

WHAT'S IN YOUR HOUSE?



Larry Blackburn

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There's a story in the Old Testament (2 Kings 4:1 — 7) that speaks about a woman whose husband had incurred a debt that was not paid before he died. Consequently, the creditor came afterwards demanding that the debt be paid.

The widow and her family could not pay the debt, and the creditor knowing that the law stated that if a father had not paid what he owed while alive, the son (or sons) was obliged to pay it, and could be jailed until the debt was paid, similar to the case mentioned in Matthew 18:23 - 35, except in this New Testament passage, this debtor wasn't dead.

The creditor that demanded payment from this widow, decided he would take her sons as bondmen until payment was paid in full. The prophet Elisha happened by and found out from the widow what happened and was asked for help. The prophet asked a very poignant question: *What's in your house?*

In this story, she replied that she had nothing of value in her house except a small pot of oil. Instructing the widow, the prophet told her to gather up as many other pots and vessels she could and to go borrow extra pots from friends and neighbors and take them all into her house, and shut the doors and begin filling them up from that which she had — that one pot of oil.

This she did and her oil did not run out until she ran out of pots. The prophet then told her to go and sell the oil, pay-off the debt and live on the remainder. She did so, and as they say — *problem solved!*

As I was reading this story of the widow and her debt-cancellation experience, the question poised by the prophet stuck me: *What's in your house, Larry?*

Both in Luke 11:17 and Matthew 12:25, Jesus tells us that a house divided against itself, will fall... it cannot stand.

I thought about my house and IF there were things that I had in my possession that were representative of the kingdom of darkness; these things I want to get rid of as they can be demonic doorways into my life and that of my household. This same type of examination was done in Acts 19:17-20, and after this was done, verse twenty says *"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."*

After examining my physical house, I then thought of, and turned my eyes upon, me... this (spiritual) house that Larry lives in. . . *What's in your house, Larry? Are there things, attitudes, mind-sets, or habits that need to be removed or corrected?*

Self-examination is a good thing; it is NOT a one-time event. Self-examinations help keep you strong and alert. Don't confuse this with condemnation where you put yourself down and rub your face in the mud, rather it's what I call "border patrol," where you maintain your sphere of influence to a top-notch efficiency, allowing the Gospel power (Romans 1:16) to permeate from within you. Ephesians 4:27 tells us to *"give no place to the devil."* The word translated "place" (Greek: *topo*) is where we get our word "topography" — surface mapping. This verse is saying *"don't allow Satan surface area in your life, much less roots!"* Another translation says it this way: *Slam the door in Satan's face!* I like that.

Once you practice doing this "border patrol," you become more sensitive to invading influences and evil spirits as stated in Hebrews 5:14 — *"But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

The Weymouth translation states it this way: *"But solid food is for adults--that is, for those who through constant practice have their spiritual faculties carefully trained to distinguish good from evil."*

Another translation - the English Standard Version renders this verse as: *"But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."*

As the saying goes, "Practice makes perfect."

Being a Christian isn't just saying a sinner's prayer, sitting in a pew and waiting for the Rapture to take place. It's a life-style of learning, self-examinations (border patrols), it's growing and becoming a reflection - a representative of the Kingdom in which you're born into. It's going about Father's Business — both inwardly and outwardly. Whether you like it or not, each one of us are an epistle - a walking book - that people see and read. The question is, what type of reading are you (and I) displaying? Positive or negative, we are being watched.

What's in your house, Larry? Are there things, attitudes, mind-sets, or habits that need to be removed or corrected?

When I asked myself these questions, I recalled that scripture speaks of myself as the temple of the Living God (2 Corinthians 6:16); I have both an earthly house and eternal house (2 Cor. 5:1 & 2); I'm in the house that Jesus is faithful over (Hebrews 3:6); and I can be a vessel of gold and silver by my "cleaning house" as 2 Timothy 2:20, 21 states.

I recalled the scripture that tells of a devil cast out of a man, and that this devil found himself in a dry place and said to himself that he would return to the house he came out of, and when he found that house empty, he goes and finds seven other demons to live in the man also. Consequently, the last state of that man was worse than it was before (Matthew 12:43 - 45).

What this passage is saying to us is that it is not only a good thing to get rid of demons and demonic influences, but more importantly, we need to fill that void with something as well. And that something is the Word of God. Taking the Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God - Ephesians 6:17), we can (with the rest of God's armour) ward off the attack of the evil one.

