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“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

November 2020

No. 419

ROUND TUITS

We are not too different from Felix; from housework to homework, we like to put things off until a more convenient time (Acts 24:25). We always tell ourselves we’ll get around to it someday. Unfortunately, someday never seems to come. This procrastination is part of our human nature, and it’s something almost all can relate to and joke about. Several have either given or received a prank gift, a “round tuit”- a circular object that has “tuit” stamped on it - to commemorate our inability to get things done when we should or say we will. What about when we can’t get spiritual things done, things which

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affect our soul and relationship with God? There are two major reasons we fail to get to things when we should: 1) we think we're capable enough to walk away and get back to it later; and 2) we have our priorities misaligned.

How many times have you walked into a room with a handful of things and just set everything down wherever you could find space? Maybe you put it in that precious "everything" or "junk" drawer we all seem to have. You were in a rush or you were exhausted, so you told yourself you would find a place for it later and walked away. Now, how often have you watched that one thing or that one small pile turn into a big pile? Inevitably, by the time you finally get that rare, valuable "round tu-it," you start to wonder how the mess got so out of hand. A problem we could have prevented with a few minutes up front turns into a daylong project of cleaning and organizing. We often hide it under the clever name of "Spring cleaning." The problem was not initially setting the pile down; the problem was walking away.

We should be keenly aware that laziness in general is of no profit to us (Pro. 13:4), but it's our reliance on our misguided (in)ability to clean up a mess after we've walked away from it that gets us into trouble; it's what turns a pile of disorganization into a mountain. Whether it's a pile of clothes, a stack of papers, or that "everything" drawer, the longer we wait, the worse it gets. The more we tell ourselves that we will handle it later or eventually, the worse it gets. Sin in our life works the same way as these messes. Although willful sin should not enter our lives, we are human and err. Repentance should come right away. If we walk away and count on working on getting that sin out of our lives later, this small pile will become a mountain. If we don't put that single sin away right away, it can lead to a continued temptation we struggle to overcome; it can become an addiction. Now, we are no longer serving God; we are imprisoned to serving the flesh.

We cannot forget who we are, and perhaps more importantly what we are in need of. We are flawed and imperfect, which is why Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was necessary in the first place:

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Rom. 3:23-24)

If we have believed and obeyed the gospel, becoming a servant of God and His will, we essentially fail to fulfill our side of a binding contract. We say we love and serve God, yet these mountains of unresolved sin in our life indicate we've broken our vow to serve Him, and we remain imprisoned to the shackles of the flesh. In the Mosaic dispensation, God warned his people to live to the vow you made or remain indebted to the wages of sin, which are death.

When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. (Deu. 23:21)

Erring and sinning is human. Sinning and walking away until we get around to repentance renders us "slack to pay it." Paul warns us not to become indebted by using our time wisely.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (Eph. 5:15-17)

We see the word "redeem" often with coupons, rebates, or sales promotions. These coupons are always for a limited time, and if you fail to redeem within the limited timeframe, you do not reap its benefits. Similarly, if we fail to make use of the limited time we have on this earth to put our sin away, we won't receive the massive discount of forgiveness brought by

God's grace in the form of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some of the most organized people we know, whether it be well planned schedules or a tidy house, share a similar philosophy best summarized in the saying "a place for everything, and everything in its place." Sometimes our piles of clutter and disorganization result because we don't have a dedicated place for it. This is how that aforementioned junk drawer develops. Sin has a place. Temptations and the traps in which we commonly fall through human imperfection have a place. It just so happens that place is not within us. We'll keep a cleaner, more organized soul if we put that sin in its place, which is as far from us as we can get it. We cannot depend on ourselves to be good enough to come back to the small pile when we find a more convenient time - remember, we're human. We have to put it away now, and avoid the small clutter in our soul before it ever grows into a fully developed mess that has overtaken our house.

It's more tempting to walk away and let the small pile grow into a mountain when there are other things we either think we need to do or would rather do. This is our second failing of why we cannot get things done: Wrong priorities. Next month, we'll see that focusing our daily efforts in the wrong direction does nothing to help organize the clutter from which we initially walked away, and in fact, it creates more clutter in our spiritual house.

