

The Proving of the 300

A Very Convicting Message about Appetite

November 24, 2013

The Proving of the 300

32,000 warriors show up for war, but 31,700 of them are sent packing

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the

people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

Judges 7:1-8

Presumptuous Sins

Not realizing that our appetites ought not to drive us

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; **let them not** have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Psalm 19:13

Our Problem: *We Think We are Just Fine*

After all, isn't serving our appetites just normal human behavior?

There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:25

There is a way that seems right unto a (man's body), but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:25

The Natural Cravings of the Body

The Six Appetites

1. The Appetite for Food and Drink
2. The Appetite for the Possession of Things
3. The Appetite for Sleep
4. The Appetite for Sensual Pleasure
5. The Appetite for Expression
6. The Appetite for Information

There is a way that is right unto God, and the end thereof is Life

The Entire Bible

Dealing with the Appetites

Four Gradients of Inner Control

1. **The Open Door Policy** - What the appetite wants, the appetite gets
2. **The Curbed Appetite** - Strong against some things, but an open door to others
3. **The Intentional Defense** - Purposeful to repel, strong at times, yet not totally consistent in all arenas
4. **The Armed Heavenly Vault** - Empowered to repel, empowered to restrain, empowered to say “no”, empowered to keep a sound mind at all times, and empowered to stay consistent

A Man and His Appetite

Controlled Appetite Equates to Excellence of Life

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

2 Peter 1:4-10

Egkrateia - Temperance or Self-Control

The Strength of God made manifest in the Saints in order to guard and control the Body, shielding it from every fiery dart of the enemy. It's a God-enabled governing of every operation of the body - a divinely empowered control over appetite, sleep, and sexuality. It's the strength and authority to not allow sin to reign any longer in the body.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **egkrateia**. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

The Danger of Allowing the Appetites to Control

But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the **land** from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which you let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein you dwell.

Numbers 33:55

The Power of *Egkrateia*

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: **and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them**; the LORD delivered **all their enemies** into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; **all came to pass**.

Dealing with the Small Stuff

Order my steps in thy word: and **let not** any
iniquity have dominion over me.

Psalm 119:133

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; **let them not**
have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent
from the great transgression.

Psalm 19:13

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,
that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Romans 6:12

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the
prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that strives for the
mastery is *egkrateuomai* in all things. Now they do it to obtain a
corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as
uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: **But I keep**
under my body (*my body under control*), and
bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have
preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

The Anatomy Self-Control (*Egkrateia*)

- First, “I” (Self) must be controlled, submitted, subjected to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Rule of the Spirit of God, and the Authority of the Word of Scripture
- Then, it is no longer “I” (Self) who lives (controls the Body) but Christ who lives within the Body. Thusly, “I” is now in it’s proper position (crucified yet alive - denied and yet yielded) to behave as it ought. It is now able to exert the authority of Jesus Christ over the body, its impulses, its weaknesses, and its fleshly longings.
- Self is now controlled by Jesus in order to now control the Body as it ought

The Concept of Business Capital

Capital is the sum of money or stock which a merchant, banker or manufacturer employs in his business.

The Concept of Christian Capital

Christian capital is the sum of grace entrusted to the servant by the King (ie. the talent(s) of gold or the mina of gold), by which the King proves the servant and deems him either faithful or unfaithful.

I am acquainted with some people who know that tea and cake and candy injure them, but they like these things, and so they indulge themselves, at risk of grieving the Spirit of God, and destroying their health, which is **the capital** God has given them to do His work with.

Samuel Brengle

HTH, p52

The Capital of the Christian

1. Bodily Health
2. Financial Resources
3. Time on Earth
4. Our Gender Role (as a man or as a woman)
5. Our Understanding and Knowledge
6. Our Thirst for More

. . . strong men retain riches.

Proverbs 11:16

. . . strong men retain (their capital).

Proverbs 11:16

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust . . .

1 Timothy 6:20

We are Proven by Two Things

1. **How diligently we manage**, caretake, and monitor our capital for our King
2. **How willingly we share**, give, and let go of our capital at the request of our King

Tried at the River

How are we handling our capital?

And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and **I will try them for thee there:** and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

Judges 7:4

The Six Rivers of Testing

How do you respond to the river at your feet when thirsty?

1. **The Stomach** - To eat at impulse and craving (letting body define need), puts the energy of the body into the stomach, dulls the spirit sensitivity, compromises the clarity of soul, slows the body

The Stomach Tests

- Going completely without (a.k.a. - fasting)
 - Eating or Drinking something more plain
 - Being watchful of those moments when just a little bite or a little slurp might be taken
 - What will others think?
2. **The Spending** - To spend and buy at impulse and craving (letting wants define action), binds a life into financial servitude, distracts the mind from Christ, opens the door for anxiety, and puts a life under the control of money.

The Spending Tests

- Fasting the spending on the unnecessaries
 - Relinquishing the right to purchase that one tantalizing item
 - Asking God to show you who to give to and how much
 - Being willing to give away your resources, even beyond what is normal or humanly sane
 - Saving - choosing to put aside as a discipline rather than spend it all away
3. **The Sleeping** - To sleep at impulse and craving (letting body define need), leads to nervous disorder, depression, emotional vulnerability, greater susceptibility to anxiety, greater propensity to give way to drowsiness at the flesh's dictates.

