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Despise Not The Small Things

By Clovis Ragsdale

In Zechariah 4:10, this question is asked, who shall despise the day of small things? The Bible is a record of man's constant failure and God's constant mercy. It portrays God's delight in using small weak things to accomplish his purpose. Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:26-29, "for behold your calling brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God."

Christ said: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Matt. 16:10. Christ stressed trivial things such as, the cup of cold water, the jot of the law, and the one talent.

Our natural environment is made up of small things such as, grains of sand, drops of water, and atoms. In the spiritual realm the small things play as important a role as in natural things. We should be attentive to the small things as well as the bigger things.

Jesus started as an infant and grew to be the Savior of the World. The Church began with only a few thousand believers and spread to include all the world. Much of the work of the church consists of little things in the eyes of man but is important in the eyes of God. Failure to attend all the services of a congregation where you worship may seem small in importance to some, but the only thing small about it is your love for the Lord. Failure to give as you are prospered may seem unimportant but it is robbing God. A careless word spoken without forethought may drive someone away from Christ and send a soul to hell.

The command to be baptized is considered unimportant and even so foolish as to not be obeyed by many but it is plainly written and often referred to in the New Testament as being a part of God's plan for the salvation of ones sould in our time. So much of the Christian life is made up of small things and because

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Reacting Against Extremes

In studying, in so far as information was available to me, why some have gone out from us, it became evident that some individuals held extreme positions and that in reacting against extreme positions they did two things. First, they attributed the extremes to the church and therefore felt that it was necessary to leave the church. Second, they went into other extremes. They did not cease to be extremists. They just changed what they were extreme about. What are some of the extremes against which some react?

One preacher said that he finally realized that he had been trying to live by his own desired, including the desire to be "a successful church worker." One should desire to do all things, which are right, through Christ who strengthens us. Yet it is possible for anyone, including preachers obviously, to do some right acts from wrong motives. Their rewards will be from men and not from God. A preacher may get a carnal thrill out of telling people off; out of the praise which some give him; and out of a feeling that he is right and they are wrong. One should want to be right but not to satisfy a self-righteous desire. We should love, seek and possess truth and be possessed by truth but we should not exalt ourselves because we have truth. One should use knowledge in love. This particular preacher evidently felt a need to surrender to the Lord but the solution was not in surrendering to some inward impulses and voices he thinks are supernatural manifestations of God to him. To surrender to the Lord means that we shall also diligently study his word and not be satisfied with just anything which some assume is found in his word.

Second, he reacted against the attitude of "forcing all men to accept my opinions." We ought to want to share truth with others, including the truth on baptism. We should also exhort men and be constrained both by the love of God and the fear of God. However, we should not try to force truth on them; much less should we try to force on them our opinions. We should seek to share truth in as effective way as possible but trying to force it on people will not get the job done. Certainly one does not have to

leave the church in order to abandon the desire to force things on others.

Third, he reacted against the ignorance of some concerning the Spirit. Some have neglected what the Bible teaches on the Spirit, and although no one can fully understand the Spirit all of us need to continue to study what the Bible teaches about the Spirit. Because some have neglected this study we do not have the right to react to the point where we think that we are inspired by the Spirit.

Fourth, this preacher said that he was distressed by his "obvious lack" of the fruit of the Spirit. We are sure all of us have room to bear more of the fruit of the Spirit. However, there are some who feel that if one is a Christian he ought in some way to so live out of himself and out of the world that he has no need to struggle much against sin. Some assume that they should automatically and without effort bear the fruit of the Spirit. But the Christian's life is a battle not only against foes without but against foes within.

The Christian's life is one of growth, and some may expect too much of themselves too soon. As one grows one becomes more and more aware of the room which he has for growth in character and in knowledge. If one is not thoughtful about the matter he may conclude that he is going backward spiritually. At one time he did not realize how much he lacked, and may have thought that he was close to maturity. But the more he grows the more he realizes that he has room for growth. And we grow, not by inward impulses or feelings—although some feelings may stimulate us to grow—but through observing the laws of spiritual growth. These laws have been revealed by the Spirit in his word. Concern about our lack of spiritual growth should not result in our taking the position that we are miraculously guided by the Spirit or that the Spirit relieves us of our responsibility to bear the fruit and bears it for us without our having to do anything. Instead, we should utilize the means and motivations which the Spirit has revealed in order to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

—James D. Bales.

