

Ever Wonder...

Why the sun lightens our hair, but darkens our skin?

Why you never see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?

Why doctors call what they do "practice"?

Why the man who invests all your money is called a "broker"?

Why the time of day with the slowest traffic is called "rush hour"?

Why they sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

Why they don't make the whole airplane out of the same stuff as the indestructible black box?

Why dog food is new and improved tasting? Who tests it?

Why sheep don't shrink when it rains?

Why there isn't a mouse-flavored cat food?

Why lemon juice is made with artificial flavor while dish washing liquid is made with real lemons?

Why Noah didn't swat those two mosquitoes?

“When we call ourselves by God's name, His reputation is tied to ours. If people have reason not to believe us, they may not believe God.”

Our Daily Bread

Reader feedback and suggestions are welcomed. Contact any member of the People Editorial Committee

Joni Cosgriff Ed Hoehing
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Money Talk

Is Your Giving a Celebration?

The dictionary is very clear in its definitions of stewardship and a steward. Stewardship is "the employment of one's time, talents, and possessions." Key phrase there is *employment* of which means we are actually to use these items for something. Similarly, a steward is "one entrusted with the management of property, finances, or other affairs not his own." Key phrase there is *not his own*.

Do you really believe, as the Bible tells us, that all you have comes from God? Your time on earth, your talents, and your possessions? Do you really believe you own nothing because God gave you everything and that he charges you to be a trustee of *His possessions*-- property, finances, whatever you have.

Unfortunately, stewardship is often seen as an obligation rather than an opportunity. Many of us hear the word "stewardship" and think only of money. We think about how to keep more and give less. This is a human reaction-- we work hard for our money, so why wouldn't we want to keep it? Because stewardship often means money, it can evoke a self-preservation instinct.

With true stewardship, it is recognizing that our gifts of creation are for the intent of glorifying God. It is not complicated. Stewardship is about using all of the gifts and resources God has given us. When we use them, we are working to make the world more properly reflect God's kingdom. We may even have to put our gifts in harm's way, if that is what it takes to carry out God's plans for us-- a kind of apocalyptic stewardship.

Stewardship is really a response to God's gifts-- it's a celebration, and people celebrate by praising God and giving to others. The promise of eternal life is certainly worthy of celebration.

When we talk about Christian stewardship... we mean God's invitation to become the people He made us to be by sharing the gifts He gave us to share, beginning with ourselves... for His glory. ■

(Senior Pastor Peter N. Smith)

This article is largely based on remarks made by the Rev. Bryan Blount, president and professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, at a conference of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



