

Why Would You Knowingly Step Into Danger?

I never cease to be amazed by the foolish things we humans do—even when we know better. Austria's Archduke Ferdinand could have easily avoided assassination had he taken the obvious steps to protect himself.

Each of could apply that last sentence to ourselves. Repeat after me: **I could have easily avoided sin had I taken the obvious steps to protect myself.**

Let's go back to Archduke Ferdinand. In June 1914, a Serbian dude assassinated Archduke Ferdinand, which triggered the ire of a lot of countries. World War I started and four years later, 17 million people were dead.

OK, it's a little more complicated than that, but you like short blogs. Let me hit the high points of that one day and draw some parallels with our approach to sin and temptation

Archduke Ferdinand was Austro-Hungarian and he came to Bosnia, home to a lot of Serbs—Serbs who did not like the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That means they were also not fans of the archduke. Ferdinand knew this, but he came anyway.

- Ferdinand came to a city teeming with dissidents.
- Ferdinand let the newspaper publish the details of the route he would travel.
- Ferdinand insisted on riding in an open car.

How many times do we, as Christians, venture into areas we have no business going and act like nothing will happen to us? We knowingly step into an area of temptation, but we're confident nothing will happen.

I should point out that Ferdinand was not totally clueless. He took some precaution. He wore seven lucky charms.

"I gave my life to Jesus when I was eight. I read my Bible this morning. I even prayed. It's obvious I love Jesus; I have a plastic fish on the back of my car."

How many times do we rely on past accomplishments—even past victories—and we let down our guard?

So Ferdinand puts his pregnant wife in an open car with him, they traveled down a well-publicized route crowded with dissidents, and—surprise!—he was attacked.

Several members of a terrorist group, The Black Hand Society, were on the route with guns and a bomb. The bomb was thrown, but it bounced off the car before it exploded. Twelve bystanders were wounded, but Ferdinand and Co. speed off.

Now this is where the story gets nuts for me. After his meeting at city hall, Ferdinand decided to get back in the same open car and go back on the same route!

How many times do we get caught up in a temptation or fall into a sin, but once we're past it—say, we've asked for forgiveness—we step back onto the same route full of temptation and sin?

When Ferdinand learned a policeman had been wounded in the earlier attack, Ferdinand wanted to visit the hospital. His driver, however, made a wrong turn and drove down a street where Gavrilo Princip, one of the members of the terrorist group, just happened to be standing. Princip still had his gun, so he took aim and killed Ferdinand and his wife.

All this could've been avoided had the archduke not been foolish and knowingly stepped into harm's way.

Wrong turns happen. Occasionally we find ourselves surrounded by unexpected temptation. But let's be honest: we often pull an "Archduke Ferdinand" and go into areas we know are full of temptations for us. Let's never venture into the world with an attitude that says "I'm spiritual enough" or "I'm strong enough." No, we're not. Only Christ is, which is why we can only "successfully" live the Christian life if we are leaning on Him.

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:10-11).

I know myself, and unfortunately, the enemy knows me too, which is why I will walk moment-by-moment close to Christ and lean on Him.