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What I Could Do If I Wanted To:

1. If I wanted to, I could help make the church one of the most wide-awake and working churches in all the world.
2. If I wanted to, I could visit members who are sick and if possible find other ways to help them.
3. If I wanted to, I could show a lot more devotion in worship and receive a lot more from them myself.
4. If I wanted to, I would attend Bible Classes regularly and encourage others to attend.
5. If I wanted to, I would profit more from the sermon by not resenting the truth when it reveals my weaknesses.
6. If I wanted to, I could use my efforts to help promote the greatest possible harmony in the church.
7. If I wanted to, I could tell others about Christ and His church, and lead them to salvation — at least my actions would always speak for Him.
8. If I wanted to, I could give back to the Lord each Lord's Day as I have been prospered; thereby helping to spread the gospel of Christ into all the world.

Of course this all depends on what I want to do! I have the ability to be an honored servant of the Greatest of all Kings, but the question is "What do I really want to do?" —Copied

Despise Not The Small Things(Cont.)

many overlook the trivial things they are failing in the bigger things also. Some look only for the big things which they cannot attain and because they cannot do nothing. Attending to small things often prepares us to then do bigger things.

Likewise, Christians are not to stress the little things to the exclusion of the bigger things. The Jews were guilty in some cases of doing this very thing. Matt. 23:23, "Woe unto you, scribes and

The Preacher's Obligations and Influence

There is no one in a congregation who exercises more influence than the preacher, not even an elder. This influence can be good or bad, willingly or unwillingly, but never the less there is great influence. The preacher often gets his influence and authority mixed up and often feels that it is his authority which is getting the job done rather than his influence. This is when his influence becomes harmful instead of good. The preacher is to conduct himself in such a manner as to show that he FIRST has come under the influence of his OWN teaching, granting of course that ALL teaching is true to God's word. As Jesus, during his mission on earth, the preacher should FIRST practice Christianity himself, THEN teach others to do like-wise. He must remember at all times that he may have as good a knowledge of the Bible as any member of the congregation, but his judgment is NOT better than the entire congregation. This often happens when the preacher is trying to "put over" one of his projects and the church believes for some reason it is not best and then the preacher "bucks" the church on matters of opinion or judgment. He MUST remember his teaching and influence are the ONLY tools God gave a preacher to accomplish the Lord's work.

OBLIGATION TO GOD FIRST! A preacher's obligation is FIRST to God, to be true to his word and STAND on the revealed word of God AGAINST ALL MEN. When it comes to matters of faith the preacher has but one choice and ONE obligation, that is to STAND FAST, regardless of who, or how many are against him. Be sure he is WITH GOD, then be unmovable! Through teaching,

pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

A good baseball player is one who can hit, run, field, and throw. To be deficit in any one of these abilities diminishes the players usefulness to his team. A Christian needs to give attention to all things to pertain unto Godliness, both great and small.

The disciples of our Lord were concerned with who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven and the Lord told them that unless they became as little children they could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Christian life is an humble life and is made up of many little things. The little things are not to be despised.

admonish others to also stand with God, but if they refuse he still MUST be true to the BIBLE. If a man is not prepared to do this he should NEVER accept the responsibility to represent himself as the servant of God. He will find times when he is lonely, as only a few will stand with him, but STAND he must!

