

# THE SAND IS WEIGHTY THE WEIGHT OF SAND

taken from  
Proverbs 27:3



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Divine Viewpoint

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## THE SAND IS WEIGHTY. THE WEIGHT OF SAND.

Proverbs 27:3, "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both."

**T**he book of Proverbs has a very wholesome horror of the character which it calls a fool, meaning thereby, not so much intellectual feebleness as moral and Christian principles and practices, which are the stupidest things that a man can be guilty of.

This comes from a very picturesque and vivid description, by way of comparison, of the fatal effects of such a man's passion. The proverb maker compares two heavy things, stones and sand, and says that they are feathers in comparison with the immense lead-like weight of such a man's wrath.

What is lighter than a grain of sand? What is heavier than a bagful of it? As the grains fall one by one, how easily they can be blown away. Let them gather and they bury temples and crush the solid masonry of pyramids. "Sand is weighty."

The accumulation of light things is overwhelmingly ponderous. Are there any such things in our lives? If there are, what ought we to do? So you can see the principle that we are getting to here.

The first suggestion is that they remind us of the supreme importance of trifles. If trivial acts are unimportant, what signifies the life of a man? For 99-1/2% of every man's life is made up of those light nothings. And unless there is potential greatness in them, and they are of importance, the life is all a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

But small things make life. And if they are small, then it is so, too. But remember that the supreme importance of so-called trivial actions is seen in this, that there may be every bit as much in the noblest things that belong to humanity condensed in, and brought to bear upon, the veriest trifle that a man can do, as on the greatest things that he can perform.

We are very poor judges of what is great and what is little. We have a very vulgar estimate that noise and notoriety and the securing of, not great, but big, results of the material kind makes the deeds by which they are secured, great ones. And we think that it is the quiet things, those that do not tell outside at all, that are the small ones.

Well, here is a picture for us: half a dozen shabby, travel-stained Jews, sitting by a river side upon the grass, talking to a handful of women outside the gates of a great city. Years before that there had been what the world calls a great event, almost on the same ground, a sanguinary fight that had settled the emperorship of the then civilized world for a time.

I want to know whether the first preaching of the Gospel in Europe by the apostle Paul, or the battle of Phillipi, was the great event. And which of the two was the little one.

I vote for the Jews on the grass. Let all the noise of the fight, though it reverberated through the world for a time, die away, as a little dust that rises up, and is lightly laid again. Not the noisy events are the great ones. And as much as true greatness may be manifested in a poor woman stitching in her garret, as in some of the things that have rung through the world and excited all manner of vulgar applause.

Trifles may be, and often are, the great things of life. (They turned the world upside down). And then remember too, how the most trivial actions have a strange knack of all at once leading on to large results, beyond what could have been expected.

A man changes his seat in a plane or a train, from some passing whim, and five minutes afterwards there is a wreck, and a collision. The place where he is now sitting is untouched, and the accidental move, as it were, has saved his life.

According to the old story, a boy failing in applying for a situation, stoops down and picks up a pin in the street, and a millionaire

sees him through the window, and it makes his fortune.

We cannot tell what may become of anything. And since we do not know the far end of our deeds, let us be quite sure that we have got the near end of them right.

Whatever may be the issue, let us look after the motive, and then all will be all right. Small seeds grow to great trees. And in this strange and inexplicable network of things which men call circumstances, and Christians should call providence, the only certain thing is that, great and small, all but cease to be tenable. And certainly altogether cease to be an important distinction.

Another thing to remember is that trivial actions which in their accumulated force make character. **Men are not made by crises. The crises reveal what we have made ourselves by the trifles.** The way in which we do the little things forms the character according to which we shall act when the great things come. Basic training....

If a crew on the battleship, Man of War, were not exercised at boat and fire drill during many a calm day when all was safe, what would become of them when tempests were raging, or flames breaking through the bulk heads? It is no time to drill then.