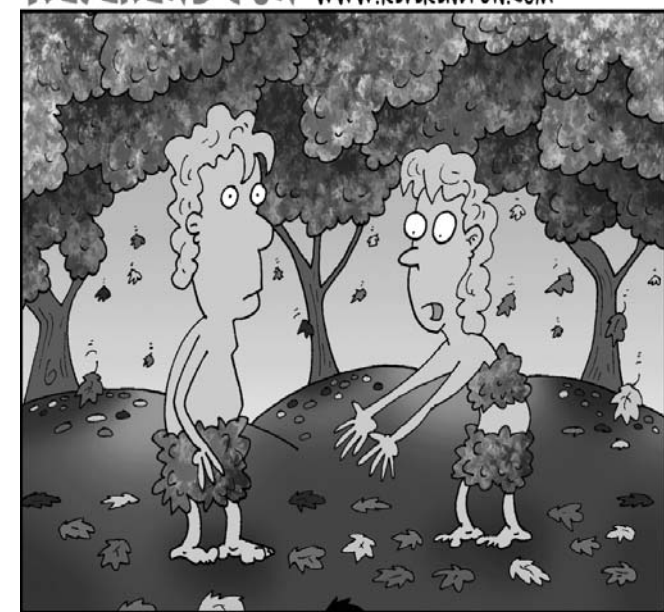
LPPC's Ministries

Serving the Community
In Christ

- *Pre-school* for three and four year olds and pre-kindergarten children
- *FROGS* (Fully Relying on God's Salvation) for fourth and fifth graders
- *Jr. High Fellowship* for youth in grades six through eight
- *Sr. High Fellowship* for youth in grades nine through twelve
- *Cross Point Young Adult Fellowship* for high school graduates to twenty-seven years old
- *Presbyterian Women*-- five circles for Bible and book study, projects, and fellowship
- *Men's Group* for fellowship and service
- *Retirees Group* for fellowship and trips
- *Sunday School for all ages*
- *Golden Age*-- luncheons for seniors
- *Presbyterian Seniors*-- fellowship and trips for seniors
- *Prayer Team*-- comfort and prayer power to members and their families
- *Music*-- Cherub Choir, Young Presbyterians, Chancel Choir, Handbell Choirs, Children's Hand Chime Choir
- *Vacation Bible School* for children four years old through just completed fourth grade

Visit the LPPC web site at lppcmin.org for more detailed information.

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“For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.”

(1 Corinthians 3:9)



People

LPPC

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Warm Hearts & Willing Hands - Sharing God's Gifts Through Participation, Involvement & Commitment

FAITH PASSAGE

John Kellar

“Overcoming an obstacle to faith”



John Kellar is a professional photographer while wife Ginny is a nurse at Paoli Hospital. They have three children-- Casey, Matthew, and Laura-- each who attend Perkiomen Valley schools, and two dogs. The Kellars live in Colledgeville.

The Kellar family name can be traced back to Polish-German ancestry roots for at least two centuries. The Kellar great aunts and great uncles have three different spellings of the last name on gravestones in up-state Pennsylvania "Must be the Polish side," reasoned John.

Ginny (Gervais) has been a member of Lower Providence Presbyterian since the mid-1970's after her family moved here from near Cleveland, Ohio. She was confirmed at LPPC in 1978. John has been a member since 1998. Although he has regularly attended since 1995, and even helped teach an adult Sunday school class, he was surprised to find he wasn't a member by virtue of marrying a member of the church. When Reverend Schmidt brought this to his attention, John was accepted for membership after attending new members' classes.

All three Kellar children have been baptized at LPPC: Casey in 1994, Matthew in 1996, and Laura in 1998. Ginny would have liked the family to have continued this two year trend, but in his own words, "John chose the couch." Casey and Matthew have been confirmed here, while Laura is finishing confirmation class this year. Like John, Ginny has also taught Sunday school-- for children. Because she often works night shift on weekends, Ginny had to give up teaching Sunday school.

John served two terms as a deacon. "One of the best parts of being a deacon was delivering the church flowers to those in need," John stated. The children and dogs would often accompany John on these deliveries. "This had an awakening influence on them on how things they thought weren't so good were really not that bad," John explained. "A difficult part of being a deacon," joked John, "was the early Sunday morning coffee preparations and seeing how something that was supposed to taste good could be so bad."

For the past four years John has struggled with a very difficult hearing problem. This has been an obstacle to his volunteer work and to his faith. John explained, "For about thirty years I've had tinnitus which is a constant ringing in the ears. I got it from playing in a garage band as a teenager. We played very loud to disguise the fact we really weren't very good. For the first twenty-five years this ringing was a minor nuisance easily ignored. For the past several years it's been so loud I can even hear it over the church organ while sitting in the balcony!"

John was very reluctant to mention this because like most people with chronic conditions, he does not want

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GOD'S LOVE AND OURS

Franklin Graham (son of Billy Graham) regrets it now, but in his youth he was wild and rebellious. One day he went roaring up to his dad's house on his Harley Davidson motorcycle to ask for some money. Dressed in

his leathers, dusty and bearded, he burst into his father's living room-- and walked right into a meeting of Billy's executive board.

Without hesitation, Billy Graham identified Franklin as his son. Then he proudly introduced him to every member of the board. Billy did not apologize for his son or show any shame or guilt. Franklin wrote later in his autobiography, *Rebel With a Cause*, that the love and respect his father gave him that day never left him, even during his rebellious years.

Our children do not have to earn our love. To withhold love for our own selfish purposes is to follow the enemy, not God. God's love for us is undeserved. We did nothing to earn it; no good in us merited it. "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). In all our relationships, especially with our children, we must genuinely show that same kind of love.

