

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume II

Issue 10

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

OUR BODY: A TEMPLE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. 1 Peter 1:3-4

Nothing causes GOD's people to feel any more uneasy than when we begin to discuss dealing with sin in our lives. All of us readily admit that we have a sin nature and are prone to succumbing to it, but for the most part we shy away from practical discussions of dealing with it in our daily walk. Some immediately begin to accuse those of legalism who would even dare to bring up such a subject as though the scripture is silent in its admonitions and exhortations to the children of GOD. (see I Pet. 1:15; II Cor. 7:1; I Thes. 4:3-7; Titus 2:12) Then there are others who try to dictate rules of conduct and standards of "holiness" which bring condemnation and guilt on those who the scripture says are without condemnation (see Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:20-23). Now one thing that we must all agree on is that GOD has called us unto righteousness not only as it relates to our position of acceptance with the FATHER but also as it relates to distancing ourselves from the life we once lived. (see Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 3:7) In fact the scripture would indicate that we have been ordained or predestined to this glorious end (see Eph. 2:10; Rom. 8:29).

It is with this very thought in mind that we approach this subject. We are not trying to exhort men of the flesh to abstain from the flesh nor trying to motivate GOD's children to do so because of some sense of burden or duty. Rather the scripture indicates that the reason the sons of GOD should mortify the deeds of the flesh is because it is their nature to do so. (see Col. 3:5) You can't get a man who is a slave to his fleshly nature to battle against it any more than you can change a leper's spots or stop a hog from wallowing in the mud. (see Rom. 6:1-23; II Pet. 2:20-22) We want to exhort those who have the mind of CHRIST and are new creatures in HIM to recognize their calling and live according to that new nature that we are given. (see II Cor. 5:17)

Corinth was a place not unlike the society we live in today. They were given over to exercising the pleasures of the flesh with little restraint and much encouragement in the same. All types of sexual uncleanness and fleshly indulgences were practiced. It was in this scenario that Paul admonished them with something quite profound and divisive when he said, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST which is in you, which ye have of GOD, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's." (1 Cor 6:19-20) He told them not to indulge themselves in the ways of the Corinthians but rather to keep themselves from those practices not because it was their duty but because it was their nature and their privilege to live godly in CHRIST JESUS. (see James 1:27) The Greek word that is used here for temple means the "inner sanctuary" or holiest place of the temple rather than the temple in general. It was into this "holy place" that the high priest went. Because our bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST we must endeavor to:

1. Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against our soul. (see I Pet.2:11) Our appetites were given to us for good reason, yet when they go unchecked and undisciplined they can destroy us. Obesity and poor health is the result of a lack of control over our desire to eat. Drunkenness is the result of too much wine. Yet none of man's appetites has the power of destruction that his (or her) sexual desires can bring about. The indulgences of the other appetites are spoken of as outside the body (see I Cor.6:18) yet fornication (i.e.; sexual sin or sexual practice outside of GOD's purpose) is a sin that is against the body which is that holy place. The body is not made for fornication (see I Cor.6:13)

2. Guard against impurity of thought. (see Phil.4:8) The thoughts of man is the doorway through which impurity of body and mind comes. The eye is often the conduit to awaken those thoughts. David had not sinned with Bathsheba had he not gazed upon her. (see II Sam.11:2) It is incumbent upon us to set a watch over our eyes and be careful what we look at.(see Prov.23:33; 27:20) When we view movies, read books, or listen to music which only appeals to our flesh and does not edify our spirit then we are in great danger of bringing reproach to the calling we have been given.

3. Set a watch over our lips. (see Prov.4:24;8:7) The LORD said that the things which go into a man don't defile him, but rather the things that come out.(see Mark 7:15) We have the opportunity to do great good with the things which we speak.(see I Cor. 2:13; II Cor.2:17) We should speak only those things that are true (see Eph.4:25), those things that become sound doctrine (see Titus 2:1), and always with grace (see Col.4:6). We are to be more eager to hear than to speak. (see James 1:19) We ought not to be talebearers nor to speak evil of any man, even those who are set against us. (see Titus 3:2; Eph.4:31; James 4:11; I Pet 2:1)

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