

The Danger of Complacency

“For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the **complacency** of fools destroys them;” - *Proverbs 1:3 ESV*

The other day I was in an nearby city. I was trying to decide where to go for a meal. My first thought was a famous pancake house because I love their blueberry pancake combo with eggs and hashbrowns. But I have been trying to lose weight upon the urging of my doctor. I have been doing pretty good on my eating patterns. And I was telling myself, “Glenn you’ve been a good boy – you’re are only five pounds from your goal weight.”

I was feeling **comfortable** with my progress. Comfortable. I might as well say what I was feeling: **complacent**. My guard was down, my thoughts of eating less sugar and less food in general were gone out of my mind. I relaxed my vigilance and took up my old patterns of self-talk -- “Oh, you are tired and real hungry, you deserve to treat yourself. It’s okay. It’s okay!” Besides me talking to myself in my head, who does that sound like to you? The devil! Satan might be on my shoulder, but he’s got a real good partner who is inside of me sitting comfortably in my brain. Pride, whose alias is ego. My pride is the main instrument of the devil in my personality. For years the familiar refrain in my brain has been:

It’s okay Glenn,
go ahead my boy,
it’s just a tiny little sin
you deserve to enjoy!

The first phrase of that Proverb 1:3 is: “For the **simple**” – **SIMPLE**! It’s so simple. Just do what you’re used to doing. Eat what you **feel** like eating. As usual, I fell back on my usual pattern of following my **feelings**. Now that is not always a bad thing, for I think the Holy Spirit sometimes uses our feelings to boost inspiration or motivation in us.

But when the feelings are attached to a bad habit, they can be dangerous and, as the rest of that Proverb goes on to say, they can trip you up with “**the complacency of fools.**” When I become too comfortable with my progress toward righting my wrongs, it is almost inevitable that I am headed for a fall. The final phrase of that Proverb is: “**destroys them.**” Depending on the degree of harm of a habit, it can end in death, either physical death or spiritual death.

Let me list a few bad habits

1. Too much television watching or computer screen time, especially right before going to sleep can alert and stimulate the mind when the need is to start coming down and letting go of stuff that activates our minds and keeps us from going to sleep or things that will interrupt our sleep. Too much of the silver screen can lead to eating fast food, weight gain, and sleep deprivation.
2. Another bad habit: dwelling on the past. We can’t change the past no matter how much we think about it. Replaying the past can make us feel anxious, worried, fearful, or depressed.
3. Lashing out at people or conjuring up insults from others. The stress of the daily grind takes a toll and can lead to anger and resentment. We probably need to ask ourselves, What events **triggered** the emotion? Maybe silence is a good thing especially if it takes us away from, for example, watching too much football on TV. Now I love football and I know how hard it is to stop the action of a game and be silent for a few seconds but I have also noticed that sometimes watching football makes me tense and tired – especially if my team is losing.

Addictions are very bad habits that affect the power to think, make decisions and also affects patterns of behavior. And we know the horrible toll of addictions of all kinds, how they can lead to divorce, bankruptcy or even suicide. So, the Proverb advising us to avoid complacency is warning us that it can keep us from God, and away from following Jesus. Perhaps the best way to avoid complacency and self-satisfaction: Asking ourselves if this is bringing me closer to Jesus.

Finally, in Romans 12: 1-5, Paul says

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with **sober judgment**, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.