

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 the erosion of their internal powers. Lawlessness, graft, bribery, and general decay in the innermost parts of these governments led to their eventual loss of power and prestige. It all happens a little at a time.

The same may be said problems and difficulties in 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—unnoticed and attended— that have taken brethren to apostasy. The gradual diminishing of the demand for scriptural authority has brought about the resultant erosion of the principles of truth and from that has proceeded the gradual diminishing of attention to scriptural ways for what we do. Such disregard for the demand for Bible authority has eventuated in the slow “denominationalizing” of the 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” or only small deviations from the truth in the Scriptures. Far too often people begin to tolerate—almost with little or no thought—just “little” departures when they occur. They ignore--and at times even approve-- 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 5:6-9).

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 in the works being done by the club and 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 an obviously dis-interested person who hardly ever attends, and folks are immediately upset. We should remember that small tears in a fabric often eventually result 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 immediately begin to erode your spiritual character. It takes only a little deviation for poor thinking to increase to 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 which once arrested you. And—bear in mind—it all started with one little transgression nobody knew about. Do you not know that to whom your yield yourself a servant to obey, his servant you are whom you obey? (see Romans 6:16). Just a little something can start what eventually becomes 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 problems.

If you are giving your time to worldly things and not to spiritual things, that little leaven may 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 allowing the spiritual growth and maturation of both you and your family. And both those matters are serious matters.

Neglect begins small and grows gradually, but it’s no less neglect when it’s small than when it reaches an obvious problem. 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 12:4-8). Only when you “add to your faith...” can you be sure that your doing your part for your own good and for the good of that body of which you are a part.

Don’t allow a seemingly small departure from the faith cause you to become less and less active in your spiritual privileges and responsibilities (Galatians 6:10).