

You shall remove leaven from your houses

Exodus 12:15b

By Mary L. Dubler

leav·en (lèv¹en) noun

1. An agent, such as yeast, that causes batter or dough to rise, especially by fermentation.
2. An element, influence, or agent that works subtly to lighten, enliven, or modify a whole.

leav·ened, leav·en·ing, leav·ens verb, transitive

3. To pervade with a lightening, enlivening, or modifying influence.

Leaven

An influence that can permeate whatever it touches, be it for good or bad.

How is leaven mentioned in the Scriptures?

In the Bible, leaven is mentioned in its literal meaning as a fermenting agent used in making bread, and in the Old Testament this is the only form of the word that is used. In the New Testament, however, this term is used metaphorically to primarily indicate corrupt doctrine or sin.

Matthew 16:6

And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Matthew 16:11-12

"How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark 8:15

And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Luke 12:1

Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

What does the Bible instruct us to do about leaven?

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul is speaking here of cleaning out the old leaven from ourselves so that we may be a “new lump.”

I suggest that a very practical way to begin the cleaning process of ourselves is to remove the “leaven” from our homes--those things which are bad influences on ourselves, our children, our spouses, and even our testimony to others who visit our homes.

At the start of Passover the women were instructed to remove all leaven from the home.

Exodus 12:15

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Exodus 12:19

Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land.

Exodus 13:7

Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders.

Prayerfully do a thorough search for leaven in your homes and remove those things. Sometimes these influences can be so subtle that our eyes have become blinded to them, which is the enemy’s desire. So ask God to help you to see the leaven in your home; He will be faithful to reveal these things to you.

If you have a spouse or family living with you, I encourage you to approach your husband with this idea so that you can pray together for the Lord’s help. You and your husband should work together on this project. Communicate clearly your desire to have your home devoid of anything that may be a negative influence. Good communication is critical with your children, especially if you find that you need to remove something that belongs to them.

Examples of leaven in the home

A. Internet access.

1. Pornography, occult, chat rooms.
2. Pop-up images, advertising, squatters [you can turn off images to avoid this].

3. On-line violent and explicit games.
 4. Can be a big time-waster
- B. *Videos and movies.*
1. Sexual content.
 2. Violence.
 3. Bad language, taking the Lord's name in vain.
- C. *Television programs or commercials.*
1. Many commercials, particularly those associated with sporting events, have sexual innuendo, violence, and alcohol.
 2. Programs which use humor to address sexual or religious issues.
 3. Another drain on time.
- D. *Books.*
1. Taking the Lord's name in vain, bad language.
 2. Sexual or highly fantasized romantic content.
 3. Violence.
- E. *Magazines.*
1. The biggest problem is the advertising. Many women's magazines have partial nudity in their advertising. This is generally not a problem for the women readers, but has the potential to be a problem for the men and boys in the family. Suggest either not reading these magazines, or storing the current issue where the family does not have access and then discarding the magazine as soon as you have read it.
 2. Often magazines have advertisements for alcohol, tobacco, or current movies which show disturbing images.
 3. Articles which address spiritual issues from a non-Christian perspective or that present homosexuality and other sin in a positive manner.
- F. *Pictures or artwork.*
1. Suggestive poses, occult figures or symbols [this could be especially prevalent in items tailored to teenagers].
- G. *Computer games (including Nintendo).*
1. Content--many are violent and demonic or display poor character qualities.
 2. Time involved in playing.
- H. *Music.*
1. Much of today's music has foul lyrics or ones which portray love in distorted ways.
 2. Loud driving beats drive up anxiety levels and damage hearing.
- I. *Radio programs.*
1. Coarse jesting and sexual innuendo are common on radio talk shows.
 2. Disturbing music.

Clean out the old leaven that you may be a new lump

So, go on a leaven search. Be open to the Holy Spirit's guiding as to what constitutes leaven for your family. Be ready to throw stuff out and don't waffle; if the Lord tells you to do it, then do it!

When you have finished the search and removed the leaven from your home, gather as a family and pray that the Lord will help you keep any new leaven from coming into the home. This is an on-going process, because leaven has a way of creeping back in and so we must be diligent to guard our homes.

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