

Eat My Dust!

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: **for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

DUST! It's everywhere. The dictionary defines it as "fine, dry particles of matter created as a result of disintegration." But that doesn't begin to portray the nuisance of it. Dust is just plain old DIRT!

Humorist Melvin Durai wrote this tongue-in-cheek article for his website:

LEAVE YOUR CHILDREN IN THE DUST

I used to think that scientific researchers had one main goal in life: spoiling our fun. If they found us eating meat, they'd show us we're at risk for heart disease. If they found us smoking, they'd show us we're at risk for lung cancer. If they found us wrestling, they'd show us we're at risk for brain atrophy.

My skepticism about researchers is fading though, thanks partly to a new study that promises to make my life easier. The study suggests that a dusty home may be healthier for children.

No, that's not a misprint. Dust is good for kids, according to the surprising study, which wasn't sponsored by the Hoover Vacuum Co.

Apparently, early exposure to germs in household dust helps children build strong immune systems, protecting them from developing allergies or asthma. Excuse me for a moment while I slide my four-month-old daughter across the back of my television set. Nothing like solving two problems at once!

Next time my wife complains about dust in our home, I'm going to shake my head and say, "Please try to think about the baby! She needs all the dust she can get. Why else do you think I've been emptying the dustpan in her crib? Instead of complaining, you should be nominating me for Father of the Year."

Some of my friends, I'm sorry to report, have spotless, immaculate homes. Their children can't even find dirt on their television sets, except by watching Howard Stern. Someone ought to call the health department. Their homes may need to be quarantined. Perhaps they should be required to take a course in hygiene.

Allergies are a growing problem in industrialized countries, what with everyone relying on antibiotics and antibacterial cleaners to keep germs away. If there's one word that captures the obsessive cleanliness of today's generations, it's "Atchoo!"

My wife has long warned me about household cleaners, concerned that they do more harm than good. Indeed, some of the chemicals I've used in our bathroom are so powerful, there's a law against exporting them to Iraq. We wouldn't want Mr. Hussein to get his hands on Mr. Clean.

In case you're wondering, the study was conducted in Switzerland, Austria and Germany, where farm children are exposed to many germs. (Now you know why it's called Germany.) Though their bedding contains a lot of dust, farm children have fewer problems with allergies. And unlike children in urban areas, they aren't even allergic to hard work.

Given these findings, it may be a good idea to let your children sleep in a sandbox. But here's a caveat: Too much dust can be harmful. Consult your doctor on the right amount for your child. Coming soon to a store near you: Johnson & Johnson's Baby Dust. Not just for the baby's bottom. If your child gets into the bottle, you can just smile and say, "Bye-bye allergies! Another one bites the dust."

Remember: In the modern world, it's not survival of the fittest. It's survival of the filthiest.

What is most amazing is that the Bible teaches us that we were created out of the dust of the ground – just plain old dirt! We were created from the dust, and when we die our bodies decompose into dust once more.

One little boy named Johnny told his parents he had to go and talk to the minister immediately after church. "Pastor," Johnny said, "I heard you say today that our bodies came from the dust." "That's right, Johnny, I did." "And I heard you say that when we die, our bodies go back to dust." "Yes, I'm glad you were listening. Why do you ask?" Johnny answered, "Well, you better come over to our house right away and look under my bed because there's someone there who is either coming or going!"

Human beings, and all other living creatures, are perhaps the greatest proof of God's existence. We are made of "dust" – just lifeless natural elements of the earth that without God would not, and could not, live. The average human body is composed of:

Oxygen (i.e. in water) - 97 pounds
Carbon - 27 pounds
Hydrogen - 15 pounds
Nitrogen - 4.5 pounds
Calcium - 3 pounds
Phosphorus - 1.3 pounds
Potassium - 0.5 pounds
Sulphur - 0.5 pounds
Sodium - 0.25 pounds
Chlorine - 0.25 pounds
Magnesium - 0.06 pounds

There is a marked Biblical emphasis on the fact that man is fundamentally composed of mere dust:

- "we are the clay" (Isa. 64:8);
- "man is of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor. 15:47);
- man's "foundation is in the dust" (Job 4:19);
- "and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14,15);
- Abraham admitted that he was "but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27).