The Sleeping Tests

- To "keep the hour" and go to bed early
- To "keep the hour" and rise consistently and early
- To deliberately choose to redeem more hours of your day for prayer and study
- To never try and negotiate with your body when the alarm goes off, but rather, command your body to rise up!
- To not excuse yourself, based on how you feel or based on when you got to bed the night before

- Stay watchful, even in sleep, and never accept anything in the night season to sway you from full focus on Jesus Christ and complete consistency with His pure nature
4. **The Sexuality** - To feed sexual craving at the impulse of the body (letting physical wants dictate behavior), leads to clouding of spiritual life, dumbness of soul, numbness of spirit, leads to vulnerability of greater and more damaging moral failure

The Sexuality Tests

- To immediately look away, to not turn that dangerous thought even one revolution within your mind
 - To guard the heart and not let it give way nor let slip out, even one unguarded emotion
 - Stop the flirting - stop trying to get others to see you, to find you appealing, and to notice your qualities
 - To give up the pursuit, to let God write your love story - hand over the pen to God and turn your attentions away from relationships with the opposite sex and focus completely on a relationship with Him
 - Guard your purity - to maintain the capital of purity and don't let anything rob from the vault
5. **The Speaking** - to allow the tongue to speak anything and everything it craves or wants to speak leads to every form of evil. An unbridled tongue is a firestarter. It starts the fires of gossip, lies, contention, division, back-biting, envy, unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment.

The Speaking Tests

- Fasting from speaking altogether, or fasting from speaking on certain subjects until proper spiritual governance is established
- Relinquishing the right to speak every thought and only speaking the thoughts that are edifying and life-giving to others
- Give away words of strength - Ask God to show you who to encourage and how to encourage with your tongue
- Stop the gossip that starts on your lips, and don't participate in the gossip that starts on someone else's

- Words spoken hastily, and with emotion, are usually words that shouldn't have been spoken. Take time to pause, weigh, pray, and seek God's answer

6. The Searching - to allow the soul to mentally wander and explore wheresoever the cravings or intrigues of the mind may lead, is to set up the soul for every conceivable disaster. Such looseness of mind is the foundation of gossip, the framework of mental preoccupation, the hearth for all wanderlust away from Christ, and the single greatest distraction from everything true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, praiseworthy, and of good report.

The Searching Tests

- Eliminate the distracting sources of information (News sources, websites, email, texting, television, magazines, etc.)
- Stop the “edgy” conversations, the “I need to know more” conversations, that always hang on the precipice of gossip
- Limit your computer and phone times, or cut them out all together for a space of time

The Natural Cravings of the Body

The five arenas through which the Glory of God is most manifest

1. The Appetite for Food and Drink
2. The Appetite for the Possession of Things
3. The Appetite for Sleep
4. The Appetite for Sensual Pleasure
5. The Appetite for Expression
6. The Appetite for Information

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

The Two Rules of Restraint

1. Don't consider, even for a moment, what you are saying "no" to, but rather, always remember what you are saying "yes" to. In practicing restraint, you are saying "no" to temporal pleasure and the life-deterioration that follows, and meanwhile, you are saying "yes" to God, the excellence of virtuous living, and pleasures that will never fade, even for all eternity.
2. Don't measure restraint by the bare ground which it, at first, necessitates, but by the luscious, green, garden of life that springs forth out of that bare ground.

The Three Captives in Babylon

Their restraint proved them stronger, healthier, more capable than others, and ready rulers of a nation

And so, all mighty men of God have learned to deny themselves and keep their bodies under, and God has set their souls on fire, helped them to win victory against all odds, and bless the whole world.

Samuel Brengle

HTH, 53

The preparation for underground work is deep spiritualization. As we peel an onion in preparation for its use, so God must "peel" from us what are mere words, sensations of our enjoyments in religion, in order to arrive at the reality of our faith. Jesus has told us "that whosoever will follow" Him will have to "take up their cross," and He, Himself, showed how heavy this cross can be. We have to be prepared for this.

We have to make the preparation now before we are imprisoned. In prison you lose everything. You are undressed and given a prisoner's suit. No more nice furniture, nice carpets or nice curtains. You do not have a wife or husband any more and you do not have your children. You do not have your library and you never see a flower. Nothing of what makes life pleasant remains. Nobody resists who has not renounced the pleasures of life beforehand.

I personally use an exercise. I live in the United States of America. Can you imagine what an American supermarket looks like? You find there many delicious things. I look at everything and say to myself, "I can go without this thing and that thing; this thing is very nice, but I can go

without: this third thing I can go without, too." I visited the whole supermarket and did not spend one dollar. I had the joy of seeing many beautiful things and the second joy to know that I can go without.

Richard Wurmbrand

Preparing for the Underground Church

The Ellerslie 2-Week Challenge

2 Weeks of Purposeful Pursuit of a Healthier Spiritual Physique

Disclaimer: *There will be many moments in which you will want to give up, give in, and give way. This will certainly not be fun, but it will be extraordinary.*

The Basic Guidelines to the E2WC

1. Make a 2-Week commitment
2. Pick two arenas of need (out of the five differing appetites). If you ask the Holy Spirit, I'm certain He would love to highlight the ones in your life that could use some extra focus.
 - The Stomach
 - The Spending
 - The Sleeping
 - The Sexuality
 - The Speaking
 - The Searching
3. Commit to journal the journey (or at least jot down some of your observations)
4. Notify at least one person of your commitment (so that you know someone else knows of your bold step)
5. Come back on the morning of Sunday, December 8th. I'd like to debrief our experiences. Like the three captives in Babylon, I'd like to trumpet the power and real-world effect of the Spirit restraint upon the soul.