

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### USE YOUR BIBLE (Lesson #3)

Is the Bible "hard to read?" Many people seem to think so. They open the book (actually, a library) and try a verse or two, wherever the eye chances to fall. Yes, it is very difficult. It makes no sense at all.

The normal difficulties of grasping the setting (2000 years ago) and context, are complicated by 17<sup>th</sup> century language styles in the King James version. Yet thousands of people do read and understand the Bible. (Their differences are from failure to *accept* the authority and sufficiency of the Bible, rather than from failure to *understand*.) Normal difficulties of interpretation are overcome by those who really want to know the message.

Previous articles on "How to Study" have emphasized the make-up of the Bible, and importance of "context" (Last two bulletins). If you really want to understand the Bible, but the "reading" is a chore, we suggest:

(1) Increase your reading habits -- with Reader's Digest, or other wholesome secular material. In these T.V. days some have grown lazy. Their reading speed slows, and they cease to improve their vocabulary. All reading becomes "hard" under these conditions.

(2) Do your reading when you are most alert. For some this is early in the morning -- for others, later in the day when they are wide-awake. The Bible should not be used as a sedative -- to "put yourself to sleep."

(3) Use a Bible with large print — easily readable. The text is the important part of the Bible -- not the "helps," "maps," or binding. A large print, hard-back N.T. is inexpensive from American Bible Society. Better to "wear out" three or four copies, than to buy a fancy little eye-burner that is more for show than for use. The money some pay for a clumsy "table book" (seldom used) would put a readable testament in every room of the house, and buy other reference books for a family library.

(4) The New American Standard N.T. is an excellent version for reference or "up-dating" of the language. Charles B. Williams's translation of N.T. is also very helpful for those who find the King James language "strange." We believe many "reading difficulties" would vanish if one would make comparative readings in such books -- verse or chapter at the time. In fact, the study might become so interesting one would forget the Bible was "hard."

(5) Use "common sense" in selecting the order in which books of the N.T. are read. They are not arranged by chronology or ease of understanding; so we suggest: Mark, Matthew, John, and Luke -- in this order. Mark is short and full of action. Luke should be read just before Acts, for continuity of material by same writer. Do not jump into Revelation, Romans, Hebrews, etc., until a general background of knowledge has been gained.

(6) Try making notes on a scratch-pad, kept handily beside your N.T. It is not a mortal sin to underline, and jot references in the border of your Bible - for the truth you seek is the sacred thing -- not the paper and ink. Understanding follows study -- lots of it.

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, Vol. 2, No. 8, September, 1965, p. 4.

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# DOES POPULARITY MAKE THINGS RIGHT?

Some people desire to be popular. I've seen some people with the goal in life to be popular. This desire on the part of men bends them in one direction or another depending on what is popular and who they want to be popular with at the time. These people want to be "big" in the eyes of others. Therefore they are in reality declaring that they are really "small" and need to look bigger than they are. They are not content with themselves. They would never admit this but I believe it is true. Do you recall Ananias and Sapphira seeking to look "big" by their contribution? They desired to be popular with the Apostles, but they died in the process (Acts 5). Do you recall Simon in Acts 8 trying to look "big" also before the brethren offering money to the Apostles so he could do miracles? Seeking popularity has ruined many a man, even when they were seeking to impress good people. It should be our desire to be popular with God. In this we see that we are small and He is great and our need is to obey Him and serve Him and gain His grace, forgiveness and mercy.

1. The fact that a thing is popular does not make it wrong. There are many things in any civilized society that are popular. It is the popular thing to pay your bills, to open a door for a lady, to say yes sir or no sir, etc. Something being popular does not make it bad. It was popular for the 3,000 on Pentecost to obey the gospel and that was good.

2. The fact that a thing is popular does not make it right. There are many things that are popular in our land that are wrong. There are such things as abortion, lascivious dancing, social drinking, lying under many circumstances, showing disrespect to others, nudity, immorality as premarital or extramarital sexual activity, etc. etc. These things are wrong even though they are popular in this country.

3. God's Word makes things right or wrong. We have a standard to go by in life, and that standard is the Word of God. I am for capital punishment. I'm not sure if it is popular or not. I have not seen the latest poll on such. I

am not really interested in finding the popularity of capital punishment. God's word speaks of such in Romans 13 and says the powers that be do not bear the sword in vain. They are to execute wrath upon those who do evil. God has ever required such of mankind. It is right or wrong because God has decreed it to be such, not because it is popular or not popular. So, all decisions of right and wrong should be determined by God's will. The early disciples, "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Aquila and Priscilla even took Apollos aside and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26).

How are you determined to judge matters? Are you bent on seeking the popular thing? Are you seeking to please a certain group to the point you lean toward them to the doing of evil or doing good because it pleases them? Our nation would be far better off seeking righteousness as revealed in God's Word rather than seeking to know the latest survey of popular opinion. Our parents would be far better at raising their children in seeking to instill in them a love for God and the doing of His will than in seeking to be please men at all cost, whoever the men might be. Let us seek not the popular thing to do but the right thing to do that we may please God.

- Stan L. Caldwell (adapted)

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## Questions To Ponder??

1. Do you not feel a need for studying the Bible with other Christians and would it not benefit you to sing and pray with other Christians at this time?
2. Since the elders are instructed to "feed the flock" and since the "flock" is instructed to "obey them that have the rule over you." are you not in rebellion to God's authority when you refuse to attend this period of spiritual feeding provided by the elders?

3. Do you think it would be to the best interest of the church to abandon this meeting altogether?
4. If you stay at home from this meeting because of your children, would you allow them to hinder you from attending a teachers meeting, a farm bureau meeting, etc. or would you make arrangements for them for those occasions?
5. If your Lord should come on Wednesday night, would you rather be present with the saints of God studying the Bible than to be at home with your feet propped up, watching TV?
6. When your children grow up, do you want them to be regular in attendance at all the services of the church, or would you prefer that they follow your example?
7. Did you know that those who faithfully attend have as many children as others, work just as hard, have as many friends and social obligations, and that the reason they can come while you do not, is that they really want to come while YOU really do not?
8. Why not abandon all excuses and attend this meeting every time possible? You will be the one who gains by so doing.

- Connie Adams, adapted

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## **SUNDAY SICKNESS**

I saw sister Sue on Saturday,  
At the neighborhood grocery store;  
She laughed and spoke most freely,  
As she did on occasions before.

But she was quite ill on Sunday,

She stayed at home in bed;  
With that nasty rheumatism,  
And a bad cold in her head.

But she was at work on Monday,  
She arrived a quarter till eight;  
She had to run 12 blocks in the rain,  
She couldn't afford to be late.

- Guthrie Dean

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## The Way Back to God

**The Psalmist once wrote: "I thought on my ways, And turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not, to observe thy commandments." (Psalms 119:59-60).**

It is tragically true, that many, many people are separated from God because of their sins. And, they remain separated from Him because they have never "thought" on their ways. They are so busy with the hustle and bustle of life that they just failed to consider where they stand in their relationship with God. Perhaps you are one of this number. If so, then why not stop right now and check your actions and attitudes with the Word of God, and then follow the example of the inspired writer: make "haste" to "observe" the commandments of God.

Friend, this course is your only hope!

— Gordon J. Pennock

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*Elders: Gregg Needham,  
Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley*

*Evangelist: Gary Smalley*

**Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30**

**Sunday PM: 5:00**

**Wednesday PM: 7:00**



***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

**HEAR THE GOSPEL**

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

**BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

**REPENT OF PAST SINS**

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

**CONFESS CHRIST**

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

**BE BAPTIZED**

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

**LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE**

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)