

Displacement: It's about more than cubic inches

Often we will talk about our car's engine size in terms of displacement. Probably the most humorous quote I heard about displacement was from the 1950's Le Mans competitor Briggs Cunningham who said, "The only substitute for cubic inches is cubic money".

We can turbocharge or supercharge and throw Nitrous into the mix but the total cubic inches or cubic centimeters will at least, in part, determine the potential HP our engine can achieve and also the cool throaty noise it makes when we crack open the throttle.

Well there is a spiritual side to displacement as well. We will often have a sin in our life that we know that we need to get rid of. My special weakness is anger. I will get angry and confess it and repent from it, only to stumble back into it again and the cycle repeats itself. It seems the more I concentrate on not getting angry, the more I fail in this area. I finally begin to feel just like the Apostle Paul felt in Romans 7 where he knew the right thing to do but just had a tough time doing it. I have recently found the secret of getting victory in this area in my life. Let me give you an example about how displacement is helping me have victory over my anger.

We live in a neighborhood where there are very few families with children. Recently a family moved in with teenagers, which is fine, but on several occasions they have parties and play their outdoor music system very loud on into the night. I remember that big 8 foot tall stereo speaker in the first "Back to the Future" movie and I think they have a couple of these aimed at our house. A couple of months ago there was one of those nights when they had the music cranked and I had to go over and ask them to turn it down so we could get some sleep. As I drifted off to sleep my mind ran on about how thoughtless these neighbors were. I awoke in the morning still having bad feelings towards them. I got ready to write them an angry letter to tell them how many of the other neighbors feel about them and the rowdy crowd that they have brought to our neighborhood has ruined our otherwise peaceful street.

Somewhere in this process, as I let my anger run wild and I spiraled downwards, the Lord reminded me that I needed to change my focus. I began to think about the wonderful Church service we attended on Sunday. I thought about the Couple's Retreat we would be having in a few weeks and our many nice friends that would be there. I thought about our home bible study and the new people that would be coming next week. I recalled how my children were walking with the Lord and the 3 wonderful grandchildren we have. I thought about the good things that God was doing in my life and in the lives of my loved ones and friends. In a matter of only a few seconds the negative attitude that I had been wallowing in was gone. It was just like it was driven out and displaced by the good things. Over the next few hours I caught myself trying to slip back into the negative and each time I would fight back by considering again all that God had done and was doing in my life. I began to realize that Paul encourages us to dwell on the true, noble, right, pure and lovely because if we do that there is no room left for anger. The end result will be the life of peace we all seek.

PHP 4:8-9 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

The thing that I'm learning is that by concentrating on spiritual growth I can displace anger out of my life. I think this can work in a similar way for any sin we have – we can displace them with a spiritual focus on whatever is true, noble, right, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.

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