

# Fruit, Sticks, and Other “Little Things”

Joe Slater

Little things matter. Our Lord Himself said, *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much”* (Luke 16:10).

In Eden, it was simply fruit. Sure, God said not to eat that particular kind (Genesis 2:16, 17), but who’s going to get all worked up over a piece of fruit? Is fruit really that important to God? You might want to check with Adam and Eve on that; they have first-hand experience. But don’t look for them in Eden. It seems God expelled them from their paradise home – something about eating forbidden fruit . . .

In the wilderness it was sticks. Sure, God told Israel not to perform ordinary labor on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17), but who’s going to get all worked up over a few sticks? Are sticks really that important to God? We could ask the man in Numbers 15:32-36 if only we could find him under that pile of rocks . . .

Those today who are bent on restructuring the Lord’s church into an evangelical denomination claim that the changes they are making are really no big deal. Matters such as gender roles, instrumental music in worship, and the frequency of the Lord’s Supper are “non-issues” according to them – they just don’t matter and are not even worthy of discussion. We who insist on strict adherence to God’s word in these and all other areas receive disdainful looks and change-the-subject comments like “just tell the lost about Jesus,” or “feeding the hungry is what’s really important.”

Jesus certainly did say that some matters are “weightier” than others (Matthew 23:23). He illustrated

this fact in the very next verse, denouncing His critics *“who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”* However, corrupting the worship of God and disregarding his teaching regarding gender roles can scarcely be classified as “gnat” issues! The New Testament’s instructions on gender roles have their basis in the creation itself (1 Timothy 2:12-14); and worship throughout both testaments has always been a crucial matter where reverence for God precludes any tampering.

Put a frog in a pan of water and place it over a very low flame. In time, the water temperature goes up one degree. The frog doesn’t even notice. It goes up another degree . . . and then another . . . Long before he catches on, the poor frog is dead!

Little things matter!

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## UNSECURED? OR JUST INSECURE?

Anyone who has ever sought a loan from a bank knows the first thing they ask is, "Do you have collateral?" Or, "Do you have any security?" If you answer "no" then you likely will not get a loan. As one, rejected applicant, responded, "I have to have something before can get something." But there is a process whereby someone might offer to co-sign, thus becoming your collateral.

Spiritually speaking, we owe a debt which we cannot pay. Also, we have nothing to offer as collateral. Nor do we have anything that will serve as security. Our only hope, then, is to find someone who will (and can), sufficiently secure, and pay, the debt for us.

Jesus Christ is that person. He willingly took upon himself the sins of the world. Through His death, burial and resurrection He paid the price for us. Thus, if we are willing to accept His offer, He will become our collateral. Romans chapter six instructs us as to how we can receive the security of Christ.

So, now that we know that our debt is secured and that we are not unsecured, the question becomes, "Are we insecure?"

Security is the state of being protected by collateral; but do we accept that with an unwavering faith, or do we still have some doubts about our salvation? Are you secure and yet feel insecure? Well, you shouldn't! Jesus has done His part; now we must have confidence in the security that He has given to us.

Paul tells us that through obedience to the gospel we have the assurance of our inheritance which has been pledged. (Ephesians 1:13-14).

In John we read, *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life”* (I John 5:13).

*“That you may know.”* It just cannot get any plainer. Be secure, not insecure!

--Roy Allen Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)