

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"Hereby We Know —"

To know God in the ultimate and saving sense involves the keeping of His commandments. In fact, as John points out in 1 John 2:3, this is the only sure mark by which one can truly be certain of "knowing" God: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." In commenting on this verse Lenski says, "John takes up the question that troubles the mind of so many young people. Is our certainty better than the certainty of men in other religions? Are we Christians merely because we are born in Christian families? If we had been born Jews or Mohammedans would we not feel just as certain and be just as right in feeling that we truly know God? Or is the certainty of the skeptic not as good as the one we claim? Is the whole of religion not a mere subjective matter, unproved and unprovable, especially to a real thinking, scientific mind?"

"Here is the answer", he continues. "God has revealed himself, has made himself known. **Those** have known and know him, those know that they have known him, who are keeping his commandments." (Interp. of 1 John, p.404). Herein lies the difference between professed and true

disciples. Many **say** "Lord, Lord", yet do not the things which he says (Luke 6:46). The **doing** demonstrates the allegiance. Thus, "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only..." (Jas. 1:22). He who claims all authority says that men are to be taught to "observe all things whatsoever I commanded you..." (Matt. 28:20). Such passages (and many, many others!) clearly show that to truly know and please God means doing something — but that's not all. Equally important is what we do. Many have substituted religious activity for keeping His commandments. To be sure, they are busy, busy, busy with their various "church" related programs, but being doers of these projects is often far different from being "doers of the word". The only acceptable doing in the name of religion is **God-directed** doing and any claim to "know apart from this is false and futile. We live in an age in which religion and religious activity has been accorded an undeserved dignity and respectability. The popular notion that a man can please God while believing and practicing what pleases the man is absurd because it is neither faith nor obedience! Regardless of how many churches may practice a thing (including "OUR" church); regardless of how many "big" preachers and elders may endorse it; regardless of how much good it may seem to accomplish, if it is not doing HIS COMMANDMENTS (truth), it is sinful and divisive! Naturally, most **assume** themselves to be doing God's will. However, men of conviction will "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21); know His commandments; do them and thereby know Him.

Indeed, there can be no substitute for God-directed doing. Rightly viewed, such doing not only does not contradict faith and grace, but rather complements them. God's grace teaches man how to live and serve; through faith man appropriates and applies His word. Thus, it is never a matter of grace only, faith only, or works only, but by grace

through obedient faith (Eph. 2:8-10). Do you KNOW that you know Him?

- Dan S. Shipley, via Plain Talk, May, 1981

HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME TEMPTATION?

Are you finding it difficult to improve your service unto God? Do you have a particular sin that you seem unable to overcome? Let me give you six steps that will help you overcome any temptation.

The first step is simply to LOVE GOD. Jesus said, "if a man love me, he will keep my words," (John 14:23). So if we think about all God has done for us and if we really learn to appreciate and love Him, we will be motivated to obey.

The second step is to TRUST GOD. Phil. 4:13 says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." If we put our trust in God, He has promised we can overcome every temptation (I Cor. 10:13).

The third step is to STUDY THE BIBLE. "The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation...", (Rom. 1:16). It gives us power, not only to be forgiven of sins, but also to live a faithful life.

Step number four is to PRAY REGULARLY. We often fail to overcome temptation because we try to do it ourselves instead of

asking for God's help. You must be "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you," (I Pet. 5:7).

The next important step is to ASSOCIATE WITH FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS. Often it is our companions who drag us down, but Christians will strengthen us. "Evil companions corrupt good morals," (I Cor. 15:33 - ASV).

And the final step is to REMEMBER OUR DESTINY. If we keep our eye on our goal it will sustain us. Even in the face of great suffering we can rejoice when we remember that "great is our reward in heaven," (Luke 6:23).

Yes, you can overcome every temptation. If you have not yet begun to do so, why not believe in Christ, repent of your sins, and determine now to be baptized for the remission of sins. Then you may live a life of faithful service to God.

-David Pratte, via Gospel Anchor, November, 1980, p. 17.

HIGH SCHOOL MARRIAGES

One of the manias of modern society is the craze to have too much too soon. The old virtue of waiting and working to obtain is exactly what we called it - "an old (obsolete) virtue." Precocious youth wants a hot-rod when it ought to be pedaling a "bike;" a boy friend when it ought to be playing with dolls.

Young married people want a \$130,000 ranch-style home in an elite suburb when they should be living in a frame cottage on Thrift Avenue.

High school boys and girls rush into the sacred institution of marriage and assume the responsibilities of household bills and children when they should be solving algebra problems and attending football games. There is a time for everything that is right and proper, but nothing is made better by rushing into it before time. The divorce courts bear mute testimony to this truth with reference to marriage. Someone has well said, "How can the teenager who isn't ready to make a success of high school think he is ready to make a success of marriage."

Marriage is divinely ordained for man's good. It is hedged about with divine laws. It should not be entered unadvisedly or hurriedly, but in the fear of God. Christian young people should realize that marriage is "until death do us part." Divorce is not a part of the Christian's thinking. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" is the principle by which he lives. A relationship so sacred and permanent deserves MATURE consideration. It was never designed to satisfy the whims and unrestrained desires of precocious' infants.

-James W. Adams, via The Instructor, July, 1974

- > To be almost saved is to be totally lost.
- > Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity.
- > The Will of God will never take you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.
- > He who kneels before God, can stand before anyone!
- > Give Satan an inch and he'll be a ruler.
- > I would rather live my life as if there is a God, and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't, and die to find out there is.

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: Guest speaker: Andrew Richardson; Sunday evening: Guest Speaker: Chuck Richardson.