

Don't Return to the Vomit!

Biblical Counsel for God's People

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The Bible addresses real issues of life. One can confidently turn to the Word of God to find comfort in afflictions, guidance in uncertainties, strength in weakness, warnings against sin, and commands for Christians. The Scriptures speak of how the people of God must view sin. Sin is a terrible evil. It woos, it traps, it kisses, and then it kills. Sin whispers that its a friend till in the end it slaughters with a death-blow. But the Bible provides the truth that God's people must heed to mortify sin and to guard from patterns of evil.

Like a dog that returns to its vomit, is a fool who repeats his folly.

— Proverbs 26:11

This essay will provide a few helpful thoughts concerning this verse & its application.

1. Be sensitive to sin & inform your conscience by Scripture.

The people of God must inform their consciences regularly with biblical truth so that the conscience is tender toward sin. Believers must not allow their consciences to become calloused and hardened. Reading the Word, understanding what He says, reflecting on the gospel, being in awe of God and His character, and seeking true godliness is what Christians must constantly attend to. This will keep them sensitive to sin, focused on Christ, and zealous toward holiness.

2. Going back to vomit is disgusting.

Everyone has seen it. The dog will return to its own vomit and begin to lick it up. Everyone sees it and everyone makes a sour face when it occurs. This precisely is the picture that Solomon brings to mind when he talks about a person returning *again* to that *same* sin. This is the person who falls into transgression and refuses to repent of it, mortify it, and slaughter it. He, in fact, enjoys the sin (or, part of the sin) and stubbornly holds on to it. The man who sins and does not kill it and take diligent efforts to eradicate that sin from his life is in a dangerous situation. It's as if he is walking back to the vomit of his sin that he committed before. He walks toward it, he smells it, he circles it a few times, he looks at it, he makes sure others aren't nearby and then he begins to lick that putrid pile of abominable vomit again. Don't go back to your vomit!

3. God labels you a fool if you continually repeat folly.

God holds no punches in the Word of God. He does not flatter. He lovingly speaks truth and reproves evildoers. The person who sins and then *returns* to that same sin again (and, repeatedly) is a fool. He lives foolish in his practical affairs and he conducts himself stubbornly in religious matters. He has no regard for God and is hard-hearted toward the gospel. He is not sensitive toward sin nor is he demonstrating a longing after Christlikeness. This foolish person opposes

God, rejects Scripture, refuses to believe, and reveals a hardened heart. Don't go to the vomit and be this kind of fool.

In light of all this, what are some practical helps to set upon your heart?

1. Get God's Wisdom from Scripture

The greatest book in all the world is God's Book. Nothing is more important in all the universe than having the divine, perfect, sufficient, and unchanging revelation from Almighty God contained in the Bible. So, child of God, learn it. Study it. Get God's wisdom from the Word of God. The Bible makes wise the simple. It imparts understanding. It contains the mind of God. It is, in fact, the Truth. The Bible is more relevant than any current event that could happen tomorrow. Since this is true, know the Bible, read it, and imbibe God's wisdom from Scripture.

2. Inform your conscience & keep it tender.

Returning to sin will kill. Like someone who tries an addictive substance, if he returns to it again and again, it'll eventually kill him. So it is with sin. What's the safeguard? Read the Word and let it inform your conscience by the truth contained in it. Let Scripture be your guard in life, your standard for life, your map toward holiness, and your comfort in distress. Keep your conscience tender by swimming in the sweet waters of Scripture. Be tender toward sin. The conscience is a gift from God and this mechanism alerts you as to when you've violated the internal law -- warning system that God has put inside you. Keep it tender. Don't let it become callous.

3. Confess your sin, receive God's forgiveness & forsake it.

Be constant in confession. Be daily in devotion. Be regular in repentance. If you make no war with sin, then be sure that sin's battle against you will ultimately turn out for its victory and your demise. If you have any desire to be holy as a child of God you must be constant before the Throne of Grace bringing your requests to God, seeking the grace of Christ, and receiving the abundant pardon available in the gospel. Confess your sins and then abandon them. Make the decisive break with them once and for all. Allow no pet sins. Have no cherished, or beloved, sin. Don't permit secret sins in your soul. Slaughter the entirety of your sin. He who amputates a leg has not killed the whole person. Don't cut off a finger of your sin and think that you've dealt adequately with it. Mortify it and replace it with a holy zeal for Christlikeness and gospel-delight.

4. Resolve to live purely & NOT return to, sniff & then eat your vomit again.

As abominable as the thought is of returning to your vomit so abominable should it be to consider returning to a sin again. Let the people of God recognize God's view of sin. He likens it to vomit. And the stupidity of returning to that particular sin is akin to turning around, seeking, and finding pleasure in that vomit. What a heinous thought! How disturbing. Let God's truth remind God's people to be pure in life and be always striving to change. God's people must repeatedly pray with the psalmist: "Make me walk in the path of your commandments for I delight in it" (Ps 119:35). The Bible says that the one who confesses *and forsakes* his sin will find compassion (Prov 28:13). Let all true Christians resolve to live holy lives and adamantly refuse, by God's grace and by the Spirit's enablement, to return to, sniff, and then eat that old sin-vomit again.