

Why Not Just Run Away From It All



David Wilkerson February 1, 1980

Almost everywhere I go nowadays, I hear people say, "I wish I could just run away from it all." Then after a sad pause, they add, "But I don't know where to run. I have no place to go. And I guess I'm too chicken."

Recently, while trimming my hair, my barber confessed, "Yesterday I called a few airlines for information on flights to Hawaii. I had this sudden wish to sell everything, walk away from my business and obligations, fly to the warm sunshine of Hawaii and become a beach bum." Then, with a heavy sigh, he added, "But I couldn't get up the courage. So, I'll keep dragging myself to work, and the problems will hang on."

What About The Housewife Who Wakes Up In the Morning to Daydream About Running Away from it All?

Her marriage is has gone stale; she feels bored and restless; and no one seems to understand what she's going through. There are some good days, but mostly they are unbearable. She wonders if it's worth it all.

She doubts she will ever be really happy — and there fleeting moments when she says to herself, "Sometimes I feel like packing it all in and just taking off — anywhere — just to get away!"

What About the Husband? How Often Does He Dream Of Escaping His Burdens and Pressures?

He gets tired of the daily routine - tired of working so hard, while falling further behind. He feels the heavy burden of raising a family in a very complex age, and he begins to think, "How long can I carry so many people on my back? How long do I have to solve everybody else's problems? Everybody is plucking at me, and I've got nothing left. I'd like to just get away from it all."

One day The Husband Or Wife, Or Both, Look Around And Take Inventory.

The house is nice, the cars are fine, the living is comfortable — but it doesn't bring happiness. There is a lingering emptiness, an unexplainable kind of longing for something more out of life, out of marriage. They remember better days, past dreams and hopes, and it all seems to have given way to a mundane kind of existence that is not what they had hoped life and marriage would be like. The magic is gone and the joy of sharing and loving is now overshadowed by problems and the cares of life. The children are loved, but their problems only complicate things even more.

All Of These Things Have A Way Of Coming To A Boiling Point.

There comes a time when even the most patient, tender, trusting Christian reaches a crisis that plunges the soul into feelings of helplessness and despair. Those are the times when everything seems to be going wrong, and

there seems to be no end of the trouble in sight. It is then this urge to run away comes on so strong. Like David the psalmist, we inwardly cry, "Oh that I had the wings of a dove — I would fly away to a distant wilderness and escape this tempest and storm?"

The True Christian Never Thinks Of Running Away To Something Evil Or Sinful.

Their love of God is strong, and they would not, for a moment, grieve the Holy Spirit. But still they find themselves boxed in. There are certain things they have prayed about that demand an answer, if not a miracle. They are convinced God is faithful and that He cares for His Children and answers prayer. But, for some unexplainable reason, their prayer is not answered — at least not up to now. Hard as they try, their marriage situation does not improve. The children continue in their foolishness, and the daily problems keep mounting. Often, the financial pressure grows steadily worse. Just when one crisis is passed, another one comes along. They begin to wonder if life is just one series of burdens and problems after another. And the thing they don't understand the most is this: "If I prayed, in real faith, and I did not get an answer — is it me? Am I doing something wrong? Am I failing the Lord, or is sin blocking the answer?" Or they begin to harbor a subtle grudge against God for ignoring them in their hour of need.

We Would All Be Surprised, If Not Shocked, By The Great Numbers Of Good Christians Who Secretly Harbor Momentary Thoughts Of Running Away From It All.

Almost everyone is hurting in one way or another. I heard Oral Roberts tell me once, "There were times I would have liked to walk away from it all. Sometimes the burdens are overwhelming but running never solves anything." The late Kathryn Kuhlman, that mightily used healing evangelist who ministered to thousands, once confided to me, "David, more than once I've thought of just walking away from everything. How nice it would be to wake up without all the responsibilities and burdens."

I, too, have had these kinds of moments when I wanted to hop on a plane and take off to some quiet, unknown place and get away from everything. Never once in my lifetime have I ever entertained a single thought of running from God or from my faith. I have never thought of running from my family or my ministry. Mostly, like so many others, I wanted to run from the demands and the busyness that tends to trap and enslave — leaving no time to grow.

So many would-be escapees are like the woman in Dallas, Texas, who confessed, "I would have left long ago, but I have no place to go. Where does a 45-year-old woman run to? And what would I do when I got there? Guess I'm just stuck here for the rest of my life."

One gentleman wrote, "I did run away — for one week! That's all I could take. The loneliness and despair only got worse. Being alone didn't help at all. I was miserable, and I realized you can never run from any problem — you have to stay and ride them out."

That is the testimony of a vast majority of those who did run away. They tell of feelings of guilt — fear — emptiness — far worse than anything they had experienced before they ran off. And the most tragic confessions come from those who wanted to go back — but couldn't. It is never the same when you go back. Things change drastically when you run away from family, from obligations, from the job. Even though you have second thoughts and decide to go back and "try again" — others change. Situations change. And just as it happened to Esau, your birthright is wrenched from your hands and given to another. If you run, don't expect to back and find everything the same. You will never be the same; something will have been lost that can never be replaced.

When People Think They Have Failed, Their First Impulse Is To Run.

If that failure brings them shame, if they feel disgraced in any way and can no longer look someone in the face — they think only of running away. It's their way of punishing themselves, as if to say, "I'm no good. I'm a burden. The best thing for me to do is get out of everybody's way. I'm a troublemaker, so I'll leave and not disgrace anybody. I can't be loved now; I can't hold my head up; so I might as well get lost."