We are called to treat our children, and all people, with love and respect. It helps to remember what we were when Christ died for us. ■

From Our Daily Bread

- Hill Watch -

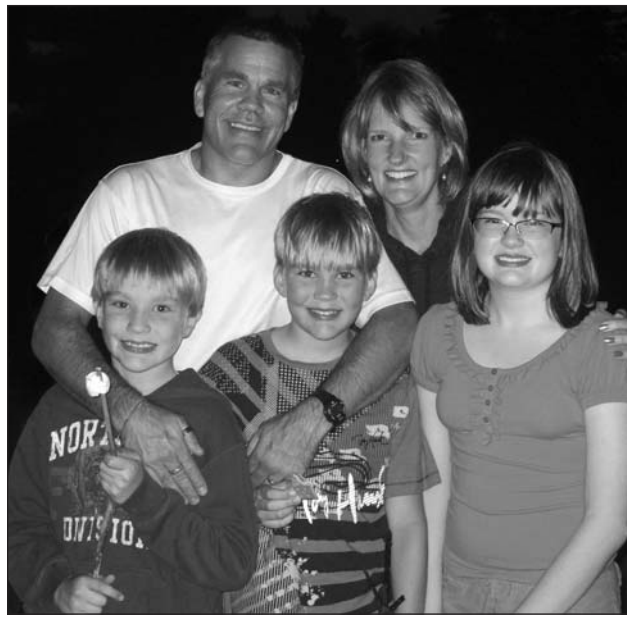
LPPC launches New Men's Ministry

Last September a new Men's Bible Study Group was formed at LPPC, first for a seven-week study of the book Uncommon by Super Bowl-winning coach Tony Dungy describing building a life of significance in walking with God, and then in a series of informal monthly breakfast meetings, most recently in the church's new atrium. In three meetings the group has expanded from twenty to over fifty attendees, both members and guests. At the first meeting Mike Zepp gave a moving testimony of how God led him to establish Kainos House, a halfway house in Harleysville, where men released from Bucks County Prison receive Christian mentoring.

*From a survey conducted at one of the breakfasts, the men endorsed the format which includes **devotions and fellowship as well as possible future involvement in mission projects.** Thus, from a small gathering in an adult education program, God has lead us to a permanent group to serve the Lord. The Saturday breakfasts are open to all men, members and non-members alike. To find out about the next event consult our church publications or call the church office.*

PROFILE
People
LPPC

Mark and Diane Hanlon--new LPPC members focused on their Christian faith



Both Mark and Diane Hanlon feel LPPC is a vibrant church that characterizes active participation of growing in the faith. "It's like a city on a hill," expressed Mark. "We were drawn to the church through a friend, Bill Cribbs, and once we arrived, seeing the sincere caring and friendliness of the members, and the renovations, we knew this was the place for us. When we first visited, the usher at the service was helpful and friendly, explaining where rooms were in the church and providing us with welcome literature." Added Diane, "It was uplifting!"

Mark and Diane are partners in business as well as in life. They met on a blind date, and both find that topic exciting to share. "It was the best surprise I ever received," stressed Mark. Together they work at Gilbertsville Veterinary Hospital where Mark is a veterinarian and Medical Director and Diane is the business manager. "We work well as a team," said Mark. Mark attended Eastern University where he majored in Chemistry, and he worked for a precious metals firm for several years. Then he followed his dream of becoming a veterinarian by attending the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Diane is a graduate of Albright College who ini-

tially was employed in video production, but later became involved in the fund raising industry. She was employed as Director of Development of the Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge.

As a child, Mark moved quite a bit because his father was in the Air Force. After his father's retirement the family settled in New Jersey. Diane is from the surrounding area. The Hanlons have been married for 22 years, reside in the Schwenksville area, and have three children, Abby, Tim, and Chris, as well as four pets: Mary Grace, Benjamin, Joshua, and Jeremiah, purposely referencing biblical names.

