

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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HEARTACHE: HOW DO YOU REACT?

Troublesome heartaches, agonizing problems, and tragic grief are conditions common to the world of humans. Suffering raises the question in the minds of many people: *"What did I do to deserve this?"* However, sufferers are asking the wrong question. Their troubles are not sent from God because He thinks they deserve them. One experiencing pain or sorrow might better ask: *"What can I do now?"* and *"Who will help me do it?"* Why should we spend energy trying to settle on what we think we deserve or don't deserve? Why should we adopt the policy of many by playing the blame game? How much better it would be to realize that troubles are the lot of all men without distinction, and to meet challenging experiences with a firm resolve to deal with them.

When heartaches come, realize that you are not the only one who has them. You are not the first to suffer under trials, nor will you be the last. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13a). Self-pity will not dissolve our troubles.

When heartaches come, never blame God. How many times have grief-stricken people asked, "*Why has God done this?*" Surely there are many things that we do not understand about the workings of God, but we do know enough to understand that He loves us, cares for us, and certainly brings no evil upon us. (See James 1:12-18.) We would do well in learning a great lesson from Job, who, in all his suffering, never shook an accusing fist at God: "Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." (Job 1:22). It is amazing that when troubles come, many falsely accuse the only one who can comfort and assist them. How foolish!

When heartaches come, trust God for deliverance. Seeking His help is much better than blaming Him. "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7). Does this sound like God heaps burdens of suffering upon us? The care that the heavenly Father has for us can be seen in the rich provisions he has given that we might be freed from the burdens of sin. Truly, the Father cares for the children: "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened." (Luke 11:9-10).

Friend, spend time with the word of God. Come to see the compassion and care of God, and that He will help you to endure whatever sufferings may come your way. Learn to rely upon prayer; pour out your heart unto God knowing that His word is true and His promises are sure. "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (James 5:16b). Remember, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way

of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1 Cor. 10:13b).

- GFS

Don't Wait For Retirement

Thousands of promises are made every day. At every wedding couples' promise to remain "faithful till death." Statistics prove many of these vows were not honored.

Christians are also guilty of taking their promises lightly. Some promise to give better "when a few bills get paid." Others promise to study harder "when things slow down at work." Others promise to start teaching Bible classes "when they retire."

It has been my observation that those who give liberally when the bills are paid were the same ones who gave while in "deep poverty" (2 Cor. 8:2). Those who devote many hours to diligent study when out of work are usually the same ones who study hard while working overtime at the factory. Those who teach in their "golden years" are usually the same ones who taught in their youth.

There is a need for qualified men to serve as elders and deacons in the Lord's church today. I realize new congregations might not have men ready to serve as elders and deacons. As we read in the book of Acts, it was several years before some congregations ordained elders. However, there are congregations which have waited for over a generation for men to become qualified to serve as elders.

What is the problem? Part of it might be that congregations wait too long before urging men to prepare for the eldership or service as deacons. Paul gave a rather lengthy list of qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Before a man was to fill either office, he was

to "first be proved" (1 Tim. 3:10). He must show his ability to serve before he is ordained to this demanding work.

If a man is not capable of teaching before he is an elder, I doubt if he ever will be. A man who throws temper tantrums before he is ordained will not magically manifest self control afterwards. Those who "convict the gainsayer" (Titus 1:9) in their youth will be able to "hold fast the faithful word" as elders.

Those who desire to be of service to Christ when they retire must remember their creator in the days of their youth (Eccl. 12:1). After the kids leave home it's too late to decide to raise "faithful children" (Titus 1:6). After years of socializing with the ungodly, it would be hard to become "a lover of what is good, soberminded, just, holy" (Titus 1:8).

Let us strive to teach our children the importance of preparing for the service of God.

- David Padfield

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The late N.B. Hardeman said: "Again, I say to you, with caution and thought, that it is not the work of the church to furnish entertainment for the members. And yet many churches have drifted into such an effort. They enlarge their basements, put in all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, and make every sort of an appeal to the young people of the congregation. I have never read anything in the Bible that indicated to me that such was a part of the work of the church. I am wholly ignorant of any Scripture that even points in that direction. Many brethren have looked upon our young people's meetings with some degree of suspicion. If we are not careful we may have an organization not at all different from others which we now condemn. Really, brethren, I have failed to find anywhere in the Bible where there is a difference made in the teaching or church work between a young fellow and an old fellow. Just where is that passage which intimates that the church should be divided according to

years? Brethren Srygley and Tant thought that such distinctions evidenced our drifting away. To say the least of such, there is a danger. I submit to you preachers that we should be exceedingly carefulest, in our enthusiasm to make a big show, we turn apart from the straight and narrow path and have within our midst something that the Lord does not want."

-- HARDEMAN'S TABERNACLE SERMONS, Volume V, Pages 50 and 53.

- > Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them.
 - > In prayer it is better to have a heart without fancy words, than fancy words without a heart.
 - > God looks most where man looks least - at the heart.
 - > If you would have God hear you when you pray, you must hear Him when He speaks.
 - > A person who knows "everything" has a lot to learn.
 - > It doesn't take much vision to see how many seeds are in each apple, but it does take more vision to see how many apples are in each seed.
 - > The Bible is for our information and our transformation.
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SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Two lessons from the Question Box: Sunday morning: *"Where Are The Dead?"* (text: Luke 23:39-43); Sunday evening: *"The Resurrection Body!"* (text: 1 Cor. 15:50-54).

SCHEDULE: Our Fall Gospel Meeting will be July 29-Aug. 3, with Aaron Andrews.