

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## **“As a Very Lovely Song”**

Why do people young and old flock to hear their favorite musicians perform on stage? Is it not because those musicians are artists who play instruments and sing masterfully? These professionals play and sing so well that the music and lyrics move the listeners and they go home flying higher than a kite. But what does this have to do with the scriptures?

Ezekiel 33:30-33. The start of the paragraph (in Ezekiel 33:30) sounds tremendously encouraging as God speaks to the man Ezekiel, saying, *“As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, ‘Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.’”* How great does that sound? The people all throughout the city are talking about Ezekiel, and they are encouraging and inviting their neighbors to come hear Ezekiel declare God’s Word! Certainly this is what every sound preacher

of the word desires out of his hearers. In fact, this is what every false preacher wants as well.

As we read on, the true desires of Ezekiel's eager listeners are manifested: *"So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them."*

God identifies a grave problem with the hearts of many people. They come to hear the word of God proclaimed and for them, the effect of the preaching is the same effect one might have to hearing "a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument." That is, they came to hear him in order to be entertained. They enjoyed coming and feeling religious. They enjoyed hearing Ezekiel declare God's commandments and warnings, but they did not take it to heart. They did not take it personally. They did not allow it to affect their conscience. The word of God, that was to convict them of sin and bring them deep remorse leading to repentance, was heard by them as if they were listening to a lovely song; something that brings joy, good feelings, and comfort. They act as if hearing the word is good enough, therefore there is no need to be a doer of the word.

In James 1:23-24, we find a similar idea but with a new illustration: *"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he*

*observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”* One who only hears the word is like one who looks in the mirror and sees their blemishes but walks away doing nothing about it. Just like one who only hears the word and does not abide within it is like a person listening to a song, and when the song is over life goes on. The song is not lived each day in the life of the listener. Likewise, the word of God does not continue within the life of one who is a hearer only and not a doer. Let’s never treat the words of salvation like listening to a lovely song.

- Tanner Campbell

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## “These Six Things the LORD Hates”

*“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”* (Proverbs 6:16-19).

There are six things that the LORD hates. “Hates” is defined as loathsome, repulsive, an enemy, a foe. Thus these six things are repulsive to God, for they are the enemy of all that is good and godly. But wait, there aren’t just six, there is a seventh added along with the word “abomination.” Therefore the text lists seven things that the LORD not only hates but finds them abominable. “Abomination” means a

disgusting thing, an abhorrence. It seems that “hate” and “abomination” can be used interchangeably. So why are they both used in the text and why is the seventh thing not listed at first with the other six things? The wise writer is using a certain mode of speaking that seems to be customary (as it is also found in Proverbs 30:18, 21, 29; Job 5:19; Ecclesiastes 11:2; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). This mode of speaking is possibly used in order to arouse one’s full attention to what the writer is saying. Does it work? I can’t speak for you but the statement definitely has my attention.

The first thing that demands our attention is that these seven things are not the only abominations to God. Other scriptures mention that the LORD hates one’s justification of bad choices (Proverbs 17:15), dishonest salesmen (Proverbs 11:1), the worship of the wicked (Proverbs 15:8), the prayers of the wicked (Proverbs 28:9), evil thoughts (Proverbs 15:26), idolatry (Jeremiah 32:34), and divorce (Malachi 2:16). All in all, we can say with all scriptural proof that all sin is hated by God (Psalm 45:7; Proverbs 15:9). So then why are there only “six-plus-one” things mentioned in the text under discussion?

Before we seek an answer for that question, we should remember that the doctrine of sin in the scriptures is well defined, and we should cautiously make sure we don’t reach any conclusions about Proverbs 6:16 that would be in disharmony with the bible’s teaching on sin. For in James 2:10 we read a perfect summary: *“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”* One cannot point to Proverbs 6:16 and say that there are only seven things really important to God that we shouldn’t do, and all other sins may go unpunished, or at least we will receive leniency. This is false doctrine. For James clearly points out that if one stumbles in one point (i.e. falls

into one sin, it doesn't matter which one), then they are guilty of breaking the law of God. James' point is that there is no partiality with God and His commandments. Therefore, Proverbs 6:16 is not teaching that God shows Partiality to some who commit so called "lesser sins," but cannot at all bear with someone who has committed one of the seven listed abominations. So again, let's let our views be in harmony with the word of God.

The truth behind Proverbs 6:16-19 is actually found right in the very context that it is often taken out of. For this text is not the start of a new subject, but the middle of one. The context begins in verse 12, saying: *"A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy."* The description of the particular wicked man, given in verses 12-15, is in exact agreement with verses 16-19 which actually lists the seven things about verses 12-15 that God hates:

--All quotes are from the NKJV--

I. "A proud look" - "He winks with his eye" (v.13)

II. "A lying tongue" - "Walks with a perverse mouth" (v.12)

III. "Hands that shed innocent blood" - "Perversity is in his heart" (v.14)

IV. "A heart that devises wicked plans" - "He devises evil continually" (v.14)

V. "Feet that are swift in running to evil" - "He shuffles his feet" (v.13)

VI. "A false witness" - "He points with his fingers" (v.13)

VII. "One who sows discord among brethren" - "He sows discord" (v.14)

Therefore, in light of the context, we understand that the seven things mentioned as abominations are not the only abominations of God, they are just the ones that particularly relate to the scenario of the “*worthless man*” in the context (count them for yourself: there are 7 things in vs. 12-15 and the same 7 things in vs. 16-19). And why is he considered worthless (KJV- naughty)? Because every choice he makes on this earth is an abomination to God. He is both wasting his earthly life and throwing away his eternal life just for the gratification he finds in these seven things:

“*A proud look:*” a lofty looker; so lofty that you’d think that he would have the best view of heaven, but rather, he has made his eyes lofty only to look down upon others and sit as judge against them.

“*A lying tongue*” and “*a false witness:*” what an unruly evil. He who has rejected God has no love for truth, nor respect for what is true. Therefore, he thinks nothing of lying. Even some “good” people find themselves lying, so we all must remember that such a thing is entirely detestable to God.

“*Hands that shed innocent blood:*” today this statement is often used in opposition to abortion, and rightly so, but let us not forget the many who are slain in robberies, school shootings, and the like. These murderers do not see the worth of precious life and are thus called “*worthless*” themselves (v.12). However, one who can see the worth of life will bear much fruit in God’s kingdom, and be worthy of eternal life.

“*A heart that devises wicked plans:*” we must be diligent to keep our hearts secure from evil, for from our hearts comes out every word we speak and every action we commit (Proverbs 4:23).

*“Feet that are swift in running to evil:”* One is truly vile when they do not even stop to contemplate the temptation before them, or make any kind of effort in attempting to not fall into temptation. One who is constantly running to commit their next sin will soon hit the wall of calamity, and there will be no remedy (v. 15).

*“One who sows discord among brethren:”* The seventh abhorrence of God. Spreading and creating gossip or slander is a quick way to cause that blessed tie that binds to rot. If one can’t treat their brethren with love, then they do not love the Lord.

*“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil”* (Proverbs 8:13). If we honor and revere the LORD, then we too will hate evil. For we will love the things He loves, and hate the things He hates.

- Tanner Campbell

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We are thankful to have Tanner Campbell, his wife Kayla and son Noah with us for our Gospel Meeting! We are confident that he will glorify God by preaching the gospel of Christ! Please invite others to hear. Meeting times Monday through Friday are 7:00 p.m.

**THIS WEEK’S LESSONS:**

Sunday am: Love for Christ!  
Sunday am: The Greatest Commandment!  
Sunday pm: The Bible, Summed up in one Word!  
Monday: Love for the Pattern!  
Tuesday: Love for Purity!  
Wednesday: Love for the Church!  
Thursday: Love for Glory!  
Friday: Love for Enemies!