BEN

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What did God initially give man to eat?
2. What was the name of Abraham's nephew?
3. Which king in the Old Testament built the first temple in Jerusalem?
4. Where was Jonah when he prayed to God with the voice of thanksgiving?
5. What event did Peter, James and John witness in a mountain with Jesus?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH. . .

And remember last month's questions?

1. Which son did Jacob not send to Egypt for grain during the famine? BENJAMIN (Gen. 42:4)
 2. What happened to Elimelech in Moab? HE DIED (Ruth 1:3)
 3. What was the relationship of Mary (mother of Jesus) to Elisabeth? COUSIN (Luke 1:36)
 4. In which town was Jesus born? BETHLEHEM (Mat. 2:1)
 5. What job did Peter and Andrew do? FISHERMEN (Mat. 4:18)
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BE NOT DECEIVED

Do you think you could be deceived by someone? That is, that you could be led to believe what another person tells you when they are not telling the truth? Maybe they are trying to sell you something that is not really what they say it is. Or maybe they are trying to make you believe a story when the story is not true. Yes, you might be deceived by someone else. But what about deceiving yourself? Do you deceive yourself? Do you convince yourself that your actions are good when they

really are not? Do you tell yourself that you love God when your actions prove otherwise? Are you confident that you are spiritual when the truth is that you are carnal? When you deceive yourself that your thoughts and actions are righteous when they are not, you mock God. God knows your actions, your thoughts, and even the intents of your heart.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:12-13)

You cannot deceive God.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Gal. 6:7-8)

Are you engaging in sexual immorality and deceiving yourself that your actions are righteous? As a man, do you look lustfully at a woman and deceive yourself that your thoughts are righteous? Do you tell a lie or bend the truth and deceive yourself that all is well? Do you have a strong desire for physical things and deceive yourself that you are spiritual? Do you spend much time in entertainment and self-pleasure and deceive yourself that you are walking according to the Spirit? In other words, are you really sowing to the flesh?

Consider a field in which you might plant rice or corn or wheat. What do you expect to reap from that field? From the beginning, God has caused each plant to produce after its kind (Gen. 2). You expect to get rice when you plant rice, and corn

THE BEST ANTIDOTE FOR DESPAIR IS
TO DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE

when you plant corn, and wheat when you plant wheat? In the same way, if you sow to your fleshly desires, you will of the flesh reap corruption – that is, decay and eventual spiritual death.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:9-11)

You were washed, sanctified, and justified by God. Don't be deceived that you can continue sowing to the flesh and expect to reap eternal life.

Instead of sowing to the flesh, sow to the Spirit because of the Spirit you will reap life everlasting. What does it mean to sow to the Spirit? It means to occupy yourself with spiritual matters.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5)

Sowing to the Spirit is contrary to sowing to the flesh. It might include studying and meditating on His word, prayer, serving God and seeing that His cause is increased, serving those around you, being a spiritual light to others, denying yourself for the cause of Christ, and walking according to the Spirit.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (Gal. 5:16-17)

It is easy to see the errors in Biblical characters whose actions

GOSPEL MEETINGS

| DATES | PLACE | SPEAKER |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| October 30 - November 1 | Oak Grove Eubank, KY | Timothy Lewis, Scott Caldwell, & |

Masks are recommended at these meetings. Information may be subject to change. Please check the website calendar for the latest updates.

sometimes mocked God - characters such as King David when he sinned with Bathsheba, or King Solomon who took so many foreign wives and let them lead him into idolatry, or Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness, or Peter who denied Christ or even Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. It is even easy to see errors in the lives of people around you. But it is more difficult to see the spirit of mockery in your own life. Do a self-examination.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. (2 Cor. 13:5-6)

Ask God in prayer to show you where you might be deceived about yourself. You do not want to be deceived like those that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 7:21-23:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Do not sow to the flesh but sow to the Spirit to reap everlasting life.

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