

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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Jackson, TN 38305

[oldhickorycofc.com](http://oldhickorycofc.com)

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## It is Hard to Start Back

For three years I was a member of the Kiwanis Club. It is a good organization devoted to community projects. Once a week, we would meet and have lunch. At this time, a guest would speak to us on a particular topic. We had policemen come and speak about law enforcement. Oil drillers would explain to us the art of drilling for oil. It was usually interesting. Fellow club members were nice, and I generally enjoyed their company. In fact, I did more than just attend. I was an active member--elected to club secretary. Last year I was chairman of the fireworks committee and head of the art contest for the chili supper. You get the idea.

Then something happened. I had to travel and miss some meetings. At first, I missed the company of fellow members and the speakers. After six months of missing, I decided to try to attend the next meeting. The only problem was that something seemed to keep coming up. I must admit not all of the problems have been major--just big enough to keep me from going.

For years I have seen faithful Christians drift away from God. Most of the time it starts with occasionally missing worship services. Then they

miss more and more assemblies and just quit. Often they do not know what happened and intend on starting back.

Let me relate my experience with the Kiwanis Club to this problem.

First, to those who faithfully attend services, I urge you to remain that way. Do not give in to the temptation to go to a ball game or just stay at home and rest. Once that pattern starts, it is hard to stop. Do not risk your soul by intentionally missing a service. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Second, it is hard to start back once you have quit. I did not say impossible, but hard. People get used to sleeping late Sunday morning or doing some extra work on Sunday or Wednesday night. You will have to make the effort to change your pattern. Returning back to services will not just happen. Repentance is one word that comes to mind. Not just sorry for missing services and not being as faithful as you should be, but a change in action is necessary. Make a point of setting that alarm clock for Sunday morning. Look at your watch Sunday evening and quit your yard work in time to get ready for services. Leave those dirty clothes alone Wednesday evening and study that Bible lesson. Be dedicated to God.

Finally, the longer a person stays away, the less they will miss the services. They will get used to not singing songs of praise to God, observing the Lord's Supper, listening to the gospel being preached, praying to God and just being in fellowship with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

This lesson should not be lost on the faithful. If a brother or sister is absent, we should make sure everything is all right. If they are having trouble, help them. Encourage, and if need be, rebuke them. Do not delay. **IT IS HARD TO START ONCE YOU HAVE STOPPED!**

- Dennis Tucker

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# Selfishness: The Home Wrecker

Though seldom identified, the sin of selfishness is the culprit responsible for most every problem, heartache, misery, and division occurring in the home. One of the marks of the "grievous times" of which Paul prophesied was that men would be lovers of self (2 Tim. 3:1, 2). And, grievous it is when husbands and wives will subordinate family needs to personal preferences; when they think in terms of self: What I want, what I like, my rights, my interests, and my happiness. Such thinking is practically the guarantee of hard times at home. But too few see selfishness as being a personal problem.

As H.W. Beecher has said, "Selfishness is that detestable vice which no one will forgive in others, and no one is without in himself." It is our inclination to see ourselves as the victims of selfishness rather than the guilty. As the unhappy wife I recently read about was heard to say, "My husband doesn't show any interest in what I do. All he cares about is whatever it is that he does at that place - wherever it is - that he works!" Such an attitude may describe us more than we care to admit. As God's people we are not ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11), the deceitfulness of sin, nor its blinding power. Therefore, however remote and unlikely it may seem, we must see the possibility of selfishness in our own lives! Like the prodigal son, we must come to self to overcome self (Luke 15:17). As Paul says, "Examine yourselves..." (2 Cor. 13:5), test your motives with absolute honesty for none can begin to deal with a problem he won't admit.

Self-denial is one of the first lessons to be learned by the follower of Christ (Matt. 16:24). Nothing is more fundamental to obedience and righteousness. Without it, no man can truly love his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25). As Christ's love sacrificed self for the church, so must be the husband's for his wife. It is an unselfish and giving love.

Without it, wives cannot be in subjection to their husbands, as unto the Lord (v.22). The very spirit that prompts submission to the Lord should prompt it between husband and wife. Being what the Lord wants me to be means being what I need to be to my mate. Selfishness, then, is a sin against man and God - and, oftentimes, against children.

Accordingly, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4) involves denying self. For instance, rearing children for heaven takes time. Selfishness robs many children of that precious time - under an alias, to be sure. Too busy, too tired, to talk and answer questions, to read the Bible, to pray with them, to take them to worship. But, worse perhaps, are those children who suffer because selfish parents divide the home rather than deny self. It is almost unthinkable that some would trade a good family for a selfish indulgence; for a bottle, for a lover, for "good times." Yet, it continues to happen, even among some claiming to be Christians. In these, and even in more subtle and respectable ways, selfishness is the great home wrecker: May God help us to want it purged from our lives.

- Dan S. Shipley

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## **Drawing Strength From the Courage of Others**

How thankful we should be for wonderful examples of courage that spur us on to greater strength in the Lord's service.

Paul was just such an example: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much bolder to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:14). These brethren, formerly timid and reticent, were drawing strength from the courage of Paul.

Other examples abound. Stephen's plea, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," surely had for its source of strength the forgiving spirit of the Lord (Acts 7:60). The Thessalonians church found a source of strength in the example of the churches in Judea (1 Thess. 2:14). The Philippians church, a model of courage and conviction, could no doubt trace much of its strength back to the wonderful example of patience and equanimity demonstrated by Paul and Silas while in their midst. The Hebrew Christians were admonished to "remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7).

Christians of this generation are similarly drawing strength from the courage of others. Young men who refuse to miss services of the church to play on a ball team; young women who refuse to be seen in public in scanty attire; businessmen who would lose their jobs rather than compromise their convictions; women who continue to adorn themselves in "meek and quiet spirits" whatever the sophisticated world thinks or says of them; sick people who bear their afflictions with patience and faith; elderly people who continue to attend worship when they are hardly able to go anywhere else; dying people who demonstrate how Christians ought to die; all are sources of strength and courage for others as they face similar circumstances. These all share a common spirit with the great characters of the Bible: they see in their temptations, trials, afflictions, and persecutions, a special opportunity to be like Christ, to demonstrate their fidelity to Him, and to provide a source of strength for those who might be weak and wavering around them. They seize the opportunity and stand, and all of us are stronger because of them. Of these courageous people this world truly is not worthy.

Are we, however, to be always on the receiving end of the strength of others? As we draw strength from the courage of others, we must in turn become sources of strength and courage. Others look to us. In the words of Charles Wesley, each of us has a "charge to keep," and "God to glorify," a present age to serve."

- Bill Hall

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Blessed Are The Peacemakers!*"  
(text: Matt. 5:7-9); Sunday evening: Bi-monthly singing.

**SCHEDULE:** Our Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regularly scheduled times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.