

WALK - STAND - SIT

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Ps. 1:1).

The Holy Spirit provides this warning against digressing into sin. It starts with “walking”, transitions to “standing”, and concludes with “sitting”.

The measure of evil also involves degenerating from the “counsel” of the ungodly, to the “way” of sinners, to the “seat” of the scornful.

How vividly this is illustrated in the life of Lot. Step # 1 involved pitching his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12). Step # 2 was moving into the city and standing with the Sodomites. Step # 3 was sitting in the gate with the leaders of Sodom (Gen. 19:1). While Lot vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, it apparently did not keep him from sitting in the seat of the scornful (2 Pet. 2:8)..

Alexander Pope once said: “Vice is a monster of such frightful mein, that to be hated needs but to be seen. But seen to often, familiar with her face, we at first abhor, then pity, then embrace”.

A positive application of this lesson is illustrated by Jesus “walking” with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Next Jesus was “standing” with them discussing supper. Finally he was “sitting” with them and breaking bread (Lk. 24:13 - 35). Note that it was while they were “sitting” with Jesus that their eyes were opened and they recognized who He was.

Salesmen, I am told, target the dining table as the best place to present a sales pitch and sell a product. While this is probably true throughout the whole earth, it is especially relevant in the middle east. Thus to “sit” with someone was more significant than walking or standing with them.

Many adulterous relationships follow the same deepening involvement. It begins with casual contact that seems harmless. Standing with someone, however, involves a deeper level of intimacy. Finally, sitting with them often sets the stage for the betrayal of virtue. The Scriptures command us to “flee fornication” not to sit down and discuss it (1 Cor. 6:18).

Similarly, walking in the “counsel” of the ungodly encourages you to stand in the sinful “way” they live. Sitting in the seat of the “scornful” implies that you are not really offended by their scandalous conversation. Remember! The way we “think” is the way we “are” (Prov. 23:7).

Hunters and fishermen pride themselves in bagging a “trophy”. An animal or fish grows big by avoiding stupid mistakes and taking unnecessary risks. Bagging a trophy is therefore something to brag about. The devil too takes delight in targeting leaders who represent the brightest and best among the godly. In my mind’s eye I can see Judas “walking” to meet the chief priests and elders. “Standing” in their presence made him even more vulnerable, but I assume that he was invited to “sit” with them to consummate the deal.

The Psalmist reminds us that the man who avoids this pathway to sin, delights in the Law of God and is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He is strong and stable producing green leaves and fruit. Strong winds only cause a tree to grow stronger.

The wicked, by contrast, are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Chaff has no root system at all. John the Baptist did not moisten his finger to see which way the wind was blowing and neither should we (Matt. 11:7). Pilate, however, violated his own conscience and condemned Christ to be crucified simply because he feared the people (Matt. 27:24).

Someone has observed that rivers are crooked because they take the easy way around obstacles, and people get crooked in the same way. Please be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Please sink your roots deep into the things of God. Please don’t walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful.