

O Be Careful



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

O Be Careful

Learn how the importance of avoiding sin in every area of your life

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Study Number: DGW60

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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O Be Careful

One popular children's Bible song is entitled, "O Be Careful, Little Eyes." The lyrics go as follows: "O be careful little eyes what you see; O be careful little eyes what you see; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little eyes what you see.

"O be careful little ears what you hear; O be careful little ears what you hear; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little ears what you hear.

"O be careful little hands what you do; O be careful little hands what you do; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little hands what you do.

"O be careful little feet where you go; O be careful little feet where you go; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So be careful little feet where you go.

"O be careful little mouth what you say; O be careful little mouth what you say; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little mouth what you say."

These are all very important Biblical principles for parents to be diligent in instilling in their children. It has always been God's plan for His people to teach their children about being careful to follow His instructions. For instance, whenever Moses reminded the Israelites of their need to be careful to observe the law of God whenever they would go into the land of Canaan, he also instructed them to teach the same to their children. Among the last words Moses spoke in his life are recorded in Deuteronomy 32:46. He said, "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe – all the words of this law."

Yes, parents must diligently teach their children to be careful so that they will observe all the instructions of God and live to please Him. Unfortunately, I think that adults can lose sight of these same basic principles we try to teach to our children. Perhaps we begin to think that we have matured beyond these truths. Perhaps we just get caught up in our busy lives. Perhaps we think that these truths no longer apply to our situations. Regardless, we need to be reminded of these same Biblical principles that are outlined in this children's song – so that we can not only teach our children these principles in song, but also through the example of our lives!

Recall what Jesus taught in Matthew 18:1-4. Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In response, Jesus called a little child to come to Him and set Him in the midst of them all. Then, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

We must be converted to Jesus Christ and become as little children – in humility and in purity. Therefore, we must make sure that we are diligently applying these same Biblical principles to our lives! During the course of this study, we will be considering how the words of this children's song contains Biblical principles for all who desire to please God.

God Expects Us To Be Careful

To be "careful" is to make great effort so as to avoid mistakes. Specifically, God wants people to make great effort in order to keep away from sin. Sin (violating God's law), after all, is what separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Consider two specific areas in which we must exercise care.

To keep His commandments

We must be careful to keep the commandments of God. Though this principle is also found in the pages of the New Testament, consider

how frequently Moses stressed this concept to the Israelites before they went into the land of Canaan. Certainly, Moses knew that there would be obstacles that would challenge the faithfulness of the Israelites. Therefore, prior to his death, the book of Deuteronomy records Moses' reminders to the people and his encouragement that they would be careful to keep the commandments of God.

In Deuteronomy 5:1, "Moses called all Israel, and said to them: 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.'" After this, Moses reminded the people of the covenant their fathers had made with the Lord. Specifically, Moses repeated to them the Ten Commandments that were foundational to the Law that was delivered to them. Then, verses 32-33 say, "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess."

Now, although the Ten Commandments were foundational to the Law that God had given, they were not the only commandments that Israel needed to be careful to observe. Instead, listen to Moses' statement in Deuteronomy 8:1. "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers." Deuteronomy 11:32 says, "And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today." And, Deuteronomy 12:32 says, "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

Once again, although these instructions were given to the people of Israel who were under the Law of Moses, the same principles are given in the New Testament for us today. We also must be careful to live according to all the instructions of the Lord. And, we must be careful not to add to or take away from the words of God! Both children and adults alike must recognize the need to be careful to keep God's commandments!

To resist temptation

We must be careful to resist temptation. The need to be careful in observing all the commandments of God implies that there is something that is attempting to pull us toward unfaithfulness that we must resist. Listen to James 4:7. "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Both children and adults alike must recognize that there is a fierce enemy who is actively working to lure us away from pleasing God and must be resisted. 1 Peter 5:8-9 explains further. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

First, notice the fact that this one called "the devil" is not interested in your well-being. Instead, he is pictured as a roaring lion who is stalking his prey, waiting for an opportunity to devour you. He wants the right opportunity to try and lure you away from God. Therefore, Peter instructs you to be self-controlled (sober), watchful (vigilant), to resist him, and be steadfast in the faith. All of this implies carefulness in choosing to obey God rather than succumbing to the devil's temptations.

