

Cleansing 6: Dirt Transferral**9612**

Everyone has heard of Murphy's Law, I guess. "If anything can go wrong it will." There are many humorous variations of this principle, but there is an element of truth in them, too. Take for example, Imbese's law of the conservation of filth: "In order for something to become clean, something else must become dirty." Then there is Freeman's extension of this principle: "...but you can get everything dirty without getting anything clean." I have had many experiences with the latter part, that of basically messing up everything.

I would like to relate a little personal experience which I think illustrates somewhat our response to sin in our lives. One day some years ago, the air conditioner began to make a strange rattling noise. With a high opinion of my own fix-it ability, I pulled the inside workings of the air conditioner partially out of its case and propped it up at the front. I then turned it on so as to be able to hear better where the rattle might be coming from. But immediately after I turned it on, the blower sucked up the curtains that were hanging up on the window next to the unit. Suddenly I wasn't so impressed with myself anymore. Unwinding the curtains from the blower shaft, I saw to my dismay that they were ripped in places and had some oil spots on them. I took them down and began trying everything that I could think of to get out the stains. I wanted to get them clean, repaired, and back up on the rod so that no one would notice what had happened. But nothing that I could do would remove the stain. Finally, I just decided to put them up anyway, arranging them so that the spots were always hidden. So I arranged for a while, but soon I was ready to give up. When I just decided not to try to hide it, I felt much better.

I think that this shows three basic attitudes that we go through when first we realize that we are sinners, that we are 'unclean.' First we try to remove it ourselves by 'good works.' Since we cannot completely remove it, we try to hide it, acting like we are not capable of such sin. But relief only comes upon confessing it to God, for only then, from 1 John 1:10, are we really cleansed from it. If now you feel dirty before God, you needn't be. You can feel the cleansing power in the blood of Jesus Christ if you choose to make use of it.

Going back to the idea in the first paragraph, though, where does the dirt go if we become clean? I am able to move dirt from one place to another, sort of spreading it out. But how do we get rid of it entirely? More importantly, where does the dirt in our spiritual lives go once we are cleansed? In 1 Peter 2:24 we read, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." Christ indeed became dirty in a sense when he cleansed us, and He had to bear that disgrace on the cross. At this point it was disposed of somehow. But we owe to Christ a huge debt for carrying this burden for us, for we could not have dealt with it ourselves. This is the sacrifice that causes us to worship.

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