

## Newsletter Teaching for 6-20-07

### Taking the Lid Off

Have you ever had one of those experiences where you dig in the refrigerator, and way in the back is a plastic container that you are sure has some tasty morsel for you, only to pop open the lid and discover a large, furry, green mass that has been growing there for weeks, maybe months? Sure you have, it's called the not-often-enough ritual of cleaning out the 'fridge. It's amazing what can grow in those hidden places when they are covered up and hidden from the light.

It's no different in our personal and corporate lives. When little, seemingly innocent issues get covered up and remain hidden in the dark, they don't just go away or stay the same. They grow the mold of defilement, and sin in the deepest places in our hearts. These are things that disgust God, and keep Him at a distance. If we truly are desperate for His transforming power in our lives and in our churches, then we must be willing to dig into "the back of the 'fridge," and take the lid off of whatever He shows us.

God essentially says this in Hosea 7:1-2, where He states: *"When I would have healed Israel, Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria. For they have committed fraud; A thief comes in; A band of robbers takes spoil outside. They do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; Now their own deeds have surrounded them; They are before My face."* The requirement of God to bring healing and cleansing is literally to uncover wickedness and iniquity in our lives. If that is the requirement of God for our healing, then how willing are we to let those things be uncovered?

### Our "green fuzzy sins"

The Word of God is true, whether it is comfortable for us or not. And it is true as Jeremiah says, that we do can not really know our own hearts because they are "desperately wicked." We must face those "green fuzzy sins" in whatever form they take. For example, one of the biggest issues in all of our lives is pride. It can grow in a number of different forms. Feeling "better" than others because of financial status, physical appearance, ministry accomplishments, position, the people we know, where we live, or what we drive. Pride can manifest itself as a desire for more or better. A subtle desire for more "toys" whether those be shoes (ever hear of shoe love?) or electronics, or the latest sophisticated PDA or phone. It can manifest itself as impatience with those a little slower to understand, or who don't drive quite as skillfully as we do. Religious pride can easily grow in our hearts as we think that our church, or our group have greater truth, or more of the presence of God than others. The roots of pride go deep in our hearts, and only the Holy Spirit of God knows how to pop off the lid and expose them to the light. He will only do that with our permission and cooperation.

"Wickedness" is a word we don't want to use of ourselves, but part of the meaning of the word is moral evil. Wickedness also has many ways to grow in the hidden places in our hearts. It is especially difficult to avoid in our sex saturated media culture in this country. The increase of pornography within the church is a not so subtle reminder of what grows in the darkness. What we allow our eyes to linger on a little too long. The thoughts that go un-checked, and then take root. The magazine or television ads that we allow our eyes to absorb. All of this becomes fertile ground for the growth of the "green fuzzies."

Lying appears twice in the list of seven things the Lord hates in Proverbs 6:16. It's amazing how subtle our words can be to communicate outright or nuances of untruth. We find it easy to exaggerate to impress. This is true not only of individuals, but of churches and ministries. In order to impress others, we find ourselves embellishing a story with some extra information for "dramatic effect." We can use words to manipulate how

other people perceive us. How often do you read of someone who is a “pioneer” or “one of the greatest” in some endeavor or field. Really? The temptation to use words and stories to impress others so that they will give financial support is a huge issue in the Church. The example of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 serves as a warning for us to keep our hearts from lying, which is what they were doing. Claiming our city to be the most networked or the most giving or the most transformed, can be a not so subtle form of deceit. Again, If we are truly desperate for the Holy Lord to bring his transforming presence, then we must be willing to let Him dig deep and take the lid off.

### **How Do We Pray?**

This list could go on, but that is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we are to live a lifestyle of 2 Chronicles 7:14, and humble ourselves, pray and seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, then we must come to a place where we are willing to allow the Lord to “take the lid off.” Start with yourself. Ask the Lord to show you the brutal truth of how He sees your heart. If you sincerely ask, He will, but it will always be with the grace to turn and be healed.

Then, do we dare to pray that in our churches, in our ministries and in our cities, that those things that are hidden would be uncovered? If we want God to come, Hosea 7 tells us this is how God will bring healing, by uncovering those things that are hidden, and covered over. His cleansing and healing brings not only a new sense of freedom and openness, but will then be an attraction for God’s manifest presence to come and dwell. It’s really up to us. Are we willing to take the lid off?