts and apply them that we might avoid being burned by sin. There are many situations in our Christian walk where our adversary the Devil will dangle enticements designed to pull us away from the narrow path of following our Savior. We won't be ignorant of Satan's devices if we absorb God's word and diligently apply it to our lives. May God grant us the grace to perceive any situation that might appear pleasant and harmless at the moment, but in the end could produce regretful results.

J.

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