

Getting Rid Of The Trash

Last fall I held a Gospel Meeting in Florida right after a major hurricane where the community was recovering from a major gas shortage. During the gas shortage many filling stations ran out of gas meaning their tanks were drained dry. Interestingly, due to trash being in their engines, cars were taken to mechanics with problems. I am sure the storage tanks at those stations were clean when they were first installed however through the years trash accumulated in the bottom but it created havoc. Many a dollar was spent to get the trash out of the motors and make those cars useful again.

This got me to thinking about trash that can be in our lives and if we are not careful it may only surface under dire circumstances. Here is a list to consider:

Doubt causes us to question the wisdom and power of God when life is not going the way we want. James 1.4-6 addresses this issue, "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." It is easy to trust God when things are going well and easier to doubt Him when not. We need to ask if our faith is strong enough to trust in Him even when we may not like His answer to our prayers. When faith replaces doubt we will trust and accept God's will in our lives.

Pettiness can be lurking at the bottom of our "tank" or mind but can surface from time to time. It is the ability to spot small flaws in others while overlooking our own. We are warned of this in various passages but I believe Matthew 7.3-6 will suffice for our study, "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from

your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Pettiness will cause us to be discontent, create strife and division in the Lord's body, and end friendships. Love is the antidote for pettiness. Loving our neighbor means we pray for them and try to help them. Love says you may not be perfect but neither am I.

Grumbling and complaining can literally be called trash talking. It can be discouraging and destructive without us realizing it. How many times have you been convinced to not try due to the complaints of others? How many elderships have heard members complain instead of offer to help them? How many preachers, Bible Class teachers, Song leaders, and others in the church have been discouraged by "well meaning" brethren who could give a list of all mistakes they had made? "Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain." (Philippians 2) The children of Israel complained in the wilderness in Numbers 11.1 and God destroyed many of them. Instead of complaining we should be thankful and encouraging. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful." (Col 3:15) Perhaps instead of complaining we need to be more involved in the work of the church.

The best way to take care of the trash in our lives is to not allow it in there to start with. If we fill our minds with the word of God there will be little room for "trash" in our lives. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4) If we find some have settle in our thoughts then we need to get rid of it before it creates some real damage. - - Dennis Tucker