We must make our characters by the way in which, day in and day out, we do little things, and find in them fields for the great virtues which enable us to front the crises of our fate unclenching and to master whatever difficulties come in our path.

Geologists nowadays distrust, for the most part, theories which have to invoke great forces in order to mold the face of a country. They tell us that the valley, with its deep sides wide opening to the sky, may have been made by the slow operation of a tiny brooklet that trickles down at its base and by erosion of the atmosphere.

So we shape ourselves. That is a great thing, by the way we do small things. Therefore, think solemnly and reverently of this life of ours. Clear your minds of the notion that anything that is small which offers to you the alternative of being

done in a right way or in a wrong. And recognize this as a fact. "Sand is weighty." Trifles are of supreme importance.

Secondly, take this saying as suggesting the overwhelming weight of small sins. That is only an application in one direction of the general principle that we have here. But it is one of such great importance that we can deal with it separately.

The point is this: That the accumulated pressures upon a man of a multitude of perfectly trivial faults and transgressions make up a tremendous aggregate that weighs upon him with awful ponderousness. To begin with, that, properly speaking, the words, great and small, should not be applied in reference to things about which, right, or wrong, are the proper words to apply. Or to put it into plain language, it is as absurd to talk about the size of a sin, as it is to take the superficial area of a picture as a test of its greatness.

The magnitude of a transgression does not depend on the greatness of the act which transgressed, according to human standards, but on the intensity with which the sinful element is working in it. For acts make crimes and motives make sins.

If you take a bit of prussic acid, and bruise it down, every little microscopic fragment will have the poisonous principle in it. And it is very irrelevant to ask whether it is as big as a mountain or small as a grain of dust. It is poison all the same.

So we talk about magnitude in regard to sins. But it is rather to introduce a foreign consideration. But still recognizing that there is a reality in the distinction that people make between great sins and small sins, though it is a superficial distinction, and does not go down to the bottom of things. Let us deal with it now.

These small sins, by reason of their numerousness, have a terrific accumulative power. They are like the green flies on the rose bushes, or the microbes that our medical friends talk so much about. Like them, their power of mischief does not in the least degree depend on their magnitude, and like them, they have a tremendous capacity of reproduc-

tion. It would be easier to find a man that had not done any one sin than to find a man that had only done it once. And it would be easier to find a man that had not done no evil than to find a man who had not been obliged to make the second edition of sin an enlarged one.

Because this is the present nemesis of all evil, that it requires repetition, partly to still conscience, partly to satisfy excited tastes and desires. As that animal indulgences in drugs and drinks and the like is a type of what goes on in the inner life of every man, in so far as the second doze has to be stronger than the first in order to produce an equivalent effect. And so on ad infinitum.

Remember that all our evil doings, however insignificant they may be, have a strange affinity with one another. So that you will find that to go wrong in one direction almost inevitably leads to a whole series of consequential transgressions of one sort or another.

You remember the old story about the soldier that was smuggled into a fortress concealed in a hay cart, and opened the gates of a virgin citadel to his allies outside. Every evil thing, great or small, that we admit into our lives, still more into our souls, is charged with the same errand as he had. "Set wide the door when you are inside, and let us all come in after you." "He taketh with him seven other spirits worse than himself, and they dwell there."

"None of them," says one of the prophets, describing the doleful creatures that haunt the ruins of a deserted city, shall by any means want its mate and the satyrs of the islands and of the woods join together, and hold high carnival in the city. And so, our little transgressions open the door for great ones. Every sin makes us more accessible to the assaults of every other.

So remember, in these little unnumbered acts of trivial transgressions which scarcely produce any effect on conscience, or on memory, but make up so large a portion of so many of our lives, lies one of the most powerful instruments for making us what we are. If we indulge in slight acts of transgression be sure of this: That we shall pass from them to far greater

ones. For one man that leaps or falls all at once into sin which the world calls gross, there are a thousand that slide into it.

