

## Poison Cupcakes

By Heather Blake

I have celiac disease, which essentially means I am allergic to wheat and gluten. At work, coworkers are constantly bringing in treats, most of which I can't eat. They stand around enjoying cupcakes or donuts and say to me, "Heather, you must have so much self-control!" I want to say, "Not really!" It takes no self-control at all not to eat something that would give me hours of severe pain and days of discomfort, maybe even landing me in the hospital. Why would I be tempted to eat poison? It is no merit of mine to say "no" in this case.

I feel this applies well to the problem of temptation to sin. I have never been tempted to drink, commit adultery, take drugs, or go out partying. Is it any merit of mine then that I have not done these things? Can I feel better about myself or superior to others who are tempted by them and then succumb? I will borrow the Apostle Paul's words - "Certainly not!"

I can only feel good about avoiding things that I am actually tempted by: Impatience. Anger. Unkind words. Pride. These too are sins. These too sent our Savior to His cross. I must not judge these sins any lesser, nor dismiss them as "faults in my character," nor fight the temptation any less than the more obvious, physical, "active" sins. If I allow myself to be proud for avoiding things I consider distasteful, and yet indulge myself in other equally unhealthy delicacies, I am perhaps in a worse state than one who sins with regret, knowing they do wrong and repenting immediately. I have become the Pharisee looking down my nose at the Tax Collector. God save me from such sinful indulgence - it must be a much harder habit to break! "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others..." (Luke 18:9-14)

### "I'd Rather See A Sermon"

By Edgar A. Guest

I'd rather see a sermon  
than hear one any day;  
I'd rather one should walk with me  
than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil  
and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing,  
but example's always clear;  
And the best of all preachers  
are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see good put in action  
is what everybody needs.  
I soon can learn to do it  
if you'll let me see it done;  
I can watch your hands in action,  
but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lecture you deliver  
may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lessons  
by observing what you do;  
For I might misunderstand you  
and the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding  
how you act and how you live.

Douglas Nichols went to India to be a missionary, but while he was just starting to study the native dialects, he became infected with tuberculosis and had to be put in a sanitarium. It was not a good place to be. It was unclean and conditions were difficult because there were so many sick people and so

few caregivers. Doug decided to do the best he could in that situation, and took a bunch of Bibles and tracts trying to teach the gospel to the other patients in the sanitarium.

But when he tried to pass out tracts, no one wanted them. He tried to hand out Bibles, but no one would take them. He tried to talk with them, but he was limited because of his inability to communicate in their dialect, and was very discouraged. There he was; his illness meant he would be there a long time. And it seemed that the work that he went to do would not be done because no one would listen to him.

Because of his tuberculosis, every night at about 2 o'clock he would wake up with chronic coughing that wouldn't quit. One night when he awoke, he noticed across the aisle an old man trying to get out of bed. The man would roll himself up into a little ball and teeter back and forth trying to get momentum to get up and stand on his feet. But he just couldn't do it. He was too weak. Finally, after several attempts the old man laid back and wept. The next morning Doug understood why the man was weeping. He was trying to get up to go to the bathroom and didn't have enough strength to do that. His bed was a mess and there was a smell in the air.

The other patients made fun of the old man. The nurses came to clean up his bed and they weren't kind to him, either. In fact, one of them even slapped him in the face. The old man just laid there and cried. Doug said, "That next night about 2 o'clock I started coughing again. I looked across the way and there was the old man trying to get out of bed once more. I really didn't want to do it, but somehow I managed to get up and I walked across the aisle and I helped the old man stand up. But he was too weak to walk, so I took him in my arms and half carried him to the bathroom, which was nothing more than a hole in the floor, stood beside him to balance him while he took care of himself. Then I carried him back to his bed and laid him down. As I turned to leave he reached up and grabbed my face and pulled me close and said what I think was 'Thank you.'"

"The next morning there were patients waiting when I awoke, and they asked if they could have some of the Bibles and tracts I brought. Others had questions about the God I worshiped. Over the next few weeks, I gave out all the literature brought, and many of the nurses and patients ended up obeying the gospel."

Doug writes: "Now what did I do? I didn't preach a sermon. I couldn't even communicate in their language. I didn't have gifts or money to offer. All I did was take an old man to the bathroom, and anyone can do that."

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1John 4:7-8).

The most profound and effective sermons are not preached by me in that pulpit, but by you in your treatment of those who are weak, or suffering, or are in want. Why do you think Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth."? "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16).

### **Repay Evil with Good**

The story is told of a man in Massachusetts many years ago who found his neighbor's horse in the middle of his wheat field. He was so angry about it that he took the horse to the public impoundment. Meeting the owner soon after this, he told him what he had done and added, "If I catch him there again, I will do the same thing."

The neighbor replied, "Well, the other night I looked out of my window and saw your cattle in my corn field. I took your cattle and drove them over to your house, and put them in the barn, and fixed your gate. If I catch them in my fields again, I will do the same thing." The man was reportedly so struck with his neighbor's soft reply that he at once took the horse out of the pound and paid the charges himself.

Perhaps the most difficult command given to us by Jesus concerns our attitude toward those we view as enemies. It is hard to restrain ourselves when we have been mistreated or when a hateful attitude has been shown toward us. The natural response is to repay evil for evil. But we will only be able to make an impact on the world around us by following the example of Jesus Christ, and are willing to repay good for evil.

"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy is

hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:17-21).

### **Standing Still on the Narrow Way**

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matt. 7:13-14)

Whether or not you reach your chosen destination depends on two things: 1) moving forward; 2) keeping on the right path. You cannot stand still on the right path. Neither will it avail to be the swiftest horse on the wrong race track! The entire book of Hebrews warns that standing still leads to drifting away (Hebrews 2:1). Obviously, if you are on the broad way, it doesn't matter how fast or efficiently you are working, you are headed toward destruction. (From Oscar C. Miles)

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- Gambling is a great way of getting nothing for something.
- One cannot get very far in life if he keeps trying to cover his tracks.
- The longer one carries a grudge, the heavier it gets.
- Whenever one kills a little time, he also murders a lot of opportunity.
- Bad habits are like a comfortable bed: easy to get into, but difficult to get out of.
- Grandpa used a tranquilizer, too; but, he called it work.
- Feel sorry for the person who feels he must win at everything.
- A lie may take care of the present, but it has no future.