

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Too Close to the Jalapenos

Bill Brinkworth

A friend of mine graciously gave me a few fresh jalapeno peppers from his garden. We usually do not eat anything "hot," but sometimes a recipe calls for them, and I thought it would be a good idea to have some handy for when they were needed.

I took those fresh peppers and cut them up very carefully for freezing. I knew the juice could be harmful if it got in one's eyes or mouth, and made sure it did not get on my body. I did handle them with caution, and after bagging them, I washed my hands very carefully three times.

Much later, I washed my face. Not once do I recall getting a drop on my face, but when water got on my face, the pain began. Apparently, just the vapors of the "hot" vegetable got on my face, up my nose, and even down my throat. When rinsing my face, the waters activated the pepper's juice and I had to deal with the agonizing pain for the rest of the day, and still felt some of the pain on my face the next day.

While dealing with the vegetable's side effects, I could not help but think how sin affects one's life very similarly to what I suffered from the jalapeno's juice. No, sin may not burn one's face or immediately cause pain, but one does not even have to be in direct contact with sin to reap the damage it can do.

One may not commit adultery, but watching suggestive television or movies can put lustful thoughts in one's life, changing how one thinks about being faithful in his marriage. Perhaps, one never would even think about doing anyone harm, but after years of seeing violence on television, killing the "bad guys" on a video game, or seeing it much in a family or work situation, it may be easier for one to act more violently when angry. Stealing may be one thing one would never contemplate doing, but after hearing of peers that shoplifted and did not get caught, it may now be considered a solution for one's getting what one wants. One may never imagine himself being involved in a certain sin, but continual exposure to it by being around those involved in the sin or seeing it repeatedly via different media may have one considering such a sin or changing one's thoughts to "it's not that bad."

Sin is so dangerous that distant exposure to it can affect one's life. This is why God commands us not only not to commit it, but to stay as far away as possible from it. Any contact with iniquity can desensitize one to it, and may break down any mental barriers one has in being involved with it. Exposure to sin may not burn your face as did the

jalenpenos, but it may allow one to be one step closer to committing sin.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,” II Corinthians 6:17 Also: Isaiah 52:11, I Thes. 5:22.

“One leak can sink a vessel and drown all. One sin can sink one’s life as easily.”

The Ink Spot

Hare, (1796-1834)

The mind of man has been compared to a white sheet of paper. Whatever we write upon the writing material and every drop of ink that falls upon it makes a permanent mark. This mark cannot be rubbed out without much injury to the paper. Even while the ink may be somewhat fresh, it cannot be eliminated. Sometimes a bigger mess is made while attempting to remove the spot. Every ink speck embeds itself into the paper. If we even try to write over it, we may make a deeper blot. If we try to scratch it out, the next letters which we write on the spot are blurred.

Likewise, every sin, however small we may deem it, affects our lives. Therefore, it is of vast importance that we should be very careful of what we “write” on our lives. Sin will harm all who allow its life-altering marks to soil themselves. This is why we are to separate ourselves from it and to avoid it at all costs.

“The wages that sin promises the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit. However, it actually only pays him death, torment, and destruction. He that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin thoroughly must compare its promises with what its payments truly are.” — South, (1633-1716)

The “Harmless” Ivy

Spurgeon.

In the gardens of Hampton Court, you will see many trees entirely vanquished and strangled by huge coils of ivy. They are round about them like the strangling snakes around a victim. Every hour the rootlets of the climber are sucking the life out of the unhappy tree.

In its beginning, the ivy was a tiny, harmless appearing plantlet, only requiring a little aid in climbing. Had it been denied then, the tree would have never become its victim. The humble weakling grew in strength and arrogance; and at last it assumed the mastery, and the tall tree became the prey of the creeping destroyer.

The moral is too obvious. Sorrowfully, do we remember many noble characters which have been ruined by their little habits. Drink has been one's ivy in many cases. For others it may have been dishonesty, laziness, or jealousy. Reader, see to it you are not involved in sin, lest the slowly-advancing iniquity overpower you. People who were murdered by slow poisoning, died just as surely as those who take quicker acting arsenic. Sin hurts everyone!

“It is Satan's custom to use small sins to draw us to greater crimes against God.”

Manton (1620-1667).

The Marks That Remained

Mursell

A father told his child that whenever he did anything wrong that the youngster should drive a nail into a post. He also told him that when the child did that which was good, that he could pull one of the iron spikes out of the post. There were a great many nails driven into the post, but the child tried very hard to get the post cleared of the nails by striving to do right.

At length, he was so successful in his struggles with himself that every nail was drawn out of the post. The father was just about to praise the child, when, stooping down to kiss his son, he was startled to see tears fast rolling down the child's face. "Why, my boy? Why do you cry? Are not all the nails gone from the post?"

"Oh yes! The nails are all gone, but look at the marks that are left."

This familiar illustration reminds many of the damage their past sins have done to their lives. It is even possible to have those sins forgiven and forgotten as one calls on the Lord to do so. However, the havoc done by sin may linger the rest of one's life. That is why it is wisest never to get

involved with sin in the first place. There will be no regrets when nothing regrettable has been done.

“Your ship may have escaped damage by the formidable rocks, but beware lest you be wrecked on the unsuspecting sands.” — *Gregory Nazianzen*

“I Can’t Get Clean

Mursell

In one of the grandest tragedies of a great English poet, there is a scene which is enough to make one's blood run cold. A woman, whose husband had made himself king of Scotland by means of several murders, and who had been the prompter and partner of his crimes, came on stage. While in her sleep, she continually rubbed her hands, as though she were washing them. She cried, “Here's a spot! And another! Will these hands ne'er be clean? This blood I have soiled myself with will not come off! All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten its stench.”

In her words, this is an awful truth. We can stain our souls with sin. We can dye them, and double-dye them, and even triple-dye them. We can dye them all the colors of Hell's rainbow, but we cannot wash them white. All the sweetest perfumes in the world will not mask the stench they have left on our consciences. All the fountains of the great deep will not wash away one little spot of sin. Its wage, and the guilt it often brings, can linger around much of our life.

The usurping Queen of Scotland had been guilty of murder. The blood from the one she had part in spilling stained her conscience. However, it is not just the sin stain of murder that robs one of peace. Every sin soils the soul.

In that tragedy, the Queen said, "What's done cannot be undone." Consider those words. One cannot push back the wheels of time, and make yesterday come again; so as to do over afresh what was done wrongly. That which you did in the past cannot be changed. However, a Christian can confess it to the Lord, ask for forgiveness, and earnestly strive not to commit that sin again.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12 — If we only ask!