

## **Provisions** **Julia Bettencourt**

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and make not provision for the flesh,  
to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14

Making provisions is a fantastic thing when it comes to the necessities of life. Those who can vegetables and fruits or pack them away into the freezer are making provision for later down the road. Isn't it just delightful to unscrew that ring on a home-jarred can of green beans in the middle of winter and pop that seal? Mmmm! Those beans taste just like they've been freshly picked off of the vine.

Putting away provisions is a wonderful concept, but I wonder how many of us put away things on the shelves of our lives that we shouldn't. That verse in Romans 13:14 warns us, but how many of us heed it?

*"...and make not provision for the flesh..."*

There are things we pack away in our canning jars as it were that can only lead to broken fellowship with Christ.

### **1. Negative Thoughts.**

What about all those negative thoughts that we get a good crop of and put up in our jars? It could be negative thoughts about our pastor, church, coworkers, or even our family members.

*"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself  
against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every  
thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5*

### **2. Negative Actions.**

Sometimes we do things that are nothing more than setting ourselves up for sin. Remember how David took Bathsheba's husband Uriah and put him at the front of the lines? (2 Samuel 11:15) He made provision for Uriah to be killed so that he could have Bathsheba.

For those of us that know Christ as Savior, our actions should be that of obedient children.

*"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end  
for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;  
As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts  
in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in  
all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.  
And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according  
to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch  
as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,  
from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with  
the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and  
without spot." 1 Peter 1:13-19*

### **3. Envy.**

Look how David made this his provision for sin. (2 Samuel 11:2-27) He saw Bathsheba and wanted her. When he opened that jar of envy up, he only invited misery into his life. Talk about opening a can of worms! Envy is listed right up there with the works of the flesh in Galatians.

*Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:  
of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,  
that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom  
of God." Galatians 5:21*

#### **4. Pride.**

We can certainly pack this one away, can't we? Some of us have several jars of pride lining the shelves of our lives. We don't always label it "pride" though. We mark it neatly as "knowledge, "talent", or "spiritual growth". Not that there is anything wrong with those things, but sometimes we use them as excuses in order to justify our prideful attitudes.

*"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.  
Proverbs 11:2*

#### **5. Worry.**

Worries we jar up a jar at a time, never too many at once. Ever notice, however, that when we open them up later, we usually end up opening all the jars of worry at one time and devouring them all at once?

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and  
supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known  
unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall  
keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6,7*

#### **6. Time.**

Setting aside time is not a bad thing but when we set it aside and put ourselves in situations where we are prone to sin it is. Many of us set aside time every week to sit down and watch a television show or two that we know doesn't honor God. Some people set aside time to roam around on the internet to places that are not fit for a Christian. Some of us even set aside time to sit and gossip on the phone. In the end it makes provision for the flesh for us to sin.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,  
Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:15,16*

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When we are making provision for the flesh to rule our lives, we aren't giving the Spirit any leeway to develop that fruit we should be exhibiting. That's what we should be jarring up and lining our pantry shelves with...The Fruit of the Spirit. When we go back to the verse we started with in Romans 13:14, it tells us how to avoid making provision for the flesh. We are to put on Christ!

*"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and make not provision for the flesh,  
to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14*

When we are putting on Christ in our daily lives we are allowing the Spirit free reign and our fruit and the things we pack away will reflect that. These are the things we should exhibit. It will in turn keep us from sin and broken fellowship with Christ.

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|---------------|------------|
| Love          | Gentleness |
| Joy           | Goodness   |
| Peace         | Faith      |
| Longsuffering | Meekness   |
| Temperance    |            |

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."  
Galatians 5:22-25*

When we are not living in the Spirit, the only other thing we can be doing is living in the flesh. There isn't any middle ground. Putting on Christ daily is the only way to keep from being bogged down with sin.

I trust that I can have my pantry full of the wonderful fruits of the Spirit. I know it isn't easy. It's something we have to put some energy into. Those green beans won't string themselves or hop into the jars by themselves. Preserving takes a little work, and so does living in the Spirit and allowing Christ to have full reign. Just like putting up home canned goods, it takes a little heat, a little pressure, and above all a little sterilizing of the jars and equipment to get started. We can only live in the Spirit when we have all unconfessed sin taken care. That's what sterilizes and makes things ready to put up that good fruit. I hope I can live that way. When people open my pantry cupboard as it were, I'd like them to find all those jars of things that only living in the Spirit can produce lined up on the shelves.

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**So, what are you making provision for?**