



[Proverbs 8:36](#)

(36) But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;
All those who hate me love death."
New King James Version

This is a sobering conclusion. We do not like to think of ourselves as loving death, but consider this in relation to [Proverbs 21:16](#): "A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead." A person who wanders and makes no conscious effort to get back on the track—no effort to repent—is drifting with the current. Because he is not really taking advantage of the great gift he has been given in understanding the purpose of [God](#), he loves death.

The Bible consistently shows that those who do not consciously and purposefully direct their lives toward obedience to God in reality love death rather than life. [Christ](#) came to give us life. He gave us a way that we are to follow. He expects that we will make the efforts to do so. If we neglect it, can we say that we are really following His way? If we just drift, can we honestly say that we really love His way? The conclusion, from God's point of view, is that those who are just drifting—neglecting—in fact, love death.

We should not feel comfortable with this at all. God intends that we take the admonition and begin to do something with our lives. When this happens, in reality, human nature has deceived the person about his purpose in life. His drifting is evidence of what the person really loves.

In light of this, it is interesting that the words most commonly used both in the Old and New Testaments to indicate sin are defined as "missing the mark." That does not sound as though someone has deliberately aimed in the wrong direction but that they have generally aimed in the right direction but missed the target.

Another word that is also translated as "sin" means "to slip, to fall, or to wander from the path." There is no indication of deliberateness at all, but that either out of weakness or

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ignorance, somehow or another, a person unconsciously turns aside. Nobody slips and falls on purpose, nor does anybody wander out of the way on purpose because he might become lost.

God understands human nature, that it has a tendency to want to hold itself steady, deceiving a person into thinking that things are okay the way they are.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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