Dust is a Scriptural symbol of poverty, lowliness and humility. It is also used as a means of expressing grief (pouring dust over the head). Dust has a distinctly negative connotation in the Bible, and all of this is to remind us that there is nothing inherently eternal in our human bodies. All the exercise, diet, cosmetics and surgery in the world cannot stave of the greatest enemy of humanity ... DEATH! The statistics on death are pretty consistent – one out of one people die. We remind ourselves of this fact every time we attend a funeral and the preacher intones – “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

BUT WE ARE MORE THAN JUST PHYSICAL BEINGS!

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT) that “God has ... planted eternity in the human heart ...” From birth, you have an inborn instinct that longs for immortality. That’s because God designed you, in his image, to live for eternity. Even though we know everyone eventually dies, death always seems unnatural and unfair. The reason we feel we should live forever is that God wired our brains with that desire!

One day your heart will stop beating. That will be the end of your body and your time on earth, but it will not be the end of you. The Bible calls your earthly body a “tent” but refers to your future body as a “house.”

2 Corinthians 5:1 (TEV) For we know that when this tent we live in—our body here on earth—is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last forever.

You see, something different happened in the creation of mankind that sets us above every other creature in God’s creation:

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils **the breath of life**; and man became a **living soul**.

In our very creation, God designed us to be vessels that could house His Spirit. But this privilege was lost when sin entered the world, and we have been groping in the dark for the meaning of life ever since! And only through a relationship with God can we find fulfillment.

No wonder Paul emphatically declared: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being!” (Acts 17:28)

We are just DIRT, and we spend our lives getting DIRTY, until God touches us! We’re still just clay, but God has a way of lifting us up to fulfill our eternal potential!

1 Samuel 2:8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.

The Apostle Paul perhaps captured this thought best:

2 Corinthians 4:7-9 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

2 Corinthians 4:7-9 (MSG) If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That’s to prevent anyone from confusing God’s incomparable power with us. As it is, there’s not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we’re not much to look at. We’ve been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we’re not demoralized; we’re not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we’ve been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn’t left our side; we’ve been thrown down, but we haven’t broken.

All that keeps this clay vessel together is the power of God inside!

Since I realize that I came from the dust, and since I realize that all too soon I will be returning to the dust, I’ve made a choice. It’s the same choice David made – **while God “holds this dust together” my clay vessel is going to praise the Lord!**

Psalm 30:9-12 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Psalm 63:4 Thus will I bless thee **while I live**: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

Psalm 104:33 I will sing unto the Lord **as long as I live**: I will sing praise to my God **while I have my being**.

Psalm 146:2 **While I live** will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God **while I have any being**.

There is one final obscure detail about DUST in the Genesis account; it deals with the ultimate enemy of humanity, the devil. Because of his part in the deception and fall of man, God cursed him with a unique curse.

When we say “EAT MY DUST!” we mean “I’M WINNING!” That’s because in a race, the lead runner or car will produce a cloud of dust that everyone else will have to run or drive through, and they will have to breathe or ‘eat’ that cloud of dust.

Genesis 3:14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and **dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:**

When you serve God faithfully, when you praise God wholeheartedly, the devil is forced to take a backseat to the humble, lowly substance of DUST! We are nothing in ourselves (and he knows it!), but God makes us worthy to become the sons and daughters of God.

The problem with most people is that they are living just as ‘animated dust.’ They have life, but they don’t have the ‘breath of life.’ They have souls, but those souls are lifeless, just searching for real meaning.

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils **the breath of life;** and man became a **living soul.**

The word “RUACH” (Hebrew) or “PNEUMA” (Greek) occurs in Genesis 2:7, when God originally breathed into man and he became a living soul. BUT WE LOST THAT PRIVILEGE THROUGH SIN! For centuries afterward, the cry of the Old Testament is one of hopelessness!

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

Oh yes, man can still ‘breathe’ physically, but he has lost his ability to ‘breathe’ spiritually! There is a lot of external religion in the Old Testament, but absolutely nothing that can change the heart of man and restore the breath of life, the PNEUMA, that he has lost. **Until ...**

Acts 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit (PNEUMA) gave them utterance.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (PNEUMA).