

Take Out the Trash

Dee Bowman

I am the trash man at our place. Every Monday and Thursday morning, I gather up a bunch of Target plastic bags and head for the three bedrooms, two baths, the sun room, and the kitchen to pick up the trash we've accumulated since the last time. After realigning each container with the Target bags and having filled the big black bag, I tote it to the street. It's my job. I take out the trash. Trash is part of life. The human body is designed to take away trash regularly. Failure to do so could be catastrophic. Trash is all over. No matter the business enterprise— be it technical, educational, or some other type— every office, every garage, every work area of any sort, you can be sure, there's a trash can nearby. And although we don't like to have the trash can where you can see it, everybody knows there's a trash can somewhere. You have to take out the trash. If you are a Christian, it's imperative that you learn to take out the trash. Doing so actually begins as you obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. The people on Pentecost were told to repent and be baptized "for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Talk about trash, without the salvation of our Savior we're every one carrying around a huge sack of trash! Sin is trash. We have to rid ourselves of it or our spiritual condition will deteriorate to the extent that we will spend eternity in a pit of pure trash. And baptism is not the end of our need to expel the trash from our lives. You have to take out the trash when and as soon as you find it, otherwise we end up in "the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). You have to take out the trash. Have you ever had some trying trouble with a friend or relative? It can produce feelings that are not healthy, feelings of disdain—even for those we are close to. Trash grows. Inordinate and excessive feelings of disdain are not a thing but trash. "Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). You have the right to stay mad for only 24 hours. After that, it's just so much trash. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). We have to take out the trash. Some people can't seem to tolerate it when someone who does what they do receives a compliment regarding their talent or accomplishments. What that is is jealousy and jealousy is just sometimes unrecognizable trash. In fact, the predicate on which envy rests is selfishness. "Rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). We seem to have far less trouble weeping with them that weep than we do with those who receive some accolades. Envy is trash. We have to take out the trash. Have you ever suddenly realized that you're singing the words of the song but without any worship in your heart? Have you sat and listened to a 45-minute sermon and then realized when it was finished you don't even remember what it was all about? Do you ever stop and realize that there are constant interruptions in your worship? What are you thinking about? Where is your heart-involvement? "The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29) Interruptions are just the devil's subtle tool intended to keep us from getting close to God. Worship interruptions are trash. We need to get rid of the trash. Every Monday and every Thursday after I have taken out the trash, I feel good. To get rid of the bad stuff produces a feeling of relief. It allows you to re-focus and get

going again. And so, "...let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). We need to take out the trash.