

A Highlight from Our Daily Bread

<http://www.christ.com/devotional-ourdailybread.html>

Ephesians 5:8-21

The days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise. —Ephesians 5:16-17

A patient checked in to a Florida hospital for a life-saving amputation. He awoke to find that the wrong foot had been removed. In the same hospital, another patient had surgery on the wrong knee.

Defenders of the healthcare system point out that such tragic cases of malpractice are like airline crashes—they are newsworthy because they are so rare. In that Florida hospital, officials responded with a plan to avoid what could go wrong: Staffers now write “NO” with a black Magic Marker on the healthy limb.

The Bible also urges that we do more than just recognize our past wrongs; we must take decisive steps to avoid evil. Paul warned the believers in Ephesus to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11). Christ has delivered us from condemnation, but we still risk temporary harm and loss because of our sinful tendencies. Our flesh still inclines us toward error and danger (Gal. 5:16-17).

But much has changed. Our relationship with God has changed. Our once hopeless future is now bright with promise. We have the opportunity to submit to His Spirit and to walk with the One who does good rather than thoughtless harm. —Mart De Haan

Thinking It Over

What conflict is described in Romans 7:15-25?

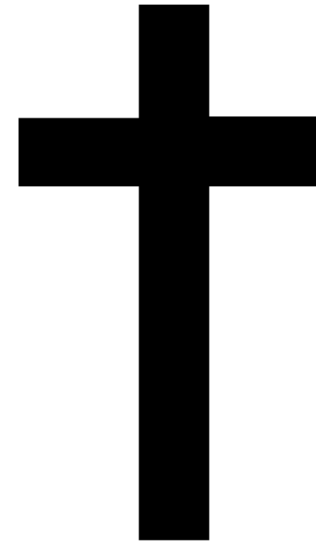
How may we win that battle? (Romans 8:12-13).

What happens when we are led by the Spirit? (vv.14-17).

Wise people don't just admit wrongs, they strive to avoid a repeat performance.

Vine Street Baptist Church Branch Gram

Exists to exalt the Lord, evangelize His creation, and edify His church according to His Word.



October 2007

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

BRANCHGRAM OCTOBER

“We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger.”

Why is this in here? It seems so trite. Who really cares what we say about somebody else? Well, it goes back to two things: We are commanded in the Scripture to avoid these behaviors and nothing can erode the unity of a church faster than gossip, backbiting, and anger. Hear the Word of the Lord:

“Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.”

Prov 26:20

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

James 1:19, 20

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!”

Psalms 133:1

Gossip and backbiting erode unity because what is spoken is hurtful. Morris Mandel says, “Gossip is the most deadly microbe. It has neither legs nor wings. It is composed entirely of tales, and most of them have stings.” Our first response to being hurt is often anger. James tells us that God’s desires do not come about through anger. That’s why we need to be watchful concerning what we say about one another. By gossiping we release a deadly microbe that spoils the unity of the church.

You might be thinking, how can I tell if I am gossiping? Alan Redpath shares a helpful acronym. He encourages his church to THINK before it speaks:

T--Is it true?

H--Is it helpful?

I--Is it inspiring?

N--Is it necessary?

K--Is it kind?

If what you are about to say passes this test, then fire away. In order to protect the unity of this church, we need to be disciplined enough to ask ourselves these questions.

With respect to anger, a lady once came to Billy Sunday and tried to rationalize her angry outbursts. "There's nothing wrong with losing my temper," she said. "I blow up, and then it's all over." "So does a shotgun," Sunday replied, "and look at the damage it leaves behind!" On a more positive note, an author for *Reader's Digest* once wrote how he studied the Amish people in preparation for an article on them. In his observation at the school yard, he noted that the children never screamed or yelled. This amazed him. He spoke to the schoolmaster. He remarked how he had not once heard an Amish child yell, and asked why the schoolmaster thought that was so. The schoolmaster replied, "Well, have you ever heard an Amish adult yell?" Anger breeds anger. By learning to stay calm in all circumstances we can protect the church, fulfill the membership covenant, and realize Jesus’ desire: “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:23)

~Pastor Michael

October

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- * Hanna Kim October 3
- * Michael Snearly October 5
- * Gladys Funk October 13
- * Edna Hartman October 14
- * Ronnie Allen October 14
- * Brenda Waters October 20
- * Roland Butsitsi October 23
- * Lorrie Hendricks October 27
- * Sarah Daniels October 31

Anniversaries

- * Jeremy and Tabitha Cheek October 14
- * Bob and Pat Meek October 15
- * Bob Kelly and Lonna Lister October 16