I also remembered two particular scriptures that talked about "things" that reside in me. The first, found in Romans 7:18 says, *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing..."* and the second, in Philemon 1:6 that states I am *to acknowledge (admit to) every good thing in me.*

At first, one might see a contradiction with these two scriptures... but in the first one, it says that there is no good thing IN MY FLESH... it did not say that there was no good thing in me.

"In my flesh" does NOT refer to what some come to believe as one's "sinful nature" as the NIV translation states. Flesh is not a nature. It's a mind-set, a way of thinking that leads to a way of living (life-style) ruled or governed by this world and this world's system.

Once a person becomes "born again" the sinful nature the person was a recipient of because of Adam (Rom. 5:12), is removed and a new creation is created. Much like a caterpillar being born afresh from the cocoon into a butterfly, a death transpired (the caterpillar's) and a new creation (the butterfly) came into existence. Likewise in the person that is born again... the old "sin nature" is dead, a new nature - one that is born from above, heavenly, or of God, is created and birthed (Ezekiel 11:19, 18:31, 36:26). The butterfly doesn't go around saying, "I'm just an ole caterpillar, saved by grace." Neither does the Christian need to go around and say, "I'm just an ole sinner, saved by grace." BOTH died to that nature. BOTH are born anew, born afresh and now have their existence in their new life. This is their new identification - not the old.

In the second supposed contradiction, I'm told to acknowledge the good that is in me. What "good" is this referring to? It's referring to all that the scriptures tell me that I am; all that the scriptures tell me I have; all that the scriptures tell me that I can do — THAT's what's IN ME. And I'm told to acknowledge that these things are IN ME NOW!

The Fenton Translation of Philemon 1:6 is *"... that your energetic unity in the Faith may advance into a recognition of every benefit there is for us in Christ."*

Psalm 103:2 tells me to remember ALL His (God's) benefits. *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits..."*

These things IN ME are what's valuable in the Kingdom of God. These benefits (all due to Christ Jesus... not by my own merit) are in me and are available to me simply because I'm IN HIM. *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."* (1 Cor. 6:17)

By the application of Romans 12:2, I become transformed by the renewing of my mind from those (worldly) *attitudes, mind-sets, and habits* that have taken up residence in my house for so long. I start to "clean house" and replace those previously held attitudes, mind-sets and habits with new ones (from the Kingdom of God)... and those new ones are brought to the surface by my acknowledging that they are in me now.

The Greek word translated "transformed" is *metamorphoō* from which we get the word *metamorphose*; like the change of the caterpillar to the butterfly. The changes that we are to incorporate are from the inside (within us - Luke 17:21), and worked outward. This is why those "New Year's Resolutions" don't work for the most part... they are attempts to change one's behavior from the outside. Same with religion — "*don't do this, don't do that... but do this, do that.*"

The "Do's and Do Nots" are not simply redressing one's looks, one's habits — although, some of those things are right. You cannot earn salvation by your performance. Scripture says, "*Work out your salvation...*" does not say "*Work for your salvation...*" (Philippians 2:12)

He's the performance God; He paid the price for humanity; He's waiting on us to receive the sacrifice He made for each one of us. It's an individual decision. You can't ride Momma's dress-tail into heaven. YOU have to decide and accept the terms of God's condition for the New Birth. No one else can do it for you; there is no other way.

What's in your house? Is there *value*? Is there some *worth* that can be used? What do you have? Is your "cup" running over and being a blessing to your household and to others?

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves... (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Romans 12:2 goes on to say that by your renewed mind, you will "*be able to prove what is the good, acceptable, and the perfect will of God.*" Wouldn't that be nice? To be able, by your living, PROVE God's will — to yourself, to others, to God, and to Satan and his crowd! WOW! What a privilege - and responsibility we have to do that.

Matthew 6:33 says to "*Seek first (our priority) the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...*" The Amplified version says "*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness — His way of doing and being right...*" That's what we can prove - His ways of doing things and His ways of being right!

A GREAT responsibility, and it all starts by each one of us individually examining ourselves patrolling our borders and cleaning house.

Let me ask you: *What's in your house?*

~Larry Blackburn
Jesus Our Surety Ministries