O B L I G A T I O N T O CONGREGATION! When a preacher moves his family to a city to work with a congregation of the Lord's people he is taking on one of the most solemn obligations it is possible to accept. In order to discharge this responsibility he must be a man of courage, conviction, deep and unwavering faith, confidence, integrity, ability, humility, honesty, self discipline, love of God, love of the truth, love of people and love of lost souls, willing to work and capable of planning and of utilizing his time to the greatest advantage, sensitive and alert to take advantage of every opportunity for good, yet "thick skinned" to unjust criticism. He must become a PART of the congregation, not an outsider who is looking for support for his family for a year or two. He should neither feel superior nor inferior to any person in the congregation: should never "play" one member against the other, but LOVE them all and be willing to do as much for one member as another, the need being equal. He MUST KNOW the word of God and BE sure he is a safe teacher. This does not mean a know-it-all, who refuses to be "crossed" and there is no question, nor appeal, when he speaks. Those with that attitude are UNFIT to teach any one! But it DOES mean many hours of honest study and research. HE MUST BE QUALIFIED AND USE IT IN HUMILITY AND LOVE! AN HONEST DAYS WORK, EVERY DAY, SHOULD BE HIS MOTTO, AND LIVE BY IT!

OBLIGATION TO SELF! The preacher's obligation to himself is also important. He has an obligation to present himself as intellectual, spiritually dedicated, mentally alert, physically sound and morally pure. His ideals and standards should be those revealed for a Christian in the Bible. He must be SOLD on his product! He must be honorable in all business dealings and his word MUST be his BOND! He must at all times live so as to be an asset to Christianity! IN OTHER WORDS HE MUST BE, AND LIVE, IN SUCH MANNER AS ALL MAY KNOW THE "PRODUCT" CARRIES AN HONEST LABEL! HE CAN DO NO LESS AND BE WORTHY OF THE NAME "GOSPEL PREACHER".

Glynn V. Purdy

By Faith Abraham Went Out

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and went out, not knowing whether he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.", Hebrews 11:8-10.

Here we learned that Abraham did receive a call from God, instructing him to leave his home and GO into a land that God would show him. The land at this time was NOT KNOWN to Abraham, therefore he went BY FAITH. Gen. 12 should be read here. God promised to GIVE Abraham and his posterity a land, yet Abraham had to GO and obey God, and later his posterity had to FIGHT for every inch of this land! Does this VOID the land as being "by faith", NO, of course not, for "faith without WORKS is DEAD", James 2:24. Everyone must OBEY Christ to be saved today, Heb. 5:8-9.

Abraham, like us today, was LOOKING for a city, which God has built. God's law then, as the New Testament today, was God's instructions concerning this city, including the instructions to go there. Then, as now, not those who said "Lord, Lord", entered the city, but those who "DID" the will of the Lord, Matt. 7:21; Heb. 3:19.

Abraham BELIEVED God, but it was not until this faith MOVED him to OBEY God, that his faith was "imputed unto him for righteousness", James 2:23. It was when his faith was "wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect", James 2:22. Man must "work righteousness", not BELIEVE righteousness, to please God, Acts 10:34-35. God's righteousness is REVEALED in the Gospel, Rom. 1:17. ARE YOU OBEYING GOD?

By Faith Moses Forsook Egypt

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible", Heb. 11:27. From verses 23 through 26, we are told WHY Moses chose to serve God, rather than the king of Egypt. Yet it was ALL "by faith". Because Moses walked by faith, does this mean that he had to "only believe" and once he had believed, he only had to wait for salvation? NO, NOT AT ALL! His faith had to WORK!

Moses, when he reached manhood, made a choice! This is what Joshua admonished the people to do in his day, "choose you this day whom you will

LET'S SHOW THAT WE CARE

By Paul Laman

An alarm goes off... a man is lost in the swamp! People are concerned. Little huddles of anxious men and women are seen everywhere. Important appointments are temporarily canceled, jobs are left. WHY? Because a man is in DANGER! Unless he is found he will die! There is widespread concern for his physical safety.

Of course this is the way we should act in regard to our fellowman. But how tragic to hear the alarm of God's Word, which tells us that men are lost in the mire and swamp of SIN and no one gets excited! Oh, there might be a few Christians who would say, "It's a shame," "How terrible," "Too bad," but never really get concerned enough to do something. Do we have the burden of the LOST on our hearts? DO WE REALLY CARE? Are we CONCERNED to the point of being ANXIOUS? Are we ready to SACRIFICE sleep, time and money as we search for those LOST in SIN? I wonder, am I showing by my LIFE that I don't want ANYONE to go to HELL? (Or am I just saying it?)

