

CONVERSATIONS WITH
BROTHER LAWRENCE
BATTLING
AGAINST SIN



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Battling Against Sin

Lying in my bed I thought about what Brother Lawrence said last night. “In many ways we are our own worst enemies. We give THE enemy a strangle-hold on us that he uses to destroy our best efforts to succeed in exercising our gifts.” To me that sounded a bit vague and maybe too psychological for my taste. But it did sound right.

Now how do I become a traitor to our Lord when I have dedicated my life to His service? What is it that keeps me from doing His will? No! Can it be that simple? But then Brother Lawrence does so love to make all those high-sounding words express the simplest of truths. Could it be simply...sin? I'm afraid so.

But Sin itself sounds so “old fashion” that I'm afraid if I went about calling everything sin no one would take me seriously. They would simply say that I was one of those crazy religious people who see the devil around every corner and write me off as a member of the lunatic fringe.

“Well, maybe you are.” said Brother Lawrence when I told him my fear of being irrelevant. “What is wrong with calling Sin? Do you remember our dear Protestant Brother Billy Graham? It has been to many years since he last took to the air-waves and told it like it is, that Sin is Sin and it is destroying our lives. The only way to get rid of sin is to turn our lives over to God by asking Jesus to forgive our sins.”

“But Brother, no one really takes the idea of sin seriously anymore. Sure, Billy Graham could say those things but it

was a different era when he preached and after all, he was Billy Graham and I'm not. I'm a simple brother who wants to be taken seriously in today's very educated world so people will listen to what I have to say about God."

"Ah my dear friend. Don't you see, when you fail to speak the truth no matter how unsophisticated it may sound, you are not speaking for God? The battle we wage for God is quite simple and our adversary is quite wise, not in a good way of course but in the wisdom of defeating us moral soldiers in carrying out our duties. To get rid of this enemy sin we must confess to our Lord that we are in need of his forgiveness first and his strength to resist sin secondly, or is it firstly. Kind of reminds me of question about what came first, the chicken or the egg." he said this last with his usual mischievous smile.

"Think of it this way. When you must go out and pull weeds from the garden you do so willingly...at first. Then the heat of the day sets in and you become tired. Then the flies start to buzz your head drawn by your sweat and then you become thirsty. Each increases the resistance to finishing your task with a willing heart. Each SEEMS quite normal yet it all also seems to be working against you. You may rest a bit in the shade but then you fall asleep and loose time. You may sit down by the well for a drink of water but then you rest a little too much and it is harder to go back to your weeding. Not that any of this is sin but it is something that seems so natural and yet so easily takes you away from finishing your task. And what if you decide that today is just too hot to do any weeding and you simply decide to do it another day? Is that so wrong?"

"It is if Brother Edward finds out." Brother Lawrence is not the only one with a sense of humor.

"Yes, I'm sure you're right. But Brother Edward is not wrong in getting disappointed by your failure to do what you were told to do is he?"

“No, I guess not. But the weeds will get pulled eventually whether today or tomorrow. What difference does it all make in light of eternity?”

“They might and you have just demonstrated the main cause for the work of God NOT getting done. Procrastination. Yes, our adversary loves it when we put off what we know we should do today. He has won his battle against us for today and tomorrow he will do the same and it will be easier for him to succeed. And when we add eternity to the equation it makes our little action seem so insignificant that surely one will see how our actions are not only right but wise.”

“But Brother, how is all this sin? “

“Do you not ask for forgiveness during the Mass when you say “in what I have done and what I have failed to do.”? That is the sin of omission and sin is sin and must be confessed before it can be forgiven. And not doing the will of God but our own will is sin. Those who are not of God's family have listened to the Adversary so long that they don't even think much about God's will, only their own. It makes it that much easier to put off obeying God and doing what makes them happy. But not doing what God wants does result of their disobedience whether they acknowledge it or not.”

“But Brother, doesn't God want us happy?”

“Yes, he does but that is another story and I'm afraid that will have to wait for another day. Let us now take our leave back to our cells to rest for tomorrow's work.”

At that we got up and prepared for tomorrow's work. In the dark of my cell I looked to God and prayed to the Holy Spirit for his gift of wisdom to understand my duties. Using my gift to teaching in the world of those who believe not can be quite trying. Wanting to belong and yet knowing that this world is not my final destination is something that can make my head spin. I will have to trust our Lord to reveal to me the truth later. But for now, I... need to...get my sleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

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