

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”-Psalm 119:105

May 23, 2004

“Make No Provision for the Flesh”

Troy Nicholson

A mother told her son that he was not to go swimming in a nearby pond. He came home with wet hair and told his mother he had fallen into the water. “Then why aren’t your clothes wet, too?” she asked. “Well,” he replied, “I had a hunch I might fall in, so I took off my clothes and hung them on a limb.”

We may find humor in the reasoning of a young child, but it is no laughing matter when people engage in the same type of reasoning in relation to sin.

Paul tells us to “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Romans 13:14). This is what the boy in the above story did, and it is what countless others have done and continue to do when they set themselves up for sin by making it too convenient to give in to temptation.

Eve made provision for the flesh when she listened to the serpent and looked upon the tree forbidden by God (Genesis 3). David did the same when he saw Bathsheba bathing and did not walk away from the view (2 Samuel 11), and his son Amnon followed in his footsteps when he made arrangements to be alone with his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13). There is also the case of Judas who continued to keep the money even though he knew he had a problem with greed (John 12:4-6).

Some parents properly teach their children that sex outside of marriage is wrong, and then they give them a condom “just in case.” That condom is not a protection from pregnancy and disease but a provision for sin and death. Parents and young people, “make no provision for the flesh.”

We are to “crucif(y) the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), not cruise around the flesh in anticipation of giving in to its desires. The boy cruised around the pond and ended up wet. When we cruise around temptation we will end up dead (James 1:14-16).

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation.”—Psalm 68:19

A Thousand Times...NO!

David Diestelkamp

Ever notice that you can say “no” a thousand times, but all those no’s are canceled by one “yes”? “No, you can’t have a cookie, can’t have a cookie, can’t have a cookie! Okay, yes!” The cookie will be eaten! To concede and fail you don’t have to say yes as many times as you must say no to remain steadfast and succeed.

A thousand no’s to fornication are deleted by one yes that robs one of his virtue and virginity. A thousand no’s to adultery are swept away by a yes that destroys family, home, and soul. A thousand no’s to drugs are erased by a yes that opens the door to all kinds of destruction and excess. A thousand no’s to stealing are forgotten by a yes on our record when we stand before the law. A thousand no’s to pornography are overwhelmed by a yes that writes indelible images in the mind. It applies across the board to all sin.

While it is certainly true that forgiveness in Christ is available for any sinful yes decision we make, this must not be seen as license to make that errant decision even once. We are called to completely die to sin (Rom. 6) — it is to have no part in us, or us in it.

Parents often tire of the “May I have a cookie?” question and finally concede with a yes. Kids know this. Satan knows this. We tire of saying no and looking different from others. We tire of our “no” answer causing abstinence from activities that appear pleasurable and fun. We tire of always being the one to say no. In time, sin nags us to the point where we finally want to say, “Okay, yes just this time.” How much more can God expect us to resist — how many more times must we say no?

The Hebrew writer reminds us, “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin” (Heb. 12:4). We’re not just talking about saying no to the point of alienation and missing out on some of life’s pleasures. Resisting “to bloodshed, striving against sin” means saying no to sin until it kills us! That means a thousand times no to the sin that tempts us from within and from without. And when we have said no a thousand times it is then time to say it a thousand and one times, and more!

Do unto others as though you were the others.

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).