The storm only blows down the trees whose hearts have been eaten out and their roots loosened. When you see a man having a reputation for wisdom and honor all at once coming crash down and disclosing his baseness, be sure that he began with small deflections from the path of right.

The evil works underground, and if we yield to little temptations when great ones come we shall fall their victims.

Remember there is another sense in which "sand is weighty." You can just as well be crushed under a sandhill as under a mountain of marble. It matters not which. The accumulated weight of one is as great as that of the other. Here is a point to ponder: That an overwhelming weight of guilt results from the accumulation of little sins.

Now I cannot help but believe that very largely in our day, the ministration of the Christian Church is defective in that it does not give sufficient, though sad and sympathetic, prominence to the plain teaching of Christ and the New Testament as to the fact that everyone of us will give account of himself to God, and if the account is long enough it will add up to an enormous sum, though each item may be only a half pence.

The weight of a lifetime of sins will be enough to crush a man down with guilt and responsibility when it comes to the Christian way of life. "Sand is weighty." Little sins have to be accounted for and they may crush you.

Thirdly. Now, let us consider a couple of practical issues of such thoughts as these. These considerations set in a very clear light the absolute necessity for all round and ever wakeful watchfulness over ourselves.

A man in the tropics does not say, "Mosquitoes are so small that it does not matter if two or three of them get inside my bed roll." He takes care that not one is there before he lays down to sleep. There seems to be nothing more than the complacent, easy going, way in which men allow themselves to keep their

higher moral principles and their more rigid self-examination for the great things, as they suppose, and let the little things often take care of themselves.

What would you think of the captain of a steamer who in calm weather sailed by rule of thumb, only getting out his sextant when storms began to blow?

And what about a man that lets the myriad trivialities that make up a day pass in and out of his soul as they will, and never arrests any of them at the gate with a, "How camest thou in hither?"

Look after the pennies and the dollars will look after themselves. Look after the trivial acts, and take the word for it, the great ones will be as they ought to be.

And again this thought can somehow take down our easy going and self-complacent estimate of ourselves. And some may say to themselves what do I have to do about all this talk about sin. I am a descent sort of a guy. I do all the duties of my daily life, and nobody can say that the white of my eyes is black. I have not committed any great transgression. What is he talking about? It has nothing to do with me.

Well, it has this to do with all of us. That in your life there are a whole host of things which only a superficial estimate hinders you from recognizing to be what they are, small deeds, but great sins. It is a small thing to go from year to year, as some do, with your conduct and your thoughts and your loves and your desires utterly unaffected by the fact that there is a God in Heaven, and that Jesus Christ died for you.

Now is that a small thing. It manifests itself in a great many insignificant actions. I will grant you, that you are a respectable man, and you keep the commandments as well as you can. "But the God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." I say that that is not a small sin. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, that is sin."

Now this is the standard by which we judge ourselves. I am not charging people

with gross sins. I don't know anything about that. But I do appeal to you and to myself, whether or not we must recognize the fact that an accumulated multitude of transgressions which are only superficially small, in their aggregate weigh upon us with, a weight heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

Last of all, this being the case, should we not all turn ourselves with lowly souls, with recognition of our transgressions, acknowledging that whether it be 500 or 50 cents we owe, we have nothing to pay, and take ourselves to Him who alone can deliver us from the habit and the power of these small accumulated faults. And who alone can lift the burden of guilt and responsibility from our shoulders?

If you irrigate the sand it become fruitful soil. Christ brings us to the river of the water of life. The inspiring, the quickening, the fructifying power of the new life that He bestows, and the sand may become soil, and the wilderness blossom as a rose.

A heavy burden lies on many peoples' shoulders. But once again, behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the sins of the world. What was it that crushed Him down beneath the olives of Gethsemane? What was it that made Him cry, "My God, My God. Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I know no answer but one, for which the world's gratitude is all too small.

The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. "Sand is weighty," but Christ has borne the burden. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord," and it will drop from your emancipated shoulders. And they will henceforth bear only the light burden of His love. "Lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us." "If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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