

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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## HONOR YOUR PARENTS

It would be a good thing to see more and more young people showing respect for their parents. It seems, of late, that respect has been cast to the wind by many young "whippersnappers" who apparently have never been taught, or have rebelled against proper training. Maybe some parents have not made it too easy for their children to respect and honor them. It could be that they do not live as if they deserve such. It is hard for children to honor a selfish, lazy, grouch who gives them no personal attention, but quickly hustles them off to a hired sitter in order to indulge in various vanities. And what kind of honor could be shown to a drunken slob, a cursing brute, or a wicked playboy? Praise be to those children who can honor parents in spite of their rebellion against God by refusal to become a Christian, worship Jehovah, grow spiritually, or in some other way render service to Christ.

Early in life, children are dependent upon their parents for nearly everything. Later they have an obligation to affectionately respect and honor the parents who brought them into the world. This is the will of God and rejection of this is rebellion against the Most

High. Even in the Old Testament the people of Israel were commanded: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you." (Ex. 20:12). Even today the wrath of God is kindled against those who harm their parents, curse them, or treat them with contempt. Parents should never allow their children to "back talk". This is ugly and sinful. It breeds disrespect, rebellion, and iniquity. (For an eye-opener read Deut. 21:18-21.) Such wicked children would do well to remember their parents' sleepless nights when they tenderly cared for sicknesses of their beloved children, hard labor expended to feed, nourish, clothe, and protect these dear ones, self-denial and sacrifice that generously and affectionately provided necessities as well as luxuries in an effort to better the quality of the souls entrusted to their care. Child, think of this the next time some disagreeable thing is needed by those who have devoted most of their lives for your betterment.

Children love your parents, honor their integrity, heed their sound advice, obey their instructions (those that are lawful and righteous). Gently bear with them in areas where they are different in temperament, taste, humor, etc. Aid in dispelling their sorrows. Bring them joy and happiness. Care for their infirmities, labor to support them if necessary, just as they did for you.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Eph. 6:1-4). Children cannot properly

honor their parents if they refuse to obey them. "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry..." (1 Sam. 15:23). Parents must take precaution to avoid stirring up wrong feelings within their children. Be fair, just, righteous, godly, sober-minded. Above all, teach them the word of God. Show them how to love and serve God. Remember Christ, who, while suffering the excruciating agonies of the crucifixion, requested of a faithful disciple the rendering of proper care for His beloved Mother. "From that hour the disciple took her into his own household." (John 19:26-27). Christ himself has shown the way. Let us walk according to His will in honoring parents.

- GFS

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## **Unfaithfulness Is Inward**

The little book of Hosea teaches a great lesson on the nature of sin. Hosea was told to marry Gomer, who became unfaithful to him and finally left him to live with her "lovers." Later, Hosea was told to buy her back and accept her as his wife, which he did.

Gomer's leaving her husband was a result of inward unfaithfulness. She ceased to love and have confidence in her husband before she left him for others. Her leaving was simply an expression of the inner infidelity that existed.

In this experience, God taught Hosea a valuable lesson about Israel's unfaithfulness to Him. Just as Hosea wanted more than a housekeeper, God wanted more than external forms of service. Just as Gomer ceased to love Hosea before she became an

adulteress, Israel had ceased to love God before they turned to idolatry.

There is a valuable lesson in this for us. God desires our love and devotion, if he gets this, He will get our external service. If he does not get this, then our outward forms will be vain. Just as Hosea did not want a "housekeeper," God does not want halfhearted, ritualistic service. If we are faithful in our hearts, our lives will reveal it. The external unfaithfulness manifested by many who claim to be children of God is simply the expression of an inner infidelity.

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.... Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 23:26; 4:23). When people give their hearts to God, faithfulness is the natural result. Paul said that the Macedonians "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5). When they "first" gave themselves, the service that followed was rendered cheerfully.

It is a sad thing to see a marriage companion forsake his commitment and commit adultery, but no one ever did that who was not first unfaithful in the heart. It is likewise sad to see those who are married to Christ (Rom. 7:4), become unfaithful in their service to God, but the unfaithfulness that we can see was preceded by an inner infidelity that only God could see.

- Frank Jamerson, via Guardian of Truth, January 19, 1984.

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# Prayer and Fasting

When Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church, they "prayed with fasting." (Acts 14:23). In 2 Cor. 6:4-f. Paul wrote of those who were approved as ministers of God in "patience. . .labours. . .fastings. . ." etc. The King James version has "fasting" in 1 Cor. 7:5, saying husband and wife should not stay apart "except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency . "

"Fasting" literally means abstinence from food, not eating; but it also has a religious significance, as seen above. There is no evidence that the ceremonial fasting of Judaism is bound upon the church, but we can see that fasting was practiced by early N.T. Christians. It seems the reference is to time set apart for spiritual matters, probably including the abstinence from food in this context, so the undivided attention might be focused upon eternal rather than upon temporal things.

The repeated association of fasting with prayer, both in the Old and New Testament, is not without significance. When one takes "time out" to think of God and eternity, what could be more natural than this quiet intimate communication. And conversely, as sincere personal prayer is neglected, fasting would be abandoned.

Some religions have made a mockery of fasting by their "Mardigras" (fat Tuesday) -- a day of uninhibited debauchery in preparation (?) for the fast of "Lent." And we suppose there will

always be those who "fast to be seen of men." We can only pity such, and pray that our avoidance of such extremes will not be considered valid excuse for doing nothing whatsoever. Do we fear to be alone with God? Or is it our conscience we dare not face, in quiet meditation? Is this world so important to us that we cannot shut it out, even for an hour of Bible reading and introspection? Public worship, valid and proper, cannot take the place of private communion with God. "Enter thy closet" (Matt. 6:6) and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, Oct., 1972

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- If you do not, and will not, honor the *God* who made you, you are a dishonorable person.
  - The most dangerous place to live in America is in a mother's womb (since the legalization of abortion in 1973, over 40 million babies have been killed).
  - The person who "prides" himself in saying all that he thinks is not thinking (Proverbs 29:11, 20).
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Don't Do This!*" (Text: Titus 3:1-3); Sunday evening: "*Mordecai!*" (Text: Esther 2:5-6).