

It Is Written

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Put to Death What is Earthly In You

By Edwin Crozier

Having explained his own work in ministering the gospel (Colossians 1:24-2:5) and then expounded the need to maintain a stable and steadfast faith (Colossians 2:6-3:4), Paul moves to the third leg of this letter laid out back in Colossians 1:21-23. He describes the need to move from hostility to holiness (Colossians 3:5-4:6).

We don't want to be taken captive by seemingly plausible arguments of worldly philosophies. We don't need to be concerned about those who judge us regarding Sabbaths, new moons, festivals, and kosher laws. We don't need to submit to multiplied rules that have no purpose but to simply restrict us with asceticism and severity to the body. However, we are to eliminate some behaviors and attitudes. And not just "kind of" get rid of, not merely diminish, "put to death." We are to kill them (Colossians 3:5).

This killing of earthly members is not merely about multiplying restrictive rules to simply deny the desires of our flesh. Rather, it is part of the process of shifting our desires. Because we are transforming from worldly-minded to heavenly-minded, some weights and burdens simply have to be dropped. Not merely because they are "against the rules," but because they hinder and destroy seeking the things above and setting our mind on things above. They weigh us down and lead us away from Christ (which is why God has made many of these things "against the rules"). As we become increasingly delighted with Christ, we will naturally drop these earthly attitudes and actions. And if we refuse to drop them, we will simply not learn to delight more and more in Christ.

If we want to be renewed in knowledge after the image of our creator, we will abandon sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, idolatry, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and dishonesty. No doubt, when we were outside of Christ, we walked in these things because they seemed to lead to what we delighted in. But as our delight changes, these actions and attitudes must change as well. At the same time, our delight won't change if we continue to court these behaviors and attitudes.

The struggle for us is how the personal choice and the natural growth intermix and overlap. For instance, alcoholics are told they won't quit being alcoholics if they keep drinking. It seems to go without saying, but it has to be said, they won't stop drinking unless they stop drinking. At the same time, as long as they are an alcoholic, they will struggle to quit drinking. The recovering alcoholic, however, doesn't just wait around until the desire to drink goes away. He or she decides to quit. Develops plans to quit. Pours out their stash of booze. Tells others they are quitting. Then, when the desire arises, they have to decide not to drink. Yet, at the same time, this recovering alcoholic does work that transforms his or her attitude toward drink, making the decision to avoid drink easier as long as he or she continues to do that work. They don't quit drinking merely because it is against the rules; they quit because they know drinking leads them away from what they most desire. As they continue in that work, they seek sobriety and set their mind on sobriety in a way that changes them to be sober. The personal decision and the natural growth intermix and overlap, feeding each other in an upward spiral of growing sobriety.

Further, those involved in overcoming alcoholism learn that half measures avail nothing. They need to put drink to death, or it will kill them. This is a great illustration of discipleship living in general. Half measures avail nothing. We want to be with Christ and like Christ. We must choose to quit behaviors and attitudes that lead us away from Christ. Further, as we continue to grow, our transforming delight will make transformation easier.

But where does it all begin? By putting to death what is earthly. We don't wait around for the transformation to happen on its own. We take up arms against sin and start cutting off what leads us to sin

and away from Christ.

Is there anything you need to put to death today?

Abuse of the Lord's Supper

By Leslie Diestelkamp

It is quite obvious that many Christians who may be quite devoted in other ways, do indeed "miss the mark" with regard to the Lord's Supper. Consider the following:

1. The attitude and practice of some brethren indicate that they expect forgiveness of their sins of the past week because they have had the supper on Sunday. But the Lord's Supper is not at all intended to bring pardon of sins. The body and blood which we remember in the supper were given for our forgiveness, but when we eat and drink at the Lord's table, we do that as a memorial: "this do in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:25).

2. As a consequence of this attitude, some seem to feel that if they cannot have the Lord's Supper on a given Sunday, they will not be forgiven and will be in jeopardy until the next opportunity. Of course, if we cannot assemble with the disciples, we do indeed miss an opportunity to "show the Lord's death till he come." The Lord knows when we can't do it, and he knows why, but he does not expect the impossible.

3. The New Testament pattern for the supper portrays the disciples coming together for this purpose – to remember – and show forth our remembrance – together. For instance, we never read of Paul (or any other disciples) having the Lord's Supper privately or in any other circumstances while they traveled, except when they were able to meet with the assembled brethren.

Now let us briefly summarize: There is certainly great benefit in regular observance of the Lord's Supper, for every remembrance means never forgetfulness. Deliberate absence from the supper means, not only loss of benefit, but disobedience regarding the Lord's directive. Besides the preciousness of this significant memorial of the death of Christ, we have the additional benefit of fellowship in togetherness with those of like precious faith. Obviously, the Lord intended for the supper **to bring us together**:

- "that ye come together..." (I Corinthians 11:17);
- "when ye come together in the church..." (I Corinthians 11:18);
- "When ye come together therefore in one place..." (I Corinthians 11:20);
- "when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another..." (I Corinthians 11:33).

"He Restrained Them Not"

By John Iverson

Do you think juvenile delinquency is an evil that is peculiar to our day? If so, then you would do well to read your Bible, particularly such passages as are found in the book of First Samuel.

Eli was judge in Israel and a priest of the living God. When he grew old, instead of his children being a source of joy to that religious leader of olden days, they caused him much heartache and grief. After Eli had heard of the almost unimaginable sins which his sons committed--as recorded in First Samuel 2:22--he said unto them, "Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people...it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress" (1 Samuel 2:23,24).

What a tragedy! The sons of this "man of God" were a stumblingblock to the Lord's people! However, the sons (though vile and wicked indeed) were not altogether to blame, for we are told in First Samuel 3:13, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Eli did not "curb" his children. He apparently just let them have their way. Perhaps he had the idea that "boys will be boys." Yes, but those boys grew up to be men — "vile men"!

This case alone should be enough to convince us parents that placing restrictions upon our children is needful if we expect them to grow up to be useful citizens and individuals whose manner of life will be worthy of "the gospel of Christ."