

# Creepy Little Things

An outbreak of cholera is nothing to take lightly. In September 1996, Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, was in the grip of just such a plague. About 300 people were suffering from acute symptoms of the disease, wrote Uli Schmetzer in the *Chicago Tribune*, and seven had already died.

The source of the problem was not a mystery. In the rainy season of August and September, the streets and sewage canals of Manila become flooded and clogged. Flies and cockroaches proliferate, feed on the trash that floats on the surface, and become carriers of the cholera germs.

To combat the epidemic, Alfredo Lim, the mayor of Manila, had a novel idea. He put a bounty on flies and cockroaches – one peso (four cents) for every 10 flies brought dead or alive to health officials, 1.5 pesos (six cents) for every 10 cockroaches. Health officials targeted some of the poorest areas of the city, and on the first day of the program officials from the Department of Public Health went into the Paco District. Residents brought some 2,000 insects in plastic bags and were paid on the spot.

“If we kill the flies at once,” said Egmidio Espiritu, the chief of the health department, “we can stop the spread of these diseases.”

That story proves that creepy little things can lead to big problems.

In a similar vein, naughty little thoughts can someday result in serious, harmful sins and consequences in our lives. We need to work on cleaning up our thought lives, and watch how much better our lifestyles become.

--Beecher Hunter