

## AVOID THE SNOWBALL EFFECT

by Adam Faughn

Sin is rarely a one-time action. More often than not, one sin leads to another. Tragically, for many, the "snowball" continues to roll down the hill, and sins pile one on top of another until a person's life is out of control.

Maybe no one in the Bible learned this lesson more graphically than King David did. He didn't fulfill his duty as king and stayed behind as his army went to fight in war. He lusted after the wife of another man. He let that lust control him to the point of committing adultery. He tried to cover up the sin by having the husband—a faithful warrior in David's own army—killed through trickery. The snowball was out of control.

If only David had listened to his own words. It was David who wrote: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). We see the progression of sin in these words. We first walk near sin. Then we stand around it. Finally, we are seen sitting right in the midst of it. What if David had just gone out to war, or, at least, had averted his eyes from Bathsheba before his thoughts turned to lust? How different his life would have been!

How do we avoid this progression? We must fill our minds with that which is wholesome and helpful. We must plant our minds firmly on the things of God.

Continue reading David's words: "But [the blessed man's] delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (Psalm 1:2-3a). While God's Word is important for many reasons, one of the great reasons to spend time in the Bible is to avoid sin. The more time we spend

reading, studying, meditating upon, and applying God's Word, the less sin will appeal to us. As David wrote elsewhere, "Your Word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

How can we spend more time reading and studying God's Word with our busy lives? Here are some practical suggestions that might help.

**1. Set aside a consistent time each day to read.** Some recommend reading for a certain amount of time each day (as opposed to a certain number of verses or chapters), suggesting it is easier to stay with the reading.

**2. Read different translations each time through the entire Bible, or even just as you read a favorite section of Scripture.**

**3. Have a small Bible that can stay with you in the glove box, your purse, or back pocket.** You'll be amazed at how much time you spend in the line at the store or in waiting rooms. Spend that time reading or thinking on good things.

**4. Start with the familiar and move to the less familiar.** We can get frustrated when we "barrel into" the reading of the Bible and quickly come to a very hard, or repetitive, passage. Start with a favorite book, or with one of the Gospel accounts, and then use the knowledge you gain to move to other, less familiar, texts.

**5. Use available helps.** If your Bible has cross-references, take the time to use them. Ask a faithful student of God's Word for inexpensive tools (many are free online) you can use to help supplement your reading and study.

Follow these steps, and you will be spending more time saturating your mind with the things of God. When your mind is filled with God's Word, you will be firmly planted and will be more apt to avoid the progression of sin.

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*Flee temptation but don't leave a forwarding address.*

### News & Notes

**SYMPATHY:** To Randy Waite & family at the passing of his mother, Gloria Waite. May God comfort the family at this time of loss.

**CARE & SHARE BEARS:** Each Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. Join the ladies in this good work making stuffed bears for children.

**AT CLEVELAND CLINIC:** Dan Williams' stem cell transplant is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 10th. We pray and wish for him the best.

**MEETING:** Lisbon ----- Feb. 27 - Mar. 1 ----- F. Higginbotham

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON SING:** Lisbon, Mar. 1st, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

**PANTRY:** Soup & crackers.

**REQUEST FOR PRAYERS:** Fred Larrimore, Jr., Richard Clutter.

**REMEMBER THESE SHUT-INS:** Mabel Sprout, Bette Gentry.

**THOSE WITH HEALTH CONCERNS:** Weirton Medical Center: Fred Larrimore, Sr. (Karen Strum's dad). UPMC, Pittsburgh: Docie Moore. Ruby Memorial Hospital, Morgantown: Marilyn Sprout. Calcutta Health Care: Marie Jones. At Home: Karen Main, Geraldine Barrett, Imogene Nice, Randy Beagle, Virginia Ferrell, Beulah Rice, Marlene Reynolds, Gene Miller, Betty Gentry, Ruth Brewer, Betty Carlin, Linda Wiersbicki, Barbara Shafer (Docie Moore's mother is at her son's home [Zane Cook] in New Cumberland). Remember others confined to their homes and in nursing homes. Check the bulletin board.

### A Word Fitly Spoken

We are all familiar with the beautiful analogy in Proverbs 25:11. Here, the "apples of gold in pictures of silver" are the right words spoken at the right time and in the right way.

Maybe a situation calls for words of teaching. Just the right words can bring someone to obedience. Maybe the situation demands words of encouragement. Words fitly spoken can cheer a depressed person, or a sick brother or sister.

Some of us are so wrapped up in our own situations that we cannot see that others need those precious words from us that would mean the world to them at that moment.

Perhaps a call to a shut-in would bring joy to their heart. Perhaps a visit to an erring Christian would bring about their restoration. Perhaps a word to a faithful worker in the church would elevate them to greater heights of service. We all have this power to say that "fitly spoken word".

- John Wright, Woodbine Church of Christ, Nashville, TN