

## *I DON'T CARE! (OR DO I?)*

Joe Slater

What things do you care about? Ask what I want for supper and I'll probably say, "I don't care." That doesn't help the chef much, but it's true – I'm really not that concerned. If you gave me a choice of occupations, however, I have a definite preference! I enjoy what I do, and have no desire to do anything else.

The New Testament uses different words for "care." One means to be anxious and fretful. The other means being interested in, or taking forethought about. Peter uses both terms in telling us we should be "*casting all your care (anxiety) upon Him because He cares for (is interested in) you*" (1 Peter 5:7).

When Jesus and the disciples were in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, they asked Him, "*Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?*" (Mark 4:38). Of course Jesus was interested in the safety of His men! But He wasn't worried.

Martha thought Jesus should tell her sister, Mary, to help her with household duties. "*Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?*" (Luke 10:40). But the Lord's priorities were spiritual in nature, and so were Mary's – Jesus would not rebuke her.

What do you care about? What interests you so that you take forethought about it? In other words, what are your priorities? Too often our interest is focused on here-and-now issues that have little, if any, eternal significance. We may even worry about such things! Jesus said our top priority should be God's kingdom (having Him reign over us) and His righteousness (being in a right relationship with Him). By caring about these things, we eliminate worry regarding material matters (Matthew 6:25-34).

## Of Hogs And Men

Once there was a small town on the edge of a large forest. In the forest lived a large herd of wild pigs. These hogs would ravage the villagers' crops, gardens, and yards. Finally the townsfolk had enough, so they formed a band of men to hunt the hogs. But they found that the wild pigs were smart and wily. So they called on a famous hunter to help them.

When he arrived with his supplies and announced his plan of action, they were quite surprised. Here's what he did: First, he put out some corn in a clearing. After several days, he noticed the hogs had finally found the place and eaten all the corn. He then replaced the corn and, of course, the hogs came back. After a few more times of this, he put up fence posts around the corn. In a few days, he then added the wire. A few more days of this and he then added the gate. Finally one morning, while the pigs were greedily eating the corn, he sneaked up and simply closed the gate. When the villagers complimented him on his brilliance, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Those hogs were mine the day they ate their first mouthful of corn."

We need to be warned of Satan's devices (cf. 2 Cor. 2:11), and one of them is getting us accustomed to sinning. We may think when we sin that it doesn't seem harmful, or that we will not get caught, or that we can stop anytime – but what we may not realize is that while we habitually sin and justify it, Satan is building a fence around us. And if we get caught in the practice of sin long enough, he will even close the gate.

The Hebrews writer warned his readers (and all Christians) of the danger of falling into this trap:

\* Heb. 3:13 says that sin is deceitful.

\* Heb. 11:25 calls sin a passing pleasure.

\* Heb. 12:1 warns that sin can easily ensnare us.

Don't get caught in Satan's trap. Repent and get out of that lifestyle of sin. Let Jesus free you from the bondage of sin. "*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*" (John 8:36)

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)

## Do Not Disturb!

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

I have always been fascinated by the lore of the RMS Titanic. Since the discovery of the ship's wreckage in 1985, I've watched videos, studied photographs, and learned all I can about its history. Perhaps the most amazing thing is how the ship sits in perpetual darkness on the bottom of the frigid Atlantic. If not for modern technology, the great ship would be forever lost.

Centuries before Christ, the prophet Micah used the ocean depths as a way to create a beautiful image of God's forgiveness. Seeking reconciliation and restoration with Israel, Micah described how God "*delights in mercy*" (7:18) and would cast His people's sins "*into the depths of the sea*" (7:19). Metaphorically, the prophet creates an image of sin being taken to the bottom by its own weight. Once there, it is forever out of sight, never to be brought up again.

Today, people delight in viewing artifacts salvaged from the Titanic. I've twice had the opportunity to tour the traveling exhibit. On the other hand, some create for themselves undue heartache and stress by "bringing up" sins which God has forgiven. The forces of darkness are also willing contributors, seeking to cause believers doubt and worry over the events of the past. Some may question the morality of bringing up items from the Titanic, but worries over forgiven sin should never be in question.

May their remains rest on the bottom... in pieces!

--Kenny Westmorland (Celina, TN)