

Garbage

by Jason Moore

Some of the most significant finds of archaeology are not temples and palaces and treasures, but garbage pits. It is in the trash pits of ancient civilizations that archaeologists learn about the diet of a people. They find pieces of broken pottery and can tell such things as the time period in which a people lived, their economic status, their contact with other peoples and cultures. They may find samples of their writing, furniture, weapons, tools, and evidences of their daily habitudes. Yes, you can tell much about a people from what they throw away.

The sorts of things we toss in the garbage pit in our country will tell future generations some things about us. They may think us wasteful. With all the push being made toward recyclable goods and packaging, they may think us primitive that we could not find uses or reuses for discarded materials.

The more perceptive and morally conscious may be appalled by other trends witnessed in America's dump sites. Isn't it a telling mark that we live in a nation that discards the unborn? It says something about the value placed on human life. It tells a tale about a people obsessed with personal liberty. It exposes a people without natural affection.

To bring the matter a little closer to home, you can tell a lot about **yourself** by what **you** throw away. Paul said of himself, *"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but **dung**, that I may win Christ"* (**Philippians 3:7-8**).

Paul's statement tells the tale of a man who had discarded inferior things for things superior. He gave up reputation among men that he might know and be known by Christ. He gave up a degree of political power that he might find a higher one, the *"power of his resurrection"* (**verse 10**). He threw away a life of material gain and relative ease that he might know the *"fellowship of his sufferings"* (**verse 11**).

But Paul acknowledged that he wasn't **"threw"** yet. *"I count not myself to have apprehended ... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (**3:13-14**).

Conversion as Paul illustrates is largely a matter of knowing what to throw away and knowing what to keep. When a believer is baptized God performs a surgery in which He removes the pollution of sin: *"In [Christ] also ye are circumcised **with the circumcision made without hands**, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"* (**Colossians 2:12f.**).

Once we by faith have submitted ourselves to this operation of God, it becomes our responsibility to keep sin in the pile of discarded items. *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ... seeing that ye have **put off the old man with his deeds**; and have **put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him"*** (**Colossians 3:5,9,10**).

So what do you find in your trash pile? Have you yet put off the old man of sin? Please note that the only way to discard sin is by the means that God has prescribed. A man would be a fool to tell his doctor that he trusted him and then not follow his doctor's orders. What of the man who says that he believes in Christ and then ignores the procedure that He prescribes for sin's removal?

[continued on page 364803](#)

364802