Abby attends Souderton High School in the 9th grade; she is involved in the chorale group, Bel Canto Children's Chorus, and she plays the violin. Tim is in 6th grade at Indian Valley Middle School; he enjoys being part of the band and jazz band by playing the trombone. Chris attends Vernfield Elementary school and plays the baritone. He is also involved in the Bel Canto Children's Chorus Preparatory Choir.

The Hanlons' journey of faith encompasses a varied background. Because Mark moved often as a child, he had experience in several denominations before joining the Mennonite Church. Diane's faith background was primarily Presbyterian. Before marriage, a joint decision was made to worship in the Presbyterian Church, and they feel strongly about raising their children with an emphasis on church involvement and family worship. Mark and Diane gain strength spiritually and physically-- Mark participates in triathlons and adventure races, while Diane takes daily walks with Gracie, one of their dogs.

Mark and Diane are especially enthusiastic about the FROGS group at LPPC-- which they volunteer to help. Abby enjoys Sr. High fellowship, and Tim looks forward to Jr. High fellowship next year. Diane commented, "We enjoy the strong youth program at LPPC, and we think it is fantastic how the church continues to focus its resources toward these programs." They also feel Pastor Smith speaks to where they are with their every day walk in their faith journey. "We are inspired by Pastor Smith's messages; he is Biblical and pragmatic, and he pulls no punches over Christian beliefs," added Mark.

Both Diane and Mark look forward to a bright future of continued growth in their Christian faith at LPPC. They like the mixture of the traditional worship with contemporary overtones. They feel LPPC has a strong foundation and the proper focus on faith, especially for the youth. "As a family we make Christian faith our focus," commented Diane. "We want our faith to be an inheritance for our children to enjoy," stressed Mark. "We feel LPPC is a great place to worship and to grow in our faith journey."

The Hanlons view these Biblical verses as inspirational: *A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver (Proverbs 25:11). Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1).* ■



THE PASTOR SPEAKS

Excerpts from sermons from Senior Pastor Peter N. Smith

Spiritual Gifts In All of Us

...Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is also endowed with unique **spiritual gifts**, according to the grace given us, which He intends us to use in the ministry of His Gospel. No one's gifts are more or less important than another's gifts. All our gifts are equally necessary for the Body of Christ to function effectively... *so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others...* We belong to Jesus Christ and to each other at Lower Providence Presbyterian Church... You owe your spiritual gifts to me and everyone else, and I owe mine to you...

Joy vs. Happiness

...**Happiness** depends on circumstances-- health, wealth, success. **Joy** as we know it depends on **relationship** with God... C. S. Lewis wrote about his search for joy, and finding it in Jesus Christ (*Surprised by Joy*): *No slightest hint was vouchsafed to me that there ever had been ... a connection between God and joy.* He was looking for a place, a condition or achievement; instead *I found it to be a Person. God is joy*, so God's people are **joyful!**

Making Hard Choices

...But there are unique situations where right choices are not so obvious, and we need the **guidance** God always provides in a variety of ways. **(1)** There is no substitute for **knowing the Bible**, the word of God, to understand what He wants us to do and who He wants us to be. Sometimes a particular verse or story will speak to us especially clearly. **(2)** There is a deep **peace** that comes from making the right decision, and **lack of peace** when we make the wrong decision. **(3)** Looking for signs is not the same as demanding a miracle. **Open Doors** of opportunity (sometimes closed doors also) can be God's way of guiding us-- job offer, college acceptance letter, a new friend or seemingly chance encounter-- providential circumstances... **(4)** God guides us through trusted friends, mature believers, who also seek His will.

Taking Off Our Fig Leaves

... J. I. Packer recommends coming to prayer for regular **spiritual checkups** because we want to be right with God (the essence of repentance), and because we cannot trust ourselves. **Students need teachers** to grade our work; **patients need physicians** to examine the health of our bodies; and **Christians need God** to test our faith, show us where we fall short of righteousness in Jesus Christ, and help us grow toward spiritual maturity... Carroll Simcox calls it taking off our **fig leaves**, and says our only chance of ever being honest with ourselves and with God is when we pray. The rest of the time we deceive ourselves and others with superficial **masks, facades** of swagger and self-confidence, **self delusions** that we dare not remove... C.S. Lewis wrote: *The prayer preceding all prayers is "May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to."* ■

MISSIONLINE

One Football Game = Missional Christianity

These excerpts were taken from commentary by S. Michael Craven, Founding Director of the Center for Christ and Culture, about an article that he quoted by Rick Reilly which appeared in ESPN The Magazine in 2009.

