

Don't Follow the Crowd!

(Psalm 1:1)

Jesus said His disciples were “in the world” (John 17: 11), yet, He said, they were not “of the world” (v. 14). Being “in the world” isn’t hard; in fact we have no choice in the matter. But resisting being “of the world” presents great challenges. Your parents probably cautioned you not to follow the crowd. They did that because following the crowd is the path of least resistance, but it generally leads to disaster. Your parents knew that, & they wanted to spare you from the trouble.

God also tells us not to follow the worldly crowd. The very first verse of the very first psalm gives us 3 cautions. “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.”

The blessed person is the one who is in fellowship with God & therefore enjoys the peace & tranquility that such fellowship provides. The first step to such blessedness is not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. The word for ungodly in this place is most often translated “wicked.” The English word ungodly usually means impiety, not respecting God and holy things. But the word in Psalm 1:1 just means wicked. The counsel of the wicked would be their advice. What do they say? And walk is a metaphor for the way we live or act. So, the psalmist is telling us not to listen when the worldly crowd tells us we should live. The world says we’re complete idiots even to believe in God, much less to live according to His teachings. They tell us that the Bible is just a collection of human opinions from a bygone era, and that we ought to decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. According to the worldly crowd, there is no concrete standard for right & wrong – every individual decides for himself/herself, and all viewpoints are equally valid!

Second, the psalmist says if we want to be in that happy, tranquil, peaceful relationship with God, we must not stand in the path of sinners. The word sinners

is virtually synonymous with wicked (or ungodly) that we just talked about. Their path is their road, which is leading them to their destination. So, the point is, don't go where the worldly crowd is going. The worldly crowd is going to the so-called "adult" movies. Would Jesus go there? Neither should we! There's really nothing "adult" about them – they actually appeal to people who are juvenile & need to grow up. The worldly crowd will be going to the night clubs to drink and dance and listen to filthy song lyrics. I doubt that there are very many in this audience planning to go to a dirty movie or stop in at the night club on the way home tonight! But it might shock you how many in the body of Christ participate in such. And then we can talk about the Prom. Yes, it's a huge social event, and "everybody who's anybody" will be there. Most of us are a little old or a little young to be involved, but we are responsible to influence our children, our grandchildren, and anyone else we can, for righteousness. Half a century or more ago, there were special homes for unwed mothers. Those who operated these homes said that most of the young girls told them that their problems started on the dance floor. Why would that surprise anyone? Such close bodily contact and movements will naturally stir desires that may prove difficult to resist. That being the case, why would we think that dancing, whether at the prom or some other environment, is harmless now? Has the type of dancing at the Prom become more virtuous in the last 50+ years? So, don't go where the worldly crowd goes. Their final destination is destruction. We certainly don't want to go there!

The third caution the psalmist gives is not to sit in the seat of the scornful. The scornful are those who mock and scoff at God's word and the way it teaches us to live. To sit in their seat is to do what they do. So the point is, don't do what the worldly crowd does. Don't listen to what they say, go where they go, or do what they do. We're "in the world." But we don't have to be "of the world." Indeed, we must not be if we would have fellowship with God!