

- One of the great characters from a Charles Dickens novel is a man called Uriah Heep. I don't like him. Uriah appears in the novel David Copperfield. He works as a clerk in Mr. Wickfield's law office. What I do like about Uriah Heep is that he is one of the few characters that I can imitate well. Uriah Heep exudes repulsion. On first meeting him you become aware of his physical shape. He bends into a bony wiry kind of man full of pretend respect and manners. The truth is Uriah Heep is a repulsive man full of hatred and jealousy. To add make up to the character Uriah Heep's catch phrase is "most humbly grateful."
- The thing about Uriah Heep is that he would fit in well into the scriptures today. This passage from the first lesson could be applied to Uriah Heep. "Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight." It is true to say that we feed our anger and resentment all the time. Even though the terrible events happened years ago I quietly nurse the memory. I feed my anger to keep it going. Then when the moment feels right I strike out to pay off my old grudges. This is pay back.
- The wrath and anger coil themselves around my spirit until I become twisted and not very nice. And then I wonder why I don't have any friends or nobody likes me. That is why. You are the sinner who hugs and holds onto terrible things. In the end they are going to kill you. Paul in his writings says "I must decrease and Christ must increase in me." In another way he says it this way today: "None of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord and if we die we die for the Lord." Paul invites us to journey away from Uriah Heep who has no friends. Let me become someone who is open and transforming into something beautiful for God. Let me allow Christ, the Lord Jesus to enter into my life. Let me begin to imbibe what Christ and his teaching is all about. The result is that I am transformed.
- It no longer becomes about me, and poor me, and what's in it for me, and where's my present, and why can't I give the orders, and why aren't I No.1. That list goes on and on. It becomes about begin open to the world, people, new ideas, new beginnings, smiling more, putting others first, not about me all the time.
- The theme of Uriah Heep continues in the gospel reading. Peter asks Jesus the question, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive?" The question betrays the mind of Peter. Why must everything be calculated and measured? Why does everything have a price? This is mine and that is yours. When is it enough? When is it too much? Peter would make a wonderful engineer because I find all engineers to be very calculating. It's not their fault. They are engineers. The way they look at the world, as far as I can see, is that the world is a machine with all kinds of cogs and wheels and it must be figured out. Measure and calculate everything and the whole thing works.

- Jesus pushes Peter's mind to go further. Why does everything have to be about what is enough and too much? Why can't you just go and do it, feel it, taste it, experience it, give it all, give too much, love all of it, leave it all out on the field. Let there be a fullness about your life in all things. Jesus said, look at the birds of the air. Not even Solomon in all his robes was every dressed like one of these. The Almighty God takes care of the birds. They don't have to worry about it. All they have to do is fly and sing. Peter, put your calculator and your measuring stick away. Just go and do it.