

# A Little Leaven

Dee Bowman

The great societies of all time have never been demolished and ruined by external forces. Their demise has, almost without exception, occurred from internal erosion. Small acts of lawlessness, graft, bribery, and general decay in the innermost parts of these governments led to their eventual loss of power and prestige. History bears witness to the fact.

The same may be said of the church of our Lord. It has never been possible for outside forces to cause the church to fail. Rather, it has ever been internal causes. The gradual diminishing of the demand for scriptural authority ( I Peter 4:11) has brought about the resultant erosion of the principles of truth, from which has proceeded the gradual wearing away of truth and the introduction of subtle errors. Such disregard for the demand for Bible authority has eventuated in the “denominationalizing” of the Lord’s church.

In the final analysis, the blame for such failures begins early—with individuals and their failure to respond to what they see as “little” deviations from truth and verity. Far too often people begin to tolerate—almost with little or no thought—small departures from the truths of the Bible. They abide what they see as minor or insignificant additions or subtractions from God’s word. There are several things that can be done to ward off this gradual decay in the lives of individual Christians.

Please be aware that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (I Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9).

Beware when you find yourself growing lax in your attendance. People have always gauged a person’s interest in a cause by the way he attends the functions attendant to that cause. If a person is enrolled in the Lion’s Club and yet he never attends their functions, be assured that he is seen to have little or no interest and resultantly soon will likely be dropped from the rolls of that organization. We all understand such an action by a civic organization, but let the Lord’s church withdraw from some obviously disinterested person who hardly ever attends, and folks are immediately up in arms. We need to remember that a small tear in a fabric often eventually results in large holes. If you aren’t attending the services regularly, you are not just robbing yourself the good to be gained of coming together to provoke to love and good works (Hebrews 10:23-25), but you are taking away your personal contributions to the local congregation. Further, your lack of attendance has a weakening effect on the local church. We are wont to say “there is strength in numbers,” but do we not also see that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”?

When you engage in some “secret sin,” some sin nobody knows about, you erode your

spiritual character. It takes only a little deviation for pure thinking to proliferate a regular process. There is no such thing as a “little” sin, anyhow. All sin is sin, even if you are able to “get away with it.” You sin a little and first thing you know there is no pricking of your conscience regarding that matter. Soon, you lose all sense of restriction. The opportunity comes around to “do it again,” and what do you do? You do it again! And then again. Before long you can put out of your mind whatever restrictions once arrested you. And—bear in mind—it all started with one little transgression nobody knew about. Do you not know that to whom you yield yourself a servant to obey, his servant you are whom you obey? (see Romans 6:16 ). Just a little can promote a lot.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7). We become what we think. If you’re so busy you don’t have any time for prayer and meditation (Psalm 1:1-2), you’re sowing a little seed that will eventually bring about a large package of indifference. If you are giving your time to worldly things and not to spiritual things, that little leaven will sooner or later have serious consequences. Do you take time to pray? Do you find time to study your Bible? How’s your spiritual life? For instance, if you’re more interested in your progress at the workplace than in the spiritual progress, you’re not only allowing a small neglect to gain a foothold on your continued spiritual development, you could be affecting the spiritual growth and maturation of both you and your family. These small negligences are serious matters. Neglect begins small and grows gradually, but it’s no less neglect when it’s small than. Neglect of your own spiritual worth and neglect of that of your family starts with small deviations—deviations which eventually become large spiritual considerations. “A little leaven...”oh well, you know.

You are important. You are important to the congregation. Every part is necessary for the whole to function with true spiritual energy (Romans 12: 5-6 ). Only when you “add to your faith...” can you be sure that you’re doing your part for your own good and for the good of that body of which you are a part (See I Corinthians 12:12-ff). Your failure to be involved affects the whole body in some way or the other.