Let us sound forth the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in all the world and to every creature. Then, and only then, will be SHOWING THAT WE REALLY CARE!

—North Little Rock

serve", Joshua 24:15. This is the BIG problem today, millions are seeking a type of immunity from Hell, through religion, without having really chosen to serve God! Once a person has truly chosen to SERVE God, there is no problem as to whether salvation is by faith, or works, or both, it is a simple matter of, "Lord what would thou have me to do"? To study his will, to know his will and then OBEY him in ALL things.

After Moses made his choice to serve God, he then had to GO SERVE GOD. This service was BY FAITH, but he still had to GO and DO the things required by God. It was not enough to believe that God COULD save him and WANTED to save him, he had to DO HIS PART. He WENT to Egypt, DID all God told him to do, led the people out of this land and led them for forty years toward the promised land. Did this VOID his salvation as being "by faith"? The answer is "NO". It was ONLY when his faith was "wrought" with his works that his faith pleased God!

As long as a person thinks that this commandment, or that commandment from God is not essential to his salvation, and is only willing to obey the commandments which HE THINKS ESSENTIAL, HE HAS NOT YET CHOSEN TO SERVE GOD! GVP

Modesty an Issue

By Bill Jones

If we were to select a scripture to describe our times, what would it be? A nation reaching toward immorality, people who are no longer concerned about the future of their children. I wish we were a people loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind and with all our strength, but is this true of our times? What has happened to those who are members of Christ's Body when they accept and join with the moving tide of worldliness?

The Old Testament speaks about a generation of confused values and morals who "called evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. This scripture Isaiah 5:20, portrays our times with sobering frankness. What was once branded scarlet is now white as the innocence of a little child. Impurity and immorality and also immodesty are no longer frowned upon by the public.

The Church as well as the nation is fast welcoming impurity. That is the way with sin. First it shocks and shames us, then we ignore its awful toll and finally we fondle and embrace it. I believe we are in the fondling and embracing stage now. From all appearances the Church has accepted impurity and I believe the evidence for this is immodesty.

Ladies, immodesty is still condemned in the word of God regardless of what the current styles are. In 1 Tim. 2:9-10 we read, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array but that which becometh women professing godliness with good works." It is difficult for me or you to accept the current apparel as "that which becometh women professing godliness." When Jesus said in Mt. 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world" and in Mt. 5:13, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and Paul in Rom. 12:2 said "be not conformed to this world," we get the idea that a Christian is to be different. He is to be different in speech, actions and dress. Paul in writing to Timothy, in 1 Tim. 4:12 said this: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. A Christian is to be an example to the world, not one who conforms with it.

When we speak of immodesty, we are speaking not only of the hemline on dresses, but shorts, clothing that is too tight, anything that is immodest, even immodest thinking. All of us know modest apparel from immodest apparel. If all of us know, then why don't we "obey God rather than men."

Melbourne, Ark.

Sowing and Reaping

One of the immutable laws of God is found recorded in Gal. 6:7-8. It states, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." There has been a great deal of discussion about this verse as to when this reaping takes place — in this life, or in eternity. Personally I am of the opinion that this truth is two-fold, now and in eternity. I think various examples throughout the scriptures bear out this reasoning.

I would like to take the liberty to apply this reasoning to both the Christian and the non-Christian even though I realize that God judges them that are without (I Cor. 5:13) and that most of the examples of the scriptures are of individuals in a covenant relation with God.

1. Adam and Eve sowed to the flesh at one time and paid for it for the rest of their lives.
2. King Saul disobeyed God, sowed to the flesh, and paid for it for years, finally losing his kingdom.
3. David sowed to the flesh and the sword never departed from his house.
4. Eli the high priest failed to control his children and properly exercise priestly duties and paid for it.
5. Peter was promised, for all sacrifices of the faithful follower, that he would receive in this life 100 fold; in the life to come eternal life.

I think it evident from these examples and others that must come to your mind that sowing necessarily implies the reaping of that which was sown: — whether of the Spirit unto life or of the flesh unto corruption.

