**WOULD YOU EAT BARF?** By David Diestelkamp

Man’s best friend does it. Dogs are known to eat their own barf. It’s disgusting to us, and it’s supposed to be revolting when Peter uses it as a vivid picture of a Christian returning to the pollutions of the world after having escaped them through Jesus Christ (2 Pe 2:20-22). You may not want to talk about it, but remember, the Holy Spirit is the One Who wants us to think about it!

So, why do dogs eat their own vomit anyway? I had to ask, and Google provided some unappetizing, but rather insightful and unexpectedly applicable answers:

**Vomit smells and tastes delicious (to a dog).** Rover.com says that a dog’s incredible sense of smell (which is 10,000 to 100,000 time more powerful than ours [iheartdogs.com]) is able to recognize food particles in barf and thinks, “Yum!” Spiritual vomit is the same for many of us. There are particles of good, of fun, of pleasure, and of pride in sin. We are attracted by the particles while thinking they somehow outweigh or justify the disgusting pile of revolting sin we have to swallow to obtain them. As a temptation, the devil showed Jesus, “…all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” (Mt 4:8). He didn’t show Jesus the revolting filth he and sin had caused in this world. But remember, even these particles of glory were not worth Jesus worshipping the devil – and they aren’t worth it for us either!

**Vomit doesn’t taste bad (to a dog).** Dogs have one-sixth the taste buds of humans, so they are not nearly as sensitive to flavor (wisconsinpetcare.com). Vomit seems like a good food source when you don’t care about how it tastes. So, when our sensitivities to this world become dulled and darkened (He 5:14), we’ll consume things we would have found distasteful had our senses not been seared by the world and sin (1 Ti 4:2). Paul describes the unbeliever’s walk as one of darkened understanding, ignorance, blindness of heart, being past feeling (Ep 4:17-19). The world is desensitized to what is good and bad. It’s no wonder sin is consumed without gagging.

**Vomit has roots in natural behavior (to a dog).** According to Rover.com, in the wild, mama dogs may chew up a meal and regurgitate it for their puppies. Things can seem like a good food source because of how we were raised, what our parents or friends or neighbors or culture did or didn’t do. Sin can seem natural, not only because of our sin-soaked environment, but also because without Christ we are “by nature children of wrath…” (Ep 2:3). Sin and the desires of the flesh feel and seem “natural” to us. We have to look outside our natural world to Jesus to find anything different, and few are willing to do that.

**Vomit is a special opportunity (to a dog).** Dogs view vomit as a quick and easy way to eat again. It is “a second opportunity to enjoy a good meal” (iheartdogs.com). How many compromises do we make, how many sins are tempting because they are quick and easy? And the devil presents sin as a special occasion, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a rite of passage, and an exception, the only option. “Seize the moment,” the devil says. The Lord says, “Today is the day of salvation” (2 Co 6:2).

Almost every pet website article ended with a warning that dog vomiting and its consumption may be a sign of pet illness. So, I’ll end with the same warning from the Holy Spirit: “…if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it,* to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire’” (2 Pe 2:20-22)

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