

YOUR LIFE IN THE **RED ZONE**

BREAKING PET SINS

REPLAY

You step into Coach's office as he requested, bringing with you Gary, the unofficial mascot of the team. You found the cute little rat just the other day. Some of the guys really like him.

"Hey, Mack, have a seat." It's not usual for Coach to be so forthright when the chat will be good. "Where'd you find your little buddy there?"

"I was walking by janitor's cart the other day, and he jumped out on me. I figure one of the other team's players left it," you say, a little defensively.

"He has to go, Mack," Coach says, his face a grim mask of determination. "He's cute now, but rats grow big and nasty and spread disease. No one on my team keeps vermin in their locker. Don't take him home, either. Those things are dangerous."

GAME BOOK

Even after becoming a Christian, people sin (1 John 1:8). The difference for the Christian in sinning now and sinning then is that then it controlled us. Letting go of the big sins is often easy. It's the little sins, the ones that don't harm anybody else (we say), that we have trouble letting go of.

As a Christian, you are called to a life of purity before God (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16). As no one becomes perfect overnight, this means a life of ongoing progression in holiness. Through Christ's strength, you become better and better.

As we said, the big sins usually come off pretty easily. It's the little ones that we want to keep. We're sure that this little sin of (you name it) won't hurt anybody. But it hurts you and your relationship with God. It very possibly hurts your relationships with others.

If your pet sin is gossip, then when (not if, when) other people find out what you've said, you'll have friends mad at you. The tongue may be small, but it controls us (James 3:4,5). Lying is another "little" sin done by the tongue. Harsh talking really hurts, even if you add a "just kidding" to the end of it.

What about not keeping your promises? That's a lack of integrity which is one of the biggest problems among Christians today. We say one thing and mean

another. Jesus commanded us to do what we said we would do (Matthew 5:37). And there are other sins that could be listed.

What to do with these sins? You can't keep them, but you don't know how to get rid of them on your own. In fact, you can't get rid of them on your own. You have to turn them over to God and let His strength defeat them (1 Corinthians 10:13).

This requires practice and training. Whenever you are tempted, remind yourself that you are a child of God and "must be about [your] Father's business" (Luke 2:49 KJV). Light and dark cannot dwell together. The light pushes out the dark. Embrace that light within yourself and use God's strength because He will pull you through.

TAKE-AWAY

As a Christian, you have to continually push on to holiness in God. You have to get rid of the small sins along with the big sins. Both kinds of sins hurt your walk with God and your holiness.

Even though getting rid of the big sins may be easier, the small ones have to go too. God wants someone wholly devoted to following Him. The little sin gets in the way just as much as the big one does.