We as parents seem to be very negligent in informing our children of this law of God regarding sowing and reaping. We usually pass it off with a flick of the hand and the statement that, "They are just sowing their wild oats." But, don't we realize that they must also reap the fruits of that sowing? Such reaping can never be pleasant and can bring only heartache and unhappiness.

The concept that we will not reap until judgment does cause many to continue to live in a careless way with the thought that they will enjoy this type of living and then before it is too late they will repent and all this will be forgotten and they will not have to reap their bad fruit. But, young people, adults, and all, remember, "Be sure, your sin will find you out." God may not settle his accounts in October but "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It may be tomorrow, next week, next year or ten years from now, but we will reap what we sow!

Dean Fuggett

Where There Is A Will With God's Help There Is A Way

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not", 2 Cor. 8:12. This was spoken by Paul concerning helping those in need, but the principal is good in all our labors for God. If God requires a thing, then with His help we can do it! Too many people refuse to become Christians because they have decided that they can "not hold out". Many Christians are "afraid" to try to do anything for fear it "won't do any good".

GOD CAN USE OTHERS, BUT WE NEED TO DO THE WORK. When the Israelites were in Egypt, God needed a man to deliver them. Today it is the same! There are millions in spiritual bondage, who need to be led to God. God has called for someone to GO! Sure He CAN send someone else, but YOU and I MUST go if we save our own souls! The soul you save will be your own! God could have called thousands of men to go into Egypt, but Moses received the call and Moses NEEDED to answer the call. Moses, like many today, did not have a WILLING MIND. He DID NOT consider God's ABILITY to SUPPLY ALL his needs. When God called him, God made ALL THE NECESSARY arrangements for the effort to be successful. Moses had only a "ROD", but in GOD'S HAND it was ALL that was needed! There might have been men with more ability than Moses but with God's help he did the job that God wanted done. Today, others may have more ability than I, but with whatever ability I have, with God's help it is enough to do what God requires me to do. God can use YOU right now, just as you are. You CAN serve God, you NEED to serve Him and NOW is the time. You of course must have a WILLING MIND.

WE ARE FIGHTING A WAR WITH THE DEVIL FOR CONTROL OF THE SOULS OF MEN.

What can YOU offer as a weapon? The Israelites were in a death struggle for control of their very lives. They had modern weapons of the day, but not a "willing mind" to use them. God was ready to grant victory to his people, but they were NOT ready to receive it. It took David, with ONLY a sling and a WILLING MIND, to accept the victory in God's name! David was not "skilled" in the use of the weapons of war, so he took off the armor. He realized that if the POWER was IN THE WEAPONS, then the soldiers did not need him, for they HAD the weapons! But the very best weapons today, talent, money, experience, or even opportunity, without

FIRST A WILLING MIND, are worthless. David knew that it took MORE than ability to fight, he knew that there must be FIRST a willing mind. With David's sling and willing mind, God claimed the victory that Israel desired but could not have with their weapons without a willing mind. With God's help, David's sling was enough! David took the little stone, placed it in his sling, then threw it in the name of the Lord. THAT IS ALL HE COULD DO; HIS WORK WAS THROUGH, THE REST WAS UP TO GOD! GOD GUIDED THE STONE TO THE TARGET. Remember, God could have killed the giant WITHOUT David, but He CHOSE David to THROW the stone. Today, God COULD have saved the world any way he chose, but He CHOSE to do it with the Gospel of Christ. We must slay the enemy with the "sword of the Spirit". God could destroy the power of the Devil some other way, but He CHOSE the "sword of the Spirit" which is the WORD OF GOD! If the enemy is killed, Christians must do it. If souls are saved, Christians must do it! This is God's way. It is NOT what God COULD HAVE DONE, but what He HAS done and DOES do today. Christians must SPEAK the Gospel and God will guide it to the target, the hearts of men. But unless we SPEAK it, there is no "stone" to be guided. Too many times we do not trust God to guide the Gospel, by saying, "I can't", or "It won't do any good". Behind all of our excuses is the fact that we DO NOT HAVE A WILLING MIND, FOR IF WE DID, WE WOULD TEACH THE GOSPEL AND TRUST GOD TO GIVE US VICTORY!

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