



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 8, 2020

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Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Larry Brackett
Aaron Evans
Larry Hill
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Todd Houston

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

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

Wednesday

Bible Study 7 pm

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Moving Past It

Do you have one experience in life that you can't shake from your memory? Try as you might to put it behind you, it won't go! Perhaps you have more than one.

In the long ago, there was a man name Esau who thought so little of his "birthright" that for an occasion of food he gave it up. The Scripture says he "despised it", that is, he held what was *sacred* as not worthy of him holding on to it at all. Later in his life, when it was expected that he would receive a *sacred* blessing from his father, the blessing was gone.

Did Esau have that one experience in life that he could not shake? Maybe he had two.

Maybe our experience doesn't rate to the level of the experiences of Esau, but they are still just as powerful in our memories and just as painful as we think on them. How does one move past it? This may be more difficult than you realize, but there is one thing you can do, one thing that is better at contributing to moving past it than anything else.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Ron Thomas

Cultivating Your Spiritual Garden

Wisteria is beautiful. Despite its beauty, though, wisteria can be an invasive vine if it is not carefully cultivated, becoming genteel kudzu. As I had to go to a doctor's appointment in Gainesville, Georgia, yesterday, I noted how much wisteria grows around that city. For the most part, it was not managed well. Thus, you would see azalea bushes or maple trees with purple flowers choking them out. However, if you take the time to train the vine, you can make a stunning addition to your garden with wisteria. One popular way of taming wisteria is having it run along an arbor creating a tunneled walkway through the blooms.

We have other things around us that act a lot like wisteria. These are things having the potential to be something helpful or enjoyable, but which end up being deleterious to our spiritual health because we do not manage them well.

Becoming distracted by doing good is one such type of spiritual wisteria. When Jesus was with his dear friends in Bethany, Martha wearied herself seeking to be an excellent hostess. She asked Jesus to rebuke her sister, Mary, for not helping her prepare. Since Mary was listening to Jesus teach, He said she was doing what was necessary (**Luke 10:39-42**). It is a good thing to be hospitable. We note that the need to be hospitable is one of the qualifications for an elder (**1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8**). However, one's priority is the kingdom of God (**Matthew 6:33**). Thus, even in having a desire to do a good thing, one may be overwhelmed and end up missing out on opportunities for spiritual growth.

Social media is another type of spiritual wisteria. During this period of social distancing, I've noted how many more brothers in Christ are utilizing Facebook and YouTube to put out encouraging and convicting lessons from God's Word. Congregations are streaming "virtual worship services" for homebound people to participate in. It excites me that we might be seeing the beginnings of the "Third Great Awakening" in the United States as people realize they have ways of expressing their faith which has nothing to do with a building. Even so, I note that with people using social media even more now (if such a thing is possible) it likewise gives rise to a lot of things that ultimately detract from spiritual growth. People are also posting depressing or rancorous things. You still see lewd jokes and double entendres. We need to ensure that our use of social media at this time helps us to serve as salt and light in this world so God can be glorified (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

You may have noted other types of spiritual wisteria I have not included. We want to emphasize that this "wisteria" in and of itself is not a bad thing. It is, rather, that a failure to discipline ourselves allows for this good thing to lessen its value. You must put forward the effort to properly utilize and enjoy physical and spiritual wisteria. You must do the same thing when it comes to cultivating a beautiful, spiritual garden pleasing to God (**cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**).