

## *Every Litter Bit Hurts*

Joe Slater

“Keep America Beautiful!” So exhorted a public service ad several decades ago (I’m reverting to my childhood again). Along with it came another slogan: “Every litter bit hurts.” I presume that was in contrast to the more positive cliché, “Every little bit helps.”

Yes, every litter bit really does hurt. Our oceans are full of plastic, and work crews pick up trash along the highways. Is it really that difficult to stash the trash until we can dispose of it properly? Evidently so, at least in the minds of some careless souls.

But this article really isn’t about tossing fast food containers out of your car window. Instead, let’s think of sin as litter. We tend to minimize sin unless it’s an outrageous act like murder or adultery. Just as a litter bug might rationalize, “it’s only a scrap of paper,” we shrug off the one vulgar word, the single neglected duty, the solitary bad habit nobody else knows about. As long as we avoid “the big stuff,” we let the rest slide.

But every one of those “litter bits” hurts us. They numb the conscience, making us less and less sensitive to sin. They diminish our appreciation for the holiness of God, in whose image we are made.

I’m all for “Keeping America Beautiful.” But I’m more concerned about keeping our souls beautiful. In both cases, “every litter bit hurts!”

## *The Exclusivity Of Truth*

Truth is whatever conforms to fact or reality. Outside of Christendom, our culture has adopted quite a different definition which is little more than personal opinion. The veritable smorgasbord of “truths” in our world creates unease in some Christians who have been told that insisting upon the exclusivity of truth is arrogant and narrow-minded. Yet we cannot get away from the fact that over five dozen times the New Testament identifies the gospel with the definite article as “*the* truth.”

When the apostle Paul referred to the gospel, he called it “*my gospel*” instead of “my truth” (Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 2:8). He simply expressed the same sentiment that Jesus did. Our Lord did not teach that He was only one of many avenues to eternal life; instead, He said things like, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6). He also stated that only by abiding in His word could a person be His true disciple so that they would know - and be liberated by - the truth (John 8:31-32).

If Christ is indeed the only avenue to the Father, it is not unloving to say so, any more than it is unloving to identify the only possible answer to a specific problem or offer the only known remedy to a particular illness. Indeed, the unloving thing would be to offer false hope by suggesting unsuccessful solutions that cannot save.

--Dewayne Bryant (via Carolina Messenger)

## **Trophy For Sale**

One day last summer I was on my way to lunch when I drove by a house that was having a rummage sale. Even though I did not stop for the sale, I could not help but notice the display closest to the street—what caught my eye was a table filled with old trophies that were now for sale on someone's driveway.

I had to wonder why anyone would be interested in purchasing a used trophy. What could they possibly do with it? The trophies for sale probably had the name of the recipient engraved on them, along with a brief description of their meritorious actions. Who would want to put someone else's trophy on their mantle?

Later, I began to wonder why the seller wanted to get rid of their old trophies in the first place. I am sure that at one time those trophies held a lot of value, or at least some emotional attachment. Trophies usually signify some accomplishment—they serve to remind us of some success in our business or personal life. Maybe a bowling trophy loses its luster when one stops bowling. That trophy from a winning high school football season might not seem as important thirty years later when your own children are in college. What we value today might wind up in the trash or on a table at a rummage sale tomorrow.

The truth of the matter is that there is nothing in this life we can carry with us into the next. The trinkets and knick-knacks we treasure here on earth will be of no value in eternity. This being so, it makes one wonder why we spend so much time acquiring earthly possessions, but so little time preparing for the life which is to come.

Suppose you gained all that this world has to offer—what would you really have? A handful of tinsel? Jesus told His disciples: “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Matthew 16:24–26).

--David Padfield (Zion, IL)