

# Proverbs 22:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thorns and snares are in the way of the foward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

## Analysis

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The 'foward' (Hebrew 'iqqesh'—twisted, perverse) person's way contains 'thorns and snares.' The righteous who 'keep his soul' stays far from them. The wicked's path is dangerous, while the righteous maintains safe distance. This reflects the Reformed principle of separation from sin. We must not only avoid evil acts but avoid situations and associations that lead to evil. The Hebrew 'shamar nephesh' (keep/guard soul) emphasizes active vigilance in protecting oneself spiritually.

## Historical Context

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Thorns and snares were dangers in ancient travel—thorns causing injury and snares trapping travelers. Using this imagery for the wicked's path emphasized the real, physical dangers of associating with perverse people.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. Are there relationships or situations you need to distance yourself from to 'keep your soul'?

2. How do you balance engaging culture with maintaining separation from sin?
3. What does vigilantly guarding your soul look like practically?

## Interlinear Text

בְּפָשָׁעַ שׁוֹמֵן רַעַק שׁ בְּדַרְעָנָה חַיִם צְבָא יְמִים  
Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward he that doth keep his soul  
H6791 H6341 H1870 H6141 H8104 H5315

מִקְרָם: יְרָם קָרְבָּן  
shall be far H1992  
H7368

## Additional Cross-References

**Proverbs 15:19** (Parallel theme): The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

**Proverbs 16:17** (Parallel theme): The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

**1 John 5:18** (Parallel theme): We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

**Proverbs 19:16** (Parallel theme): He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

**Proverbs 13:15** (Parallel theme): Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

**Job 18:8** (Parallel theme): For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.