

Careless Conduct

By Bill Elliff



I didn't pay careful attention. We changed insurance carriers, and the new company denied my diabetes medicine that had been keeping my blood sugar levels in check. I temporarily switched to some "over-the-counter" insulin to use occasionally when my blood sugar spiked.

But I was careless. Going to bed late one night, I noticed my sugars were high despite taking an earlier dose. So,

without looking at how much I should take, I "eyeballed" the syringe and gave myself a healthy dose.

You can't be careless with insulin, as I discovered when I woke up 2 hours later in a full-body sweat. Something was dramatically wrong. I couldn't think, talk, or move well. As I wandered into the den and sat down, I realized I had no energy in my arms and legs. I could literally feel the strength draining from my body by the minute and could barely respond as the paramedics came (you see where this was going). The doctor in the Emergency Room told me, "You're very fortunate. I've had many patients who overdosed on insulin at night and never woke up."

CARELESS

Proverbs has some wisdom about this that is broader in its application than just an insulin shot.

He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, but he who is careless of conduct will die. (Proverbs 19:16)

The word "careless" in the Hebrew can also be described as "despises." It means to "regard lightly, to pay no attention to; to treat flippantly." A wise mother tells her small son not to go too close to the street. But he treats her admonition lightly and is negligent in his steps. There was a reason in her warning and the results of his disobedience can be disastrous.

Any boy or girl, or man or woman who doesn't pay careful attention to what God is saying to them, is playing a dangerous game. Parents direct and warn us for our good, and our heavenly Father knows exactly what He's doing with every single instruction He gives us.

QUENCHING THE SPIRIT

Paul uses the equivalent word in the New Testament as he urges us not to quench (to stop) the Holy Spirit when He speaks to us.

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22)

"When God speaks," Paul says, "Don't take it lightly. Don't ignore it. If you are careless with the Spirit as He's directing you, you will miss His path and may step right into that which will harm you (and miss the glory He has for you!)"

For instance, if you hear a soul-touching sermon from God's Word and the Spirit of God clearly prompts you to do something, don't get in your car, go home, and make no adjustments to your life. God obviously wants to lead you into His ways, but if you are careless in your obedience and treat His instructions lightly, His words will have had no effect. The problem will not be that He didn't lovingly direct, but that you carelessly ignored.

EVERY MOMENT CARE

Are you careless in your conduct? Our lack of instant obedience has disastrous effects, whether we realize it immediately or not. The one who will "keep" (watch over, guard) God's commandments, will "keep his soul," but if you are careless with your conduct "you will die." You will miss the path of life that God has ordained for you. It's not just the spiritual death you could avoid, but the abundant life that you will miss.

There are always consequences to ignoring God. Don't think that despising God in the small things doesn't have an effect. It takes one "no, I don't think so right now" to the promptings of His Spirit and the illumination from His Word to turn from walking by the Spirit to walking by the flesh. (See the dramatically different outcomes of these choices in Galatians 5:16-23).

Be careful today. Pause and talk to the Father before every step however small. More is at stake than you realize in every casual choice of the common day.

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