



Moving from Avoidance to Advancement

by John Himmelberger

Intro

When faced with opposition, we're not called to avoid—it's our mandate to advance. In *Moving from Avoidance to Advancement*, we confront how fear masquerades as wisdom and how avoidance causes us to forfeit Kingdom ground. Jesus never retreated from darkness, and neither should we. This teaching equips you to move forward with boldness, compassion, and authority—redeeming what's been lost and stepping into your God-given assignment without fear. It's time to stop shrinking back and start moving forward.

My Intention and Assumptions

I hope that your relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is strengthened through this teaching. My assumption is that you have read or are reading all 66 books of the Bible for context. This is meant to be 'salt' and make you thirsty. You're welcome.

About the Author

John Himmelberger is a teacher, pastor, and lifelong learner. With decades of experience walking with Jesus and leading others into transformational truth, John brings a grounded yet radical perspective rooted in Scripture, personal growth, and kingdom living.

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Moving from Avoidance to Advancement

Theme:

We weren't called to survive or sidestep—we're called to advance. The Kingdom doesn't shrink back when confronted; it moves forward with authority, love, and truth. Avoidance forfeits ground. Advancement reclaims it.

I. The Problem with Avoidance

Key Point: Avoidance feels safe but leads to spiritual paralysis.

- Avoidance is often fear pretending to be wisdom.
- The early church didn't avoid hardship; they advanced through it.
- When we avoid:
 - **We miss divine appointments** (Acts 8:26-40 — Philip didn't avoid the eunuch).
 - **We allow darkness to occupy space we were meant to fill.**
 - **We reinforce fear cycles in ourselves and others.**

Scripture:

- **Hebrews 10:39 (AMP):**
"But our way is not that of those who shrink back to destruction, but we are of those who believe...and by this confident faith preserve the soul."
→ The opposite of shrinking back is moving forward with confident faith.

Teaching Note:

Fear makes you believe retreat is wisdom. Faith makes you see forward movement as obedience.

II. Advancement is the Nature of the Kingdom

Key Point: The Kingdom is always advancing, never retreating.

- **Matthew 11:12 — "The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."**
→ The idea here is active pursuit, not passive existence.
- **Jesus advanced into places others avoided:**
 - The leper (Mark 1:40-45)
 - The Samaritan woman (John 4)
 - The demoniac (Mark 5)
- The gates of hell are defensive—we are the ones moving against them.

- **Matthew 16:18** — “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”

Teaching Note:

Gates don't chase you. If you're encountering them, it's because you're moving toward them.

III. What Advancement Requires

1. Discernment with Boldness

- Not every open door is God—but hiding behind “discernment” is cowardice if it means you never move.
- Boldness is a byproduct of trust, not personality.

2. Compassion with Conviction

- Compassion compels us to act.
- Conviction keeps us rooted in truth while we love.
- Jesus never compromised compassion or conviction—and neither should we.

3. Truth with Authority

- Advancement isn't about arguing—it's about carrying authority rooted in truth.
- Truth without love is harsh; love without truth is hollow.
- You are authorized by Jesus Himself (Matthew 28:18-20).

Scripture:

- **2 Timothy 1:7 (AMP):**
“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity...but [a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment...”

Teaching Note:

The church isn't advancing because of better strategies—it advances when people walk in bold truth, Spirit-led love, and unshakable authority.

IV. Activation & Reflection Questions

- Where have I been shrinking back instead of advancing?
- What's one place God is asking me to stop avoiding?

- Am I waiting for permission God has already given me in His Word?
 - Where do I need to step forward this week—in conversation, prayer, relationship, or influence?
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Declaration:

I was not made to shrink back. I am called to advance the Kingdom with boldness, love, and authority. I move forward—not in fear, but in faith. The gates of hell will not prevail against the advance of the King through me.

Activations:

- Ask people to write down one area they've been avoiding.
- Pray together for courage and wisdom.
- Invite each person to declare out loud, "I advance in Jesus' name."