Second, consider how it is that the devil (Satan) works to lure you away from God. James 1:14-15 explains that "each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." So, Satan works through your own physical desires, appealing to the things that you find enjoyable, worthwhile, etc. And, whenever he has enticed you to consider pursuing your own fleshly desires rather than please God, he has tempted you. "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." That is, whenever you are not careful to resist temptation and choose to fulfill your own desires rather than God's, you commit sin. And, sin results in spiritual death.

Given the serious nature of this enemy who is actively working to lure you away from God, you must recognize the need to be careful. God has given you the ability to overcome the devil, but you must

carefully take the way of escape that God provides out of every temptation (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). In addition, you must carefully put on each piece of spiritual armor that God has given you so that you can be victorious over the devil (see Ephesians 6:10-18)!

Careful Eyes

Having established the general need for everyone to be careful, let's consider each one of the areas addressed in the song. The first area pertains to the eyes. "O be careful little eyes what you see; O be careful little eyes what you see; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little eyes what you see." Once again, please recognize that the care demonstrated in what a person sees must not only be considered as good advice for children. Instead, this is practical application of Biblical wisdom for all people to consider! Let's consider two examples (one negative and one positive) and then make some applications.

David's eyes led to adultery

King David was not careful with his eyes. 2 Samuel 11 records the events that changed David's life. One evening, David walked on the roof of his house. "And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold" (verse 2). Though the reason she was bathing in public is not identified in this text and the text does not say that David had sinned in seeing her (as it could have been unintentional), it is in what comes next that we start to learn a great lesson about our eyes. Verse 3 says that David "sent and inquired about the woman." Evidently, once David saw her, he did not turn his eyes away. The implication is that he continued to look and lust for her.

David's failure to be careful with his eyes was sin enough. But, then you need to consider where this failure led David. After calling for this woman (Bathsheba), he committed adultery with her, resulting in the woman becoming pregnant. Then, David unsuccessfully tried to cover up his sin, and eventually had Bathsheba's husband (Uriah) killed in

battle. Later, the child also died, and David's kingdom would never be the same after these events. Now, do you suppose that David went up on the roof of his house with adultery and murder in his mind? I seriously doubt it. Yet, because he was not careful with his eyes, this is exactly what resulted.

Job's covenant with his eyes resulted in pleasing God

When Job's faith was being put to the test, he maintained that he was not being punished for some sin that he had committed. And, as he maintained his innocence, he said, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1). Job was committed to being careful only to look at things God approves. He recognized that looking on a young woman (with lustful intents) would fail to please God.

Why did he make this covenant with his eyes? He recognized that God promised to punish the wicked and that God saw all that he did (see Job 31:2-4). So, Job had committed himself to integrity (Job 31:6). And, this integrity included that he would not lust after those God had forbidden.

Applications

Are you being careful with your eyes and what you see? We have seen how one man's carelessness with his eyes resulted in displeasing the Lord and consequences, and how another man's carefulness with his eyes resulted in integrity and innocence before the Lord. Which one better describes you?

Are you careful not to look with lustful intents after others (as condemned in Matthew 5:27-30)? Are you careful not to watch television programs and movies that show people immodestly dressed? Are you careful not to put worthless things in front of your eyes (as discussed in Psalm 119:37), recognizing that putting worthless things in your mind will often lead you to sinful thoughts and actions. Are you careful to focus your eyes only upon that which is right and holy in God's sight? O, be careful what you see!

Careful Ears

The second area addressed in this song pertains to the ears. “O be careful little ears what you hear; O be careful little ears what you hear; There’s a Father up above; And He’s looking down in love; So, be careful little ears what you hear.” Once again, please recognize that the care demonstrated in what a person hears must not only be considered as good advice for children. Instead, this is practical application of Biblical wisdom for all people to consider! Let’s consider two examples (one negative and one positive) and then make some applications.