They played the oddest game in high school football history in Grapevine, Texas. It was Grapevine Faith (The Lions), a small Christian School with many coaches, players and the latest equipment, vs. Gainesville State School (The Tornadoes), a maximum security correctional facility whose players were incarcerated for drugs, assault, and robbery, many of whom had been disowned by their families and who wore old shoulder pads and ancient helmets. All the inmates at Gainesville had experienced little or no love in their short lives.

So Grapevine Faith Coach Kris Hogan had this idea. *What if half our fans-- for one night only-- cheered for the other team?* In an Email to the Faithful he wrote, "Here is the message I want you to send: You are just as valuable as any other person on planet Earth. Imagine if you didn't have a home life. Imagine if everybody had given up on you. Now imagine what it would mean for hundreds of people to suddenly believe in you."

The Faithful response was nothing less than miraculous... More than 200 Faithful fans sat on the Gainesville side during the game and kept cheering the Gainesville

players on. They even made a 40-yard spirit line for the players to run through and a banner saying "Go Tornadoes" for them to crash through. The Gainesville players were turning around on their bench to see something they never had before. Hundreds of fans. And actual cheerleaders!

Gainesville quarterback Isaiah said, "I never thought in my life I'd hear people cheering for us." It was a strange experience for boys who most people cross the street to avoid. "We can tell people are a little afraid of us when we come to a game. You can see it in their eyes," said Gerald, a lineman. "But these people were yellin' for us! By our names!"

After the game both teams gathered in the middle of the field to pray when Isaiah surprised everybody by asking to lead. He said, "Lord, I don't know how this happened, so I don't know how to say thank you, but I never would've known there was so many people in the world that cared about us."

As the team was leaving, the Gainesville coach grabbed Hogan by the shoulders and said, "You'll never know what your people did for these kids tonight. You'll never, ever know."

In a place where high school football often rises to the level of idolatry, one small Christian school intent on being missional, and driven by love, displayed on the field of competition the radical values and nature of the Kingdom... ■

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned But I Have Several Excellent Excuses

Summary from a book Yes, Lord, I Have Sinned, But I Have Several Excellent Excuses, authored by Rev. James W. Moore, a United Methodist pastor, and presented as part of a video series in the Adult Education Program.

We live in a world where people seem increasingly more willing to admit mistakes and questionable actions, such as infidelity in marriage, embezzlement of funds, even murder. Yes, our culture may be inclined to admit such sin, but is it willing to take **responsibility** for these transgressions?

Rev. Moore relates that although we may admit our sinful deeds and even laugh at immoral actions, we often *rationalize them with excuses to justify our behavior*. He points out the sins that are common in our churches and among Christian people.

- Just talking a good game
- Reacting in shameful silence to sinful actions

- Halfheartedness in what we do
- Spiritual arrogance
- Deception
- Overreaction
- Hostility
- Presumptuousness
- Losing our spiritual balance

And these are some of the "excellent excuses" we use to justify our sins: **Words; scapegoats; blaming others, circumstances, or past events; even evil spirits** (It was the devil who made me do it!).

But we are not left to drown in our guilt. We are uplifted by God, our loving Father. He wants us to have a *personal relationship* with Him and to seek pardon for our transgressions through His son Jesus. "After all, we are justified not by our eloquent excuses but by the grace of a loving, caring, forgiving God." ■

The adult education classes, open to members of the community, take place on Sunday mornings.

YOU are so Blessed



If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who won't survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 20 million people around the world.

If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, you are more blessed than almost three billion people in the world.

If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.

If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

From the Internet-- author unknown

"When praying, it's better to have a heart without words than words without heart."

