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# The Wooley Springs Helper

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## ***Work, or Fall Into Ruin***

If you want to live in a filthy house, *do nothing* to clean it.

If you want to ruin your health, *do nothing* to care for yourself.

If you want to destroy your car, *do nothing* to maintain it.

If you want to be ignorant, *do nothing* to learn.

If you want to be lonely, *do nothing* to nurture friendships.

If you want to kill a church, *do nothing* to keep it alive.

If you want to alienate your neighbors, *do nothing* to your yard.

If you want to get lost, *do nothing* to plan your routes.

We don't have to overtly engage in evil to destroy ourselves: all we have to do is *nothing*. The nature of the world is decay and decomposition. In scientific terms, this is called entropy, defined by Webster's Online as: 2a: the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity; 2b: a process of degradation or running down or a trend to disorder.

Our environment constantly drains us of life both physically and spiritually. This is largely due to the original transgression of man, but it is also fostered by our own behavior and that of our generation. Each of us is subject to the maxim, "Use it or lose it." We are forgetful and sometimes lazy; we lose focus on what is important and fail to improve. We can be selfish. It takes constant effort to resist these tendencies.

Even churches can be affected by lethargy and inactivity, leading to dereliction of duty and impotence in the Lord's work. John's

revelation to the seven churches of Asia is tailored to their individual character. Three are issued harsh words for falling into apathy and neglect:

1) To Ephesus: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love ..." (Rev 2:2-4). Note that their efforts have not altogether faded away; they are still active in defending truth. But this zeal seems to mask the inward depletion of genuine motivation; they have abandoned their "first love."

Just as marital relationships will wither and die without nurture, so will our fellowship with Christ. The Ephesians seem to have overly stressed legalistic purity at the expense of genuine affection for the Lord.

2) To Sardis: "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God" (Rev 3:1-2). "You are dead" – what a horrible diagnosis of one's condition! This is a congregational assessment, for "you have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (3:4). Again, note that they are not accused by the Lord of great wickedness; rather, they are dead, inactive.

I wonder how difficult it was in Sardis for those faithful few to carry on the work and sustain their spiritual health while being part of a dead body. Lethargy and apathy are a heavy weight to bear.

3) To Laodicea: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot ... So then, because you are lukewarm ... I will spew you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked ..." (3:15-17). Again, no overt wickedness, just a smug sense of comfort and maturity and blessing while oblivious that the Lord is sickened by them. Key words: "And do not know ...". They have no self-awareness, which only comes from looking into the mirror of truth.

This theme continues in the teaching of Jesus, who spoke of ...

1) A steward who buried his master's money in the ground – Mt 25:14ff. He wasn't guilty of theft, risky investments or moral corruption. He just *did nothing*. **Solution:** Make a good faith effort to use your God-given resources in His work. Such resources are distributed according to the individual abilities of God's servants. He does not saddle us with expectations that are "above our pay grade." Generally, being conservative in spiritual things is commendable, but when we are conserving that which should be invested and utilized and thus bearing fruit, we have missed the point of receiving the blessings.

2) A branch that bears no fruit – "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away ..." (Jn 15:2). The branch is not diseased or bearing poor fruit; it is *doing nothing*. **Solution:** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me ... He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (15:4-5). Fruit is naturally produced by a living branch that is attached to the vine; it is the vine that supplies the water and nutrients that allows the branch to bear grapes. We must make sure that our soul is truly vitalized by connection with the vine. Ulterior motives that merely mimic a relationship with Christ will result in a barren branch.

3) A lamp hidden under a basket – "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house ..." (Mt 5:15). The analogy is clear: Jesus intends His people to be "the light of the world" (5:14). To hide our light under a basket is to *do nothing*. **Solution:** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (5:15). God isn't glorified by mere words; He is glorified by good works done in His name in a world that is not doing those things – or doing the opposite. Caution: Jesus later warns against doing things merely to glorify self (6:1-18). But the solution is not to hide our light or remain aloof under the guise of humility. Both God and our fellow brethren will see through that charade.

If we are not truly zealous for God, there are a thousand justifications for doing nothing: too tired, busy, depressed, untalented, afraid ... But life everywhere reminds us that if we are sedentary, if we just sit and *do nothing*, we will be rendered useless by dust and rust and weeds.

– Jim Jonas, *The Centreville Journal*

Linda Faulk is at home after undergoing hip surgery but is still having some problems.

Continue to pray for **Wesley Abernathy, Jesse McCune, David and Adams, Ruth Fisk, Teresa Broadway, Chessie Harwell, Richard Clapp, and Jane Belew.**

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## *Enoch Did Not See Death*

Genesis chapter 5 contains the genealogical record of Adam to Noah. A familiar phrase is found 8 times in this chapter – “and he died.” When men like Joshua and David said, “I am going the way of all the earth” (Josh. 23:14; 1 Kings 2:2), they were referring to their approaching deaths as a common experience of all mankind (Heb. 9:27).

The phrase “and he died” is found 8 times in Genesis chapter 5, but there are 9 men who are mentioned in the chapter. Of Enoch it is said, “So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him” (Gen. 5:23-24). What exactly happened to Enoch?

Hebrews 11:5 clarifies the matter for us. “By faith Enoch was taken away so that **he did not see death**, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (emphasis mine – HR). Enoch did not experience physical death.

One interesting note about Enoch’s being taken in Genesis 5 is that it is the first evidence in the Bible that man continues to exist after his physical life on earth is over. Enoch did not cease to exist. He was taken from this world to another place. This begins the Bible’s teaching on man’s eternal existence.

Job asked, “If a man dies, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14), to which Jesus later responded, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29). This physical life is not the entirety of our existence; it is just the beginning. Are you planning for eternity?

– Heath Rogers