



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 7, 2014

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

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WHAT DEFILES A MAN?

From the Church of Christ at Keltonburg, Smithville, TN

Are you a defiled person? How can you tell? Jesus said, *"There is nothing that enters a man from the outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, these are the things that defile a man."* **(Mark 7:15).**

Later, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, James wrote, *"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so"* **(James 3:10).**

Paul told us, *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each man"* **(Colossians 4:6).** And he also told Titus, *"Speak evil of no one, but be peaceable, gentle, showing humility to all men"* **(Titus 3:2).**

Do you get the general idea? When we say things about someone else that we ought not say...and we know what these things are...then we have defiled ourselves. Quite in opposition to what the world thinks, the only person or thing which can defile a person is himself. Old, ragged clothes do not defile you. The lack of a bath might make you odorous, but it does not defile you. Disease does not defile you. Hard work in a dirty area does not defile you. In fact, if you read the above verses, the only thing that can defile a man (or woman) is what he or she says or does that is not in keeping with the Word of God. Cursing another or telling lies about them defiles one. Evil deeds, even those done from anger, jealousy, or envy, are defiling in the sight of God. We are told to keep ourselves clean by being kind, merciful, and gracious to others.

Do we have a formula for this? Well, really yes, we do. *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous: not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."* **(I Peter 3:8-9).**

THE FORMULA FOR FAILURE

I believe each of us desires to succeed. We want to succeed at our business, our families, and in life in general. I think I can also confidently say that we all want to succeed spiritually. It is often said by many a Christian, "I want to hear the Lord say to me, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

However, the harsh and sobering reality is that many will fail. They wish for it but don't work at it. They adopt the philosophy of the Christian life, but they never truly apply those philosophies, and thus they fail.

Looking to the example of the man who buried his talent, I believe we can find a proven formula for failure. I am sure you have read this section of Scripture in **Matthew 25** many times. Jesus tells this parable to explain a point about service, accountability, and judgment. It serves as a source of encouragement for those who devote themselves to service for their master, and a warning against idleness.

We are well aware of the choices of the man who was given one talent (a rather large sum of money), and the Lord's condemnation of that man (**see Matthew 25: 26, 30**). Certainly, everyone would agree that the one-talent man failed (**see Matthew 25:15**). If we look at his reasoning and his actions, I believe we see a formula for failure.

First, we see that the one-talent man was guilty of faulty thinking. When he was required to give an account, the one-talent man basically said of his master, "You are a man who is hard to please." He reasoned that nothing he did would please his master, so he decided to do nothing (**See Matthew 25:24**). Many today reason in a similar way. They will say it is just too hard, or it is someone else's duty to do "so and so." They conclude in their thinking (although they will rarely ever admit it), that the Christian life is too demanding and difficult, so why even try? (However, attending some or all of the services of the church, that is doable).

Next, we can observe that fear played a major role in the decision making of the one-talent man. The man said, "I was afraid" (**Matthew 25:25**). Therefore, he did not do what he was called to do. He was crippled, paralyzed, and frozen by the emotion of dread and anxiety known as fear. There were things he had the "ability" to do (**25:15**), there were things he "ought" to do (**25:27**), but he did nothing.

Looking briefly at the example of the one-talent man, I believe we can note a formula for failure. Here it is: FAULTY THINKING + FEAR = FAILURE.

Whether we are talking about personal growth via your Bible study, your personal prayer life, or your service to the Lord (e.g. evangelism, visiting, benevolence, etc.), if you want to fail, just apply the formula above.

Joe Williams