

## Altered States

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**Galatians 5:9** “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

Cooks and bakers would understand the process referred to in our text. A simple chemical process is at work here. Put a little yeast in a batch of dough and leave it for a while and it will make the entire batch to rise...it affects the entire mixture. What is not well understood about this process is that this yeast, this leaven, is a fungus, and it finds a perfect medium in the moist flour or meal in which to explode in growth. That growth spreads thru the mixture and gives off gasses which swell the flour and water mixture, giving it that rise that we look for. When we cook the mixture to make bread we kill the yeast but the rising stays and we have fluffy bread. What our bible text points to is the cryptic manner of the yeast in permeating the entire “lump” of flour, and the fact that it takes a very small amount of it to do the job.

I. Sin in the Soul of a Lost Sinner Will Permeate the Entire Being and Amplify in Every Facet of That Life (“ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”)

- ❖ The sad truth about the sin ridden condition of a lost person is that sin begets sin. As worms beget worms, snakes beget snakes, and lions beget lions, so sin in the soul begets sin as an offspring.
  - Bread yeast reproduces by budding off itself. This process of expanding fits so well with what happens regarding sin in the souls of men.
  - In the Genesis account (**Genesis 1:11,12,21**), God declared “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit **after his kind**... And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, **after his kind**... And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl **after his kind**....” In just the same way, sin brings forth after its kind...that kind is true to its parent...it is sin also.
  - The condition of man as a species at the time of the flood is an excellent illustration of how sin grows on a sinner the longer he is in this world: **Gen. 6:5** And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.
  - The best possible reformation by human beings in their own human efforts to improve their moral or spiritual character ends up like the situation explained by Jesus in Matthew 12:43-45.
  - Peter knew what the end result of human contrived reformation meant: **2Peter 2:22** “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
- ❖ So, the sad case of an unregenerate sinner is pitiful. They have nothing within themselves by which to save themselves from the whole lump of their being becoming leavened by the sin that is in them from birth. Unbelief in the heart of a human will infiltrate the very being of that person and unbelief will become a state of heart and soul and totally permeate all that he is.

## II. Sinful Principles and Practices in the Lives of Believers Will Amplify in Their Lives (“ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”).

- ❖ A great illustration of this is found in the biblical account of the sons of Jacob: **Gen. 37:4-5** “And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. **5** And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they **hated him yet the more**.”
- ❖ Unchristian conduct, thinking, talking will:
  - Leaven the attitude of the believer with negative feelings and attitudes
  - Leaven the relationships believers have with others with mistrust and negative interactions
  - Leaven the testimony of believers with hypocrisy
  - Our text chapter (**Gal. 5**) in **vv. 19-26** contrasts the fleshly behavior with the spiritual. The following advice is given to us about purging out old leaven (**v. 25**), “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”
  - Why is that instruction given? Because if we walk after fleshly things, those very things will leaven our lives and impact our spirituality.

## III. Unspiritual Things in the Makeup of a Church Will Amplify in and Permeate the Character of a Church (“ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”).

- ❖ A good way to illustrate this is to look at what Paul says about something as simple in a church as members criticizing or talking ill of one another: **Gal. 5:14-15** “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. **15** But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye **be not consumed one of another**.”
- ❖ In **I Corinthians 5**, Paul deals with the presence of known sin in one of the Lord’s churches and uses the same comparison as our text verse in explaining the impact on a church of the presence of sin in its members.
- ❖ In **Revelation 2 and 3**, Christ contends with the churches at Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira, and Laodicea. We notice that certain undesirable things had grown in these churches until they were ascribed to the churches themselves, not to any one member or group of members.

## IV. Spiritual Processes and Practices in Believers and in the Church Will Amplify in Both (“ a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”).

- ❖ You cannot begin to predict what a positive effect your spiritual demeanor will have on others, the church, and yourself (“A little leaven...”)
  - Illustrate by explaining the origin of a hurricane and the final result contrasted. A hurricane can begin with a small pool of warm water in the ocean no bigger than a swimming pool; the sun hits it just right and thermal updrafts begin to rise causing a low pressure spot; it grows until a tropical depression develops, then a hurricane which covers miles of ocean.
- ❖ If only you alone are contributing the leaven, and that leaven is a very small amount, it may be the only introduction of a spiritually positive thing that is needed to produce the enormous impact spoken about in our text
  - Illustrate by discussing activity of one dirt dauber working on a mud nest in your garage. First it was one little wad of heavy clay dirt, then a small line, then a line of cells. Then one

by one, the dauber captures spiders, paralyzes them and stores them in the cells. A mud nest as big as your hand, and hundreds of spiders...all gathered by one dauber, one item at a time.

- ❖ A small church can have the same effect: See: **Rev. 3:8** “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”
- ❖ Those who make a commitment to prove this axiom of God must look at the law that applies, not at visible evidence.
  - The effect may be subtle and cannot necessarily be observed by you at the outset, nor even in active stages of its action (the action is like that of the Kingdom of God described by Jesus in **Matthew 13:33**) “Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and **hid** in three measures of meal, **till the whole was leavened.**”
  - This great biblical promise must drive us: (**Gal. 6:9-10**) “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
  - Those who are determined to live by this law must remember that some people seem impervious to, and actually seem to be able resist the effect defined by the law of the leaven.