The man of God’s ears led to his death

An individual simply identified in the Scriptures as a “man of God” went to the king of Israel (Jeroboam) and spoke God’s message against his wicked actions (see 1 Kings 13). This “man of God” was also commanded by God, “You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came” (verse 9). However, there was a man identified as an “old prophet” who went to the man of God. This old prophet told the man of God, “Come home with me and eat bread” (verse 15).

Although the man of God repeated God’s words to him, the old prophet said, “I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water’” (verse 18). However, the Scriptures identify that he was lying to the man of God. Yet, the man of God chose to listen to him rather than obey what God had said. The result was that the man of God was killed by a lion on the road. Therefore, his choice to hear the lies of man rather than God’s truth led to his disobedience and death.

Noah’s ears resulted in obedience and salvation

During the time that Noah lived on this earth, the world was filled with wickedness (see Genesis 6:5-7). Yet, Noah found favor in God’s sight. As a result, whenever God revealed to Noah that He would destroy the wickedness of man by means of a

flood, God also revealed that He would save Noah and His family by means of an ark. Then, as God gave Noah instructions relative to the preparations of the ark, the statement is made concerning Noah that he “did according to all that the Lord commanded him” (see Genesis 6:22 and 7:5).

While I do not know how many people were living during this time of the flood, it is only reasonable to believe that Noah would have heard many things during his life. He would have likely heard the ridicule of people who were living around him. He would have likely heard their invitations to participate in sin with them. But, Noah decided he was only going to use his ears to hear what God commanded and listen to Him! As a result, Noah and his family were saved from the flood and God was pleased.

Applications

Are you being careful with your ears and what you hear? We have seen how one man’s carelessness with his ears resulted in displeasing the Lord and consequences, and how another man’s carefulness with his ears resulted in pleasing the Lord and salvation. Which one better describes you?

Are you careful to only listen to God’s instructions and obey them? Are you careful not to listen to music, movies, and television programs that use profanity, euphemistic expressions, God’s name in vain, suggestive humor, double talking, etc. that will fill your mind with corrupt speech? Are you careful not to listen to gossip? Are you careful with the friends you keep company with so that your ears will not hear the same types of corrupt language? Are you careful only to willingly subject your ears to that which will help you increase your holiness? O, be careful what you hear!

Careful Hands

A third area of this song pertains to the hands. “O be careful little hands what you do; O be careful little hands what you do; There’s a Father up above; And He’s looking down in love; So, be careful little hands what you do.” Once again, please recognize

that the care demonstrated in what a person does with his/her hands must not only be considered as good advice for children. Instead, this is practical application of Biblical wisdom for all people to consider! Let's consider two examples (one negative and one positive) and then make some applications.

Achan's hands resulted in death

Whenever the Israelites prepared to go into Jericho, Joshua instructed the people, "And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it" (Joshua 6:18). Yet, the defeat Israel encountered at the hands of Ai led Joshua to recognize that someone had disobeyed and taken from the accursed things (things that God wanted to be destroyed). Someone had stolen and hidden some of the accursed things. That individual was Achan.

He later told Joshua, "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it" (Joshua 7:21). And, because Achan did not keep his hands from stealing and hiding these accursed things, not only were 36 men of Israel killed in battle against Ai, but he and his family would also all be killed.

Dorcas' hands were used to serve

In Acts 9, a woman named Tabitha (or, Dorcas) died. She was described as being "full of good works and charitable deeds" (see verse 36). And whenever she had died, there were many who gathered together to mourn her loss. Furthermore, they sent word to Peter, pleading him not to delay in coming. And, whenever Peter came and saw those weeping for her, Peter went in to Dorcas and (by the power of God) raised her from the dead.

Now, I want to specifically consider why so many were weeping over Dorcas' death. When Peter had come, "all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them" (verse 39). She was clearly a servant. She had used her hands to make a

difference and do good. Therefore, she touched the lives of many people by doing what she was capable of doing.