That is the first reaction of husband or wife caught in adultery. The exposed party weeps, cries, and then offers to get out of the way. "Okay, I know what I've done. I'm filthy, no good, worthless. You deserve better. I know you and

God will never forgive me, so I'll just pack my bags and get out." In many cases, the guilty party does leave, then tells everybody, "I got kicked out. I did my best to be reconciled, but my spouse disowned me."

Young People Think Of Running Away For Various Reasons.

Girls often run when a boyfriend breaks their heart. Heartbreak for a young woman is the most cruel and traumatic experience of all. Without God's help, it is nearly impossible for some to overcome. So they run, and keep on running — from God, from feelings of worthlessness, and from their inner hurt. Young men run from jobs and careers that are dead end. Almost daily, I receive letters from young men seeking full-time employment "in some kind of ministry." They confess to feelings of not accomplishing anything with their lives. They feel like running and not stopping — until they can find some kind of work that satisfies their need for fulfillment. That is why I believe the majority of our runaway youth today are not running away from something, as much as they are trying to run to something worthwhile. They are searching, more than running.

Do I sound too pessimistic? Do I sound as if I think the majority of Christians are restless, bogged down in despair, faithless, and wanting to run? Do I make it sound like there is no victory in Christ — no life of joy — peace and happiness? Do I make it sound like most marriages have gone stale and that a majority of husbands and wives are wanting out?

That is not the intent of this message. Thank God for all the happy, well-adjusted, settled Christians who have no problems, pain, or adversity. Thank God for those who enjoy marriages free from burdens and hassles. Thank God for the Christians who live, breathe, and talk faith and victory. That is the goal Christ has set for us — a life of total trust, childlike faith, and victory over all the power of the enemy. But some of us are still going through struggles. Some of us are still praying earnestly for things that have not yet come to pass. Some of us, filled with faith and victory, still endure family pressures, illnesses, heartbreaks, and trials. We, too, love the Lord and have peace with God. But we can't lie about our true feelings, and we can't hide from the battles that surround us. So don't think we are second class Christians because of those times we cry as Jesus did, "Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?" Don't think we are blasphemers or doubters because we get these fleeting thoughts occasionally about escaping from the battle. Don't accuse us of being immature or weak simply because we do not yet understand all the Word of God — or how to appropriate all the promises — or how to get every prayer answered. And please don't tell those of us who still weep and cry and hurt because of pain, suffering, and misunderstanding that we must laugh, be always happy and successful. Even that saintly apostle Paul spoke of being "pressed beyond measure, insomuch that we despaired even of life."

God Fully Understands Man's Impulse To Run In Times Of Trouble And Crisis.

That is why he provided Israel with cities of refuge, where people in crises could run for shelter and protection. Six cities were set aside so that any Israelite who was overwhelmed "unawares" by a problem could "run unto one of these cities that he might live" (*Deuteronomy 4:42*).

Today we have something even better. God has provided us with a Strong Tower to which we can run and be helped in times of need.

"The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (*Proverbs 18:10*).

Friend, There Is No Place To Run — But To The Lord.

David in times of trouble, fled to the Rock. Jesus invites us to run under the shelter of his wings. When many of His disciples were forsaking Him, Jesus turned to the twelve and asked, "Will you run away too, like the others?" Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter was convinced that Jesus was the only place to hide — the only place to rest.

Think of the poor, dejected homosexual who has just lost a "true love." He drinks to deaden his guilt and despair. He lives in fear and constant torment, lonely and fearful. He has no place to run — because he has no Christ. He has no sheltering wing, no refuge from the storm.

Think of all the perplexed husbands and wives locked into hopeless marriages - unable to communicate, unable to

bridge the chasm between them. They drink; they cheat; they live in agony and mistrust. They see no hope, so they run from each other. They seek temporary relief from their problems in any way possible — pills, alcohol, infidelity — but it only makes them more depressed. They have no Savior to run to. They have no strong tower in which to escape the powers of evil. What a pity!

But not so for the child of God! We have a place we can run to! There is no place on this earth to escape our problems and pressures - He alone has what we need. To whom shall we go? Where shall we go? To Him! Can't you hear Him crying, "Come, run to Me, all you who are weary with problems and heavy laden with burdens — and I will give you rest"?

Don't Try To Understand What You Are Going Through — In Your Life — Your Home — Your Marriage — Or Your Work.

You will never understand it in a million years. When the enemy comes in like a flood, trying to swamp you and make you run in fear, flee to the secret closet of prayer and pour out your heart to the Savior. Give Him your complaints, bring forth your strong reasons, as Isaiah suggested, and let it all out in His presence. Cry a river of tears if they come. If you have no tears left, simply give up and let Him take over everything. Then stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Don't Let The Devil Try To Deceive You With The Idea You Are Evil, Unworthy, Or Demon Possessed.

If you have failed, if you have sinned — confess it! Repentance is simply wanting desperately to change! You can run to the forgiving arms of Jesus and be made completely whole and go forth stronger and cleaner than ever before.

And don't listen to those lies from Satan that suggest you are in a hopeless situation. Those fiery trials you are going through are common to all Christians, and God will not let you go through more than you can bear.

Here Is God's Message of Hope:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (*1 Peter 4:12,13*).

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (*1 Corinthians 10:13*).

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