

## The Dog I Kept Too Long

Sometimes sin is like the dog I kept too long.

Getting rid of a dog I once owned was paramount to getting my life back. Actually this dog had owned me. I financed her, and fed her, and petted her, yet she gave me nothing but grief. She was destroying my property by tearing up my yard and my deck, and disturbing my neighbors with her incessant barking. I sincerely wanted her to make her home with me, but now she would have to go. When I told my older brother I finally got rid of my nuisance dog, he quickly quipped, “Don’t you wonder why you didn’t do it sooner?” His words hit home, and indicated that he’d been there and done that, and he already knew my answers to that question would expose my apprehensions, and my pride, and my weaknesses. He knew I had willingly enslaved myself to something inferior, even something which menaced me, and for the longest time I didn’t have the guts to cut it loose. I admit my notion was, “I want to solve this and keep the dog.” I kept thinking I could turn this thing around, while all the time I didn’t have an ounce of evidence to prove this was possible. As much as I wanted it, I was not meant for this dog.

How can something, that works against us, endear itself to us? Let’s turn to a spiritual context? How can something, which is sinful and eternally damning, become inseparably attached to us?

**We may keep sinning because we think we can manage the impossible in a controlled fashion.** Sin has a deceptive way of convincing us we can have it *all* without any consequences. We’re told we can drink as long as it’s in moderation. We’re told we can commit fornication as long as we don’t cause pregnancy or disease. We’re told we can gamble as long as we have a pre-set limit.

Read Proverbs 6. Here’s a man who thinks he can balance adultery in his life, and he’s as foolish as the man who puts fire in his bosom. How about you? Can you manage a blazing fire down your shirt without getting burned? The truth is, there’s no such thing as safe sin. There’s no striking a balance with sin.

**We may keep sinning because we don’t want to be a quitter!** Pride dictates that I can’t be a quitter! I may think I need to ride this thing out. After all I have a reputation to uphold!

We need to be a quitter when it comes to sin. We must admit that the liar, the cheat, the drunk, the gambler, the fornicator, and the drug addict all have so few chances to quit. Jesus said His chance to do God’s will on earth was limited, and He resolved to use that time wisely. In John 9 He said, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.”

Zacchaeus quit stealing (Luke 19), the Ephesians quit their business of idolatry (Eph. 19), and the Apostle Paul quit a dead religion (Acts 26).

We can resolve to use our time wisely, to glorify God, and become a quitter... of sin.

**We may keep sinning because we are going to miss it.** For some sinners it seems like there’s nothing else to do. Let’s be honest. There is nothing else *they want to do!* Even if we are naturally good at sin, it doesn’t mean that sin is our “life’s calling.” For us to leave earth, boasting our fill of sinful fruit, is to say that we were created for corruption. What a waste.

We need to turn our hearts to God and use our talents for Him (Rom. 12:1-2). We need to focus on holiness and purity, and then immerse ourselves in God’s work. The God of glory created us perfectly for His purpose: to learn of him, to praise him, to worship him, and to do His good work on earth.

Thank God sin doesn’t have to destroy us before we get rid of it. Through Christ we can get rid of sin (repent) now!

*Carl Lungstrum*