

Navigating the Hidden Dangers of Life

The water looked calm as far as the eye could see. It reflected the blue sky, creating a scene worthy of a travel brochure. The setting was the Outer Banks, a narrow 200-mile band of barrier islands off the Atlantic Ocean. The depth finder on our boat wasn't working, so it was critically important that we look for channel markers and navigation buoys in the estuaries we traveled through. We had a fishing map on board that showed the low tide water depth in the areas we wanted to travel. Most of the numbers were single digits, so we knew we needed to be careful. To the naked eye, there were areas with a telltale brownish tint to the water, indicating the sandy bottom was close to the surface. If we entered those waters, it would have been too late to avoid running aground. Everywhere we went, we had to be alert to the possibility of hidden dangers below the surface.



Life in our everyday world is full of hidden dangers that lie beyond our view. Something that may look OK from the surface might cause our life to run aground. There are times when we travel along with what appears to be an unobstructed path, but a hidden obstacle can bring us to a screeching halt. When we notice even a hint of danger, just as we observed the brownish tint of the water, it is time to change course *before* entering those areas. Still, life has plenty of hidden and sudden surprises.

What help is there to guide our passage through life? We can't do it without help.

- First, we need to trust in the Lord and allow Him to direct our path. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6)*. God is like the channel markers that we pointed to as we navigated around shallow water. If you think you have life figured out and lean only on your own understanding, you are asking for trouble. We had never boated at the Outer Banks before, and we needed guidance. Each day of our lives contains new experiences in uncharted water. God's guidance can help. Speak to the Lord through prayer and listen for His answers.
- Study the map. We used the navigation map to warn us of the shallow waters. Without it, we would have surely gotten into trouble. Our Bible is the navigation map that points out the dangers of life. It is where you seek God's direction as you proceed through life. *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path (Psalm 119:105)*.
- Seek the guidance of other people of faith. Others have dealt with many of the same issues you face and can speak from experience. We observed the path that other boats our size took, knowing that many had been here before. God has placed people of faith in your life for you to seek good counsel. Everyone has an opinion, so seek those whose guidance is from God and not their opinion. *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed (Proverbs 15:22)*. *Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps errs (Proverbs 19:2)*. *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice (Proverbs 12:14)*.

Life isn't perfect. There will be times when you run aground. Avoid being stubborn and trying to solve every problem yourself. Prepare for life through prayer, the study of God's Word, and faith-led advisors. All act as channel markers to guide you through the difficult passages of life.

Questions: How do you seek the Lord's guidance for your life? To whom do you go for spiritual advice?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. Our lives are full of hidden dangers. Guide us through your Word and the wise spiritual counsel of others you place in our path. Amen.