

Removing the Tent Pegs of Paganism

Have you ever wondered why some Christians who start strong in their faith end up struggling or falling away? The answer often lies not in major sins or dramatic failures, but in the small, seemingly insignificant compromises we make along the way.

The Danger of Despising Small Beginnings

In Zechariah 4:10, we're warned: "Who has despised the day of small things?" This powerful question reminds us that everything significant in life starts small. Your own life began as something microscopic before growing into who you are today.

Jesus reinforced this principle in Luke 16:10 when He said, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much. And he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."

The truth is, both good and bad things in our lives begin as seeds. The small choices we make daily determine the direction and quality of our lives.

What Are the Tent Pegs in Your Life?

Think about a tent. What holds it up? What gives it shape? What keeps it secure when storms come? It's the tent pegs - those small, often overlooked components that determine where and how securely you live.

In biblical times, tents weren't just temporary shelters; they were homes. Where people placed their tent pegs determined where they would live and how secure their dwelling would be.

The Cautionary Tale of Lot

Consider the story of Lot in Genesis 13. He was Abraham's nephew, raised like a son after his father died. The Bible describes Lot as a righteous man who had faith. Yet his life ended in tragedy - living in a cave, impoverished, and morally compromised.

What went wrong? It started with where he pitched his tent. Genesis 13:12-13 tells us: "Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord."

Lot made a small decision that seemed insignificant at the time - he positioned his tent toward Sodom. This "tent peg" pointed in the direction of wickedness, and eventually, he moved from being near Sodom to living in Sodom, becoming a leader there.

Though God mercifully rescued him before destroying the city, Lot lost everything because of where he had placed his tent pegs.

How Small Compromises Lead to Major Downfalls

The Bible warns in Song of Solomon that it's "the little foxes that spoil the vine." First Corinthians 5:6 reminds us that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" - just a pinch of yeast works through an entire batch of dough.

Consider these examples of how small compromises can lead to disaster:

Lot's Attitude of Compromise

When angels rescued Lot from Sodom, they instructed him to flee to the mountains. Instead of simply obeying, Lot argued and asked to go to a nearby city instead, saying, "Is it not a little one?" (Genesis 19:20).

His attitude of minimizing small things - "it's just a little city" - revealed the mindset that led to his downfall. He ended up in the mountains anyway, but only after losing everything.

Achan's "Small" Theft

In Joshua 7, we read how the Israelites were defeated at Ai because one man, Achan, had taken "a beautiful Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold" from Jericho - items that were supposed to be destroyed.

This seemingly small act of disobedience led to defeat for the entire nation and ultimately cost Achan and his family their lives.

Why We Underestimate Small Things

We often fail to take small things seriously because:

- We don't see their potential for growth
- We rationalize them as "not a big deal"
- We focus on managing big problems while ignoring small ones
- We don't realize how small choices shape our character

Just as a microscopic embryo grows into a full human being, small compromises grow into life-altering problems if not addressed.

The Mirror of God's Word

The Bible serves as a mirror that shows us both our potential in Christ and the areas that need correction. When we look into this mirror:

- We see who we are in Christ - righteous, blessed, healed, protected
- We also see the small issues that need to be addressed

Just as you'd want someone to tell you if you had food stuck in your teeth, God's Word lovingly points out the small issues in our lives before they become big problems.

Life Application

How can we apply these truths to our daily lives?

- Examine the small things in your life. What tent pegs have you placed that might be pointing in the wrong direction? What small compromises have you been making in your entertainment choices, attitudes, or habits?
- Don't despise small beginnings in your spiritual growth. Be faithful with small acts of obedience, prayer, and Bible study. These will grow into a strong, mature faith.
- Take immediate action on small issues. Don't wait until problems become crises before addressing them. Deal with impatience, dishonesty, or disrespect while they're still small.
- Remain teachable and correctable. Welcome the mirror of God's Word and the input of spiritual leaders who can help you see blind spots.

- Choose blessing daily. As Deuteronomy reminds us, we must "choose this day" whom we will serve. Every day is a new opportunity to align our tent pegs with God's purposes.

Questions to Consider:

- What "small" compromises have I been making that could be undermining my spiritual life?
- Where am I placing my tent pegs - toward godliness or toward worldliness?
- Am I taking God's Word seriously enough to let it correct the small issues in my life?
- In what areas am I saying "no" to God's direction, thinking I have a better plan?
- How can I be more faithful in the small things this week?

Remember, it's not the big, dramatic failures that usually derail our faith - it's the small, seemingly insignificant compromises we make along the way. By being faithful in small things, we position ourselves for God's blessing and protection in every area of life.

Quotes

1. "We often underestimate small things because we don't recognize their potential for growth."
2. "God doesn't want us to despise the day of small things."
3. "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much. And he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."
4. "It's the little things in life that can spoil your life, that can completely mess it up. In fact, nothing big in life started big—everything starts small. Even you."
5. "Everything begins as a seed. Every good thing and every bad thing starts small. That's why we must take the little things in life seriously."

6. "Where you place your tent pegs is where you live. If the tent is your home, then wherever those pegs are driven into the ground, that's where your life will grow and develop. The quality of your life will be determined by where you place those small and seemingly insignificant tent pegs."
7. "Every great fall begins small. No one's downfall started great. We only notice it when it becomes great, but it always began as something little."
8. "Never underestimate the little good you do—or the little wrong you allow. Take every detail of your life seriously, because it matters."
9. "The safest place to be is in the will of God."
10. "What you allow yourself to get by with is training you. It's shaping you, developing you, and moving you in a direction—whether you realize it or not."
11. "You know why that awful, huge sin happened? Because of the small act of dishonor or disrespect back there. You allowed it, you excused it, you justified it, you watered it—and it grew until it transformed your life."
12. "Sin is simply a piece of Satan in your life."
13. "When we underestimate things, we can end up defeated by them. We can be overthrown and conquered by what we thought was small."
14. "Never underestimate anything. And never go into life—or into battle—without the counsel of the Lord."
15. "You need God in the little just as much as you need Him in the big."
16. "Don't wait until things get desperate before you call on God. Most people wait until desperation, but you need Him now."
17. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."
18. "Things can carry curses. They can carry a residue of demonic influence. That's why you must guard what you watch. Movies aren't just entertainment—they are impartations."

19. "Choose this day: blessing or cursing. Do you want to be cursed, or do you want to be blessed?"

20. "If you stay teachable and correctable, and if you rule over the little things, then you'll be trusted with greater things. Faithfulness in the small makes you a ruler over much."

Verses

1. Zechariah 4:10
2. Luke 16:10
3. Song of Solomon
4. 1 Corinthians 5:6
5. Joshua 7
6. Deuteronomy
7. Genesis 13
8. Genesis 19
9. 2 Peter

Summary

Small, seemingly insignificant compromises often determine our spiritual trajectory more than dramatic failures. Like Lot, whose life spiraled downward after pitching his tent toward Sodom, our small choices establish the direction of our lives. The Bible warns against despising 'small beginnings' and reminds us that faithfulness in little things leads to faithfulness in much. By examining the 'tent pegs' in our lives—those small decisions that determine where and how securely we live—we can identify areas needing correction before they grow into major problems. Taking immediate action on small issues and remaining teachable to God's Word positions us for blessing and protection.