Applications

Are you being careful with your hands and what you do? We have seen how one man's carelessness with his hands resulted in many deaths, and how a woman's carefulness with her hands resulted in leaving an impact on others in God's service. Which one better describes you?

Are you diligent in using your hands to serve God and do good to others? Are you willing to put your hands to work in the service of God? Are you making sure that everything your hands find to do is pleasing to God? Or, are you using your hands for dishonest purposes (i.e. stealing, cheating)? Are you using your hands only for selfish purposes? Are you using your hands as tools to help you commit sin? O, be careful what you do!

Careful Feet

The fourth area of this song pertains to the feet. "O be careful little feet where you go; O be careful little feet where you go; There's a Father up above; And He's looking down in love; So, be careful little feet where you go." Once again, please recognize that the care demonstrated in where a person goes must not only be considered good advice for children. Instead, this is practical application of Biblical wisdom for all people to consider! Let's consider two examples (one negative and one positive) and then make some applications.

Jonah used his feet to run from God's instructions

The word of God came to Jonah, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). God clearly wanted to use Jonah's feet to take His message of warning to the people of Nineveh, so that they would turn from their wickedness.

Yet, Jonah 1:3 says, “But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.” Therefore, Jonah actively used his feet to go in a direction that was contrary to God’s instructions. As a result, God prepared a great fish that would swallow Jonah and release him at the appointed time. Only later would Jonah actually go where the Lord instructed him to go.

Joseph used his feet to run from temptation

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. Eventually, Joseph was in the house of an Egyptian named Potiphar and found favor in his sight. He became head over this man’s house and all that he had was entrusted to Joseph’s care (see Genesis 39).

Over time, Joseph encountered many temptations from Potiphar’s wife. She lusted after Joseph and wanted him to commit adultery with her. However, Joseph was a man of integrity and refused to violate Potiphar’s trust and refused to commit such wickedness and sin against God (see verse 9). Still, Joseph was tempted on a daily basis to lie with her, but he would not give in. One day, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, she “caught him by his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me’” (verse 12). But, the text records that “he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside” (verse 12). He used his feet to get away from temptation!

Applications

Are you being careful with your feet and where you go? We have seen how one man’s carelessness with his feet resulted in displeasing the Lord and being swallowed by a great fish, and how another man’s carefulness with his feet resulted in pleasing the Lord. Which one better describes you?

Are you careful in using your feet to accomplish the purposes of God (i.e. helping those in need, going to those who need the gospel taught to them, going to the assemblies of the local church, etc.)? Are you carefully evaluating each step you take in your life to make sure that God approves of

it? Or, are your feet too lazy to do the good things God wants you to be doing? Are you using your feet to run with people who are up to no good (as pictured in Proverbs 1)? Are you using your feet to walk into temptations rather than to get away from them? Are you using your feet to go places that give the appearance of evil? O, be careful where you go!

Careful Mouth

The fifth area of this song pertains to the mouth. “O be careful little mouth what you say; O be careful little mouth what you say; There’s a Father up above; And He’s looking down in love; So, be careful little mouth what you say.” Once again, please recognize that the care demonstrated in what a person says must not only be considered as good advice for children. Instead, this is practical application of Biblical wisdom for all people to consider! Let’s consider two examples (one negative and one positive) and then make some applications.

Peter used his mouth to deny Jesus

Jesus had foretold that Peter would deny Him. Then, after Jesus was arrested, Matthew 26:69-75 records the Biblical record of the apostle Peter denying Jesus Christ. On three occasions, Peter was given the opportunity to use his mouth to confess his allegiance with Jesus Christ. But, on all three of these occasions, Peter used his mouth to accomplish the exact opposite.

A servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” But, Peter “denied it before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are saying.’” Later, another girl saw him and told those who were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” “But again he denied it with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’” Then, a little later, others came up to Peter and said, “Surely you are also one of them, for your speech betrays you.” But, Peter “began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the Man!’” Then, the rooster crowed – just as Jesus had said would happen whenever Peter denied Him. Recognizing what he had done, Peter “went out and

wept bitterly” because of how he had used his mouth on these three occasions.

