



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Ecclesiastes 3:6

(6) A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

*King James Version*

Some things are worthy of treasuring for the rest of our lives, while other things belong in the dumpster.

We all have the natural tendency to cling to what is familiar, even if it proves detrimental to us. Like those who have adopted the Depression mentality, we fearfully and tenaciously cling to self-defeating and destructive behaviors. Many individuals have collected injustices and grudges throughout the years, nursing them and keeping them alive long after the activating event has ceased. Spouses who have gone through an ugly divorce carry these malignancies to the grave after having infected their offspring with the same malignancy.

In his book, *Weight Loss for the Mind*, Stuart Wilde suggests that "letting go" is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for a human being. He suggests that we instinctively "hang on to our family connections, to the certificate we got at school, to our money, we embrace and hang on to our children [sometimes attempting to micromanage their lives into adulthood], we lock our car and hang on to it." People may hang onto books, magazines, cassettes, records, shoes, egg cartons, plastic jugs, bottles, reusable cans, etc. If we keep these items long enough, we sentimentalize them, affectionately calling them antiques.

Henry David Thoreau in *Walden* compares our accumulated belongings to traps we carry around, suggesting

it is the same as if all these traps were buckled to a man's belt, and he could not move over the rough country where our lines are cast without dragging them—dragging his trap. He was a lucky fox that left his tail in the trap. The muskrat will gnaw his third leg off to be free. No wonder man has lost his elasticity.

The difficulty we have in freeing ourselves from physical clutter metaphorically parallels our difficulties getting rid of spiritual clutter. God's Word indicates, however, that we must make a full-fledged effort to rid ourselves of excess baggage. Notice [Hebrews 12:1](#):

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the [sin](#) which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. . . .

Perennial and chronic sin constitutes the unwanted weight or obesity that we desperately desire to shed. This accumulative set of reinforced bad habits and transgressions the apostle Paul identifies as the "old man." He admonishes that we ought to slough off the "old man" like an accumulated mass of dead skin cells or an old discarded garment: ". . . that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" ([Ephesians 4:22](#)).

Paul gets more specific as he identifies particular obnoxious traits and qualities found in the old man—or our comfortable, old, carnal selves:

But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. . . . ([Colossians 3:8-9](#))

Dr. William V. Haney in his *Communication and Organizational Behavior* illustrates that people who hold negative or dysfunctional self-images tenaciously hold onto them, feeling their very "identities" to be at stake:

A man, for example, may regard himself as incompetent and worthless. He may feel that he is doing his job poorly in spite of favorable appraisals by the company. As long as he has these feelings about himself, he must deny any experiences which would not seem to fit this self-picture, in this case any that might indicate to him that he is competent. It is so necessary for him to maintain this self-picture that he is *threatened* by anything which would attempt to change it.

. . . This is why direct attempts to change this individual or change his self-picture are particularly threatening. He is forced to defend himself or to completely deny the experience. This denial of experience and defense of self-picture tend to bring on rigidity of behavior and create difficulties in personal adjustment. (3rd Edition, 1973, p. 88)

To hang on to this negative self-image rather than to conform to God's image ([Romans 8:29](#)) means to resurrect and hang onto the old man—with its obnoxious habits and behavior patterns. Some of these behavior patterns we may have reinforced so thoroughly that it has become part of us, somewhat like individuals who carry around benign or malignant tumors, accepting them as part of themselves, rather than a hideous and life-threatening alien growth.

— David F. Maas

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