

Burn Ointment**971123**

During our many escapades in the mountains, we generally try to follow the established procedures for optimum camping and hiking. Sometimes, however, there are situations that we find ourselves in where we have to develop our own strategies. Take for instance, chafing problems in the middle region of the body. This has proved to be a formidable challenge when you are undergoing a "death march" through the Smoky Mountains. I don't know of any other theme that has generated quite as much discussion and variety of opinion.

Once damage has been done, however, there is then the question of what is the best treatment. I suggested a creme designed to ease muscle pain to one sufferer, but after applying a little bit of it this it was quickly determined to be the wrong prescription. Reading the fine print made it very clear that this was not to be applied to an open wound or raw skin. Wrapping in moleskin or toilet paper was not a great solution, either.

A couple of guys decided to ask their local pharmacist what they could suggest to ease the chafing problem. The pharmacist gave them a plastic bottle labeled merely: Burn Ointment. This was taken on the next big hike and used very enthusiastically whenever discomfort was felt. But by the end of the hike they were having real problems, which continued for several days. After a couple of trips with this kind of mixed success, they finally asked the pharmacist what was in the ointment.

"The ointment doesn't seem to be easing the friction problem," they complained.

"That ointment won't help with that," the pharmacist answered. "All it does is deaden the pain for a while."

And so it was discovered that a bit of a communication gap had been experienced.

One can only hope that there was a lesson to be found in this painful experience, and I believe that I have found out what it is. The real problem was that the burn ointment numbed the pain so that we could keep doing what we wanted to do, even though it was destroying us inside. When the medicine wore off; the pain really began. We sometimes do the same thing in life, finding something that we can use to numb our mind so that we can do what we want. But the damage is being done to our souls. We can use alcohol, drugs, and so many other things to keep us from dealing with the pain of life. But it is only in facing life head-on that we can truly remove the pain without damage.

There is great evil in the loss of feeling. We all know that even though we do not like pain, if it was totally eliminated we would suffer great damage simply because we did not know what was happening to us. If we pursue evil enough, then as Timothy says in 1 Tim 4:2, our conscience will be as though it was seared with a hot iron. Once this is done, there is not much hope for recovery. We all have the problem of having to deal with pain in our lives. The only solution is through the Great Physician. Our love for His Goodness will see us through.

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