Paul and Silas used their mouths to praise God

Paul and Silas were imprisoned because they had been involved in casting out an unclean spirit from a woman who was used by her masters to make money in fortune telling (see Acts 16:16-24). Seeing that their scheme was over, her masters accused Paul and Silas of causing trouble and they were beaten, thrown into prison, and securely kept.

Yet, it is at this moment – beaten, imprisoned, and feet fastened in stocks – that Paul and Silas used their mouths to glorify God. Acts 16:25 says, “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” While many people would prefer to use their mouths to curse God in such a situation, Paul and Silas chose to glorify Him! And, there is implication that how they had used their mouths influenced those who heard them and they would lead the Philippian jailor to become a Christian, along with his household (see Acts 16:26-34).

Applications

Are you being careful with your mouth and what you say? We have seen how one man’s carelessness with his mouth resulted in denying the Lord and how two men’s carefulness with their mouths resulted in glorifying God and the conversion of a jailor and his household. Which one better describes you?

Are you being careless with your words so that you speak corrupt language (i.e. profanity, euphemisms, dirty jokes, etc.)? Are you drawing people toward Jesus with your mouth or pointing them away from Jesus? Are you using your mouth to engage in gossip and tear other people down? Or, are you using your mouth to encourage and build people up in the faith? Are you using your mouth to deny Jesus or confess Him (see Matthew 10:32-33)? Are you using your mouth to help people learn more about Jesus? O, be careful what you say!

The Father Is Watching!

Why does it even matter whether or not we are careful with our eyes, with our ears, with our hands, with our feet, and with our mouths? Listen to the phrase that was repeated in every verse of the song. “There’s a Father up above; And He’s looking down in love; So, be careful...” We must be careful because there is a loving Father in Heaven who wants us to do the right thing – and knows whether or not we choose to do it.

He sees all

Proverbs 15:3 says, “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good.” The Scriptures repeatedly state and demonstrate the truth that God sees everything about our lives. He has perfect knowledge about what we focus our eyes on. He has perfect knowledge about what we listen to. He has perfect knowledge about what we choose to do with our hands. He has perfect knowledge about where we use our feet to take ourselves. And, He has perfect knowledge about how we use our mouths. Although we may think that no one else knows these things, God surely does!

He will judge all

But, why does it matter that God knows all of these things perfectly? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 explains why – and explains our response to this truth. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” There will be a Day on which this all-seeing God will judge us for the things we have intently looked upon with our eyes, the things we have intently listened to with our ears, the things we have done with our hands, the places we have went with our feet, and the words we have said with our mouths. Given this truth, we must focus our careful attention on fearing God and keeping His commandments in all of these areas!

Conclusion

Are you being careful to live your life so as to please God? Please carefully evaluate yourself. Don't just dismiss these important principles of holy living as being applicable to children. Yes, teach them to children. But, first apply them to yourself. The apostle Paul said, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Corinthians 13:5). O, be careful!

Study Questions

What lessons are taught by the children's Bible song, "O Be Careful"? How often do you apply these same lessons to your life?

1. God Expects Us To Be Careful

What did God tell the Israelites about being careful to keep His commandments? Does He expect this same kind of carefulness of people today?

Why do we need to be careful so as to resist temptation?

2. Careful Eyes

Describe David's carelessness with his eyes.

Describe Job's carefulness with his eyes.

What applications can you make to your eyes?

3. Careful Ears

Describe the man of God's carelessness with his ears.

Describe Noah's carefulness with his ears.

What applications can you make to your ears?

4. Careful Hands

Describe Achan's carelessness with his hands.

Describe Dorcas' carefulness with her hands.

What applications can you make to your hands?

5. Careful Feet

Describe Jonah's carelessness with his feet.

Describe Joseph's carefulness with his feet.

What applications can you make to your feet?

6. Careful Mouth

Describe Peter's carelessness with his mouth.

Describe Paul and Silas' carefulness with their mouths.

What applications can you make to your mouth?

7. The Father Is Watching!

How much of your life does God see?

How much of your life will God judge?

***Are you being careful to live your life to please God?**