Our Daily Bread

Faith Passage

continued from page 1

sympathy, especially public sympathy. "I do not want to be a poster boy for this, and if anyone pities me here, I'm going to snarl at them!" John said jokingly with a straight face. "However, I think it's extremely important to bring this to people's attention because it is easily prevented in most cases. Several other people in our church even have this condition but I really think in a milder form. An afternoon with a chain saw, a leaf blower, a power boat, standing too close to the speakers at a concert or school dance, listening to an iPod device too loud... can bring on this unrelenting ring or make a mild condition severe. I'm like most people in that I didn't listen to advice until I couldn't hear or rather hear a screech that isn't actually there. 'It'll never happen to me' we all too often believe."

John continued, "To put it mildly, my faith has been challenged by this problem. I appreciate the support I received from several church members. I remember telling the prayer team a few years ago 'if you see me gaining weight, you'll know I'm doing better.' I did lose about twenty pounds because of what I think is a natural depression because of this but I've gained back the twenty pounds plus five. Chewing helps disguise the ring.

"Even though the siren never stops, I thank God I'm coping much better. I'm no different than countless oth-

ers with so many visible or invisible struggles. It took me longer to be mature about this than it may have taken others. In 1 Peter 4:12 it says-- *do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.* I was once so eager to believe this scripture, thinking the trials were mostly ridicule from the non-believing world, or maybe willful fasting or self-denial and minor ailments. But God does choose to bring this lesson home a little harder, sometimes incredibly harder."

It's estimated that forty million Americans have tinnitus and twelve million of these have a severe case. And as of now there is no cure. As John has suggested, the most common cause of tinnitus is loud noise exposure, though it can be caused by head injury, ear infections, the side effect of some medications, or Meniere's disease. What's worse is millions do not even know such a condition exists.

John shared his condition with the hope his experience might prevent others from getting this tormenting condition or help someone who's already affected mildly from having it get worse. His advice: *When under your control, keep the volume down. When it's beyond your control, believe it or not, \$50 earplugs from CVS or Walgreens can save your sanity. And if you don't have ear plugs, recognize the danger and run like Joseph did from Potipher's wife.* ■

THE ENEMIES WITHIN US



It is relatively easy to identify our external "enemies", people whom we perceive have done us harm or whom we dislike for whatever reasons. Although we may not like someone, Jesus challenges us to love such a person as ourselves.

But what about the "enemies" within us? These are not so easily identified because our egos slyly crowd out the reality of recognizing them for what they are-- the seven deadly sins. And how do these internal enemies affect our behavior toward our external enemies.?

One of the most potent enemies or sins within us is **pride**, or vanity, an excessive belief in one's own abilities that interferes with our recognition of the grace of God. Pride has been called the sin from which all others arise. Egoism can make a person feel that any opinion or decision one makes is the only right one possible. Thomas Aquinas said of pride, "Inordinate self love is the cause of every sin."

Then there is **envy**, or jealousy, the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation-- the grass is greener syndrome which leaves a person never satisfied with one's own strengths and abilities, thereby inhibiting spiritual growth.

Gluttony follows-- an inordinate desire to consume more than that which one requires. Gluttony usually applies to excessive eating. In the broader sense it can pertain to desiring or indulging in anything to excess or even withholding food from the needy.

Similarly, **lust** is also a desire, an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body. Excessive thoughts or desires of a sexual nature can be a powerful negative force if uncontrolled.

And then there is **anger**, or wrath, as manifested in an individual who spurns love and opts instead for fury. Anger can cause us to react inappropriately, often with hate, temporarily or long-term, against loved ones, friends, or external enemies.

Greed, or avarice or covetousness, is the desire for material gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual. Wanting what isn't ours can cause us to lie, steal, commit adultery, and murder. Greed is an inordinate desire to acquire or possess more than one needs or deserves.

And lastly is **sloth**, the avoidance of physical or spiritual work. Laziness and indifference point to a failure to use one's talents and gifts.

Not only do sins affect our attitudes toward our enemies but also to families and friends by dominating our actions in a negative way. As an anecdote to the enemies within us, try the *seven contrary virtues-- humility* against pride, *kindness* against envy, *abstinence* against gluttony, *chastity* against lust, *patience* against anger, *liberality* against greed, and *diligence* against sloth. ■

References: Sins (Internet); Our Daily Bread