

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

A third grade student gave this definition of salt. "Salt is what you don't notice until someone forgets to put it in." We tend to take many things for granted until they are missing just as this student did the salt. We are wise to notice and appreciate the many unseen things in our lives that so many ignore until they are gone. The oil in our engines, the air in our tyres, the water in our radiators, and the salt in our food are all necessary and we find out just how important they are when we discover they are absent.

Someone once wisely observed that if the stars shone only one night a year, everyone in the world would see them. Because they shine every evening, many go about never looking up and discovering their grandeur.

Those who have grown children now realize how short a time we have our children safely tucked in their own beds in our home. The time to enjoy them is now. Too many people go through life being "when-ners," not winners but "when-ners". They say "When this happens, then we will be happy;" or, "when we have more time, when we finish school, when we get a job, when we get a car, when we get a home, when we get our debts paid, when the children are older, when we retire then "

The sad thing about when-ners is that eventually they get old and they have missed living for they were always going to live "when." What do they say at the end of their lives? They talk about the good old days "when." Unfortunately life passes the when-ners by for they have not learned to live in the here and now. This is the only day we have to live for the Lord. Solomon was right when he advised us saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

It has been said that we should "live neither in the past nor in the future, but let each day's work absorb all your interests, energy and enthusiasm. The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work superbly well."

James said, "Go to now, you that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Paul knew the secret of happiness but it was something he learned. He told us "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

We too, can learn to be content right where we are, right now. We need to count our blessings every day and not take them for granted until they are gone. This is true of salt, it is true of our children, it is true of our health. Let us wake up each morning and rejoice in the day that the Lord has given us. Every morning when we awake we have been given another 24 hours to spend. We cannot spend tomorrow or re-spend yesterday but this day is ours to live to the full in the service of our Lord. The time to live is now. Be thankful for the good gifts God has given us and remember that we, like Paul, "can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."

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A superior pilot is one who stays out of trouble by using his superior judgment to avoid situations which might require the use of his superior skill. This saying is on a poster for the Canadian Aviation Safety Bureau. The wise pilot avoids having to use his superior ability by steering clear of the dangers that would require him to use it. Would that all of us showed this wisdom in our lives! So often we walk where angels fear to tread, confident we will be able to extricate ourselves from the dangers we are courting. Young drivers so often rely on their driving skills to get them out of a jam that they should have avoided in the first place.

Scripture teaches us that we ought not tempt the Lord our God. Jesus refused to. When Joseph was being tempted by the wife of Potiphar, "he hearkened not unto her." When she tried to seduce him he "fled right out of her house."

Paul told the Corinthians, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication, sins against his own body." Paul also said, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." To the young man Timothy he exhorted, "But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." "These things" that Paul was exhorting him to flee from, included the desire to be rich and the love of money.

The sign of the superior pilot is that he avoids the need to use his superior skill by steering clear of dangerous situations. Similarly, those who love God, avoid the temptations that are all around them. So many attend parties they know they should avoid. In an attempt to get ahead in life, we are tempted to work late with other employees who do not have the same goals and standards. The more we are around those who do not live by God's standards, the more we court danger. It may seem innocent enough at first, but little by little, we find that we are in predicaments that we never dreamed would happen to us.

Paul warned the Corinthians "not to associate with sexually immoral people." He then goes on to explain that he realizes that it would be necessary to leave the world in order not to ever come in contact with those who are immoral, or greedy, or swindlers, or idolaters. The point is we are not to associate with any brothers or sisters who are doing these things. It also goes without saying that we should not associate with such people in the world, any more than is absolutely necessary.

We are in the world and we cannot help that. Jesus did not pray that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil of the world. In his prayer to his Heavenly Father he said, "I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil."

God promises us a way of escape that we might be able to bear our temptations but we must use our common sense and stay as far away as possible from the temptations that we can avoid.

Let us live the Lord's prayer in addition to praying it: "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

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