

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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How to Change People

The mission of the church is to change people. Our object should never be that of just winning an argument or making a point. Our goal should never be just to "put down" someone; rather, we want them to change their minds and their lives to conform with the saving gospel of Christ. To this end, all of our collective and individual efforts should be devoted. It therefore behooves us to consider how we might get people to change. There are only three possible ways by which men have ever been changed: (1) By Force; (2) By Purchase; or (3) By persuasion. Men and even nations have been changed by the use of physical force. When a person's life or physical welfare is sufficiently threatened by the use of force, he will usually submit to the will of another. The history books are full of examples of this kind of change. Likewise, if a sufficient price or consideration is offered to most people, they will change their lives to conform to the will of the purchaser. This is readily recognized in the area of wages or even bribes. Man's conduct is also changed by the power of persuasion. When compelling reasons are given for a different course of action, a

person may frequently be convinced to change both his mind and his conduct.

Now, of these three ways by which man can be changed, which is/are acceptable for use by Christians? It should be obvious that neither Force nor Purchase is acceptable in trying to change others. Neither one of these methods has anything to do with changing the mind of the individual. These methods might change his actions. But they will not change his convictions. Belief in what is right cannot be imposed on the human mind by either force or money. Even the change in conduct wrought by these methods lasts only as long as the force or the money holds out.

The only tool, therefore, left to the Christian is the power of Persuasion. This is precisely as God has ordained it:

- "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men..." (2 Corinthians 5:1).
- "...and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening." (Acts 28:23).

Our Lord is not interested in forced service or bribed obedience. He is interested in people being persuaded to "obey from the heart" (Romans 6:17). God desires a transformation of the whole man which begins with "the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

While the power of persuasion is all we have, it is enough! The only thing that renders it ineffective is our refusal or negligence to

use it. May God always find us busily engaged in using the power of persuasion to change men.

- Bob West

How Well Do You Listen?

Have you ever been misquoted? Have you ever misquoted someone else? Have you ever told someone, or been told by someone? "What you thought I said is not what I really said." This is so easy to do when people do not listen well. People often hear, but do not hear (they are not deaf, they are just not tuned in). It is said that people can speak at a rate of 130 to 160 words per minute; but they can listen to over 800 words a minute. This is why people often get lazy while listening to other people. They would rather do the talking, than the listening. They do not concentrate on what is being said, and later, can only remember about 50% of what is immediately said. That is why there is so much misunderstanding over what is said or heard. Have you ever heard a preacher say something worth remembering, then think to yourself, "I am going to remember that to use later?" But, by the time you get home it is forgotten. Poor listeners seldom hear a good sermon. Many a good sermon is ruined because the audience is not really listening to what is said. You need to take notes and write down the things you want to remember. Sermons

will become more worthwhile when you take notes to review at a later date.

Jesus encountered poor listeners, and that is why He spoke to them in parables. We read in Matt.13:9-16, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear! ...Therefore I speak to them in parables because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, and do not understand." He then went on to teach that such people did not really want to learn. How about you?

What kind of listener are you? Here are some common sense observations that reveal whether you are a poor listener. 1. Wandering eyes. If you catch yourself looking around at other objects, instead of looking at the person talking, you are not listening very well. 2. Doing other things while the person is talking indicates you are not concentrating and trying to hear exactly what is said. 3. Constant interruptions and changing the subject shows you would rather talk than listen. If you want to know what is said by the speaker stay on the point until he finishes the point. Then, if you are not sure of what you heard, ask a question to clarify what is said. 4. Displaying signs of being bored is a sure indication of disinterest. If you are uninterested you will not hear.

We must have the right disposition to properly hear. The Bible teaches how to be a good listener. (1.) Have a good attitude and desire to hear. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" Jas.1:19. (2.) Listen very carefully to hear exactly what is said, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is a folly and shame to him"

Prov.18:13. (3.) It is smart to listen to what is said. Prov.1:5 reads; "A wise man will hear and increase learning and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel." Be a good listener.

Poor listening can be illustrated by some quotes from an article published a number of years ago entitled, "The World According To Students," found in a book by Richard Lederer, "The World According To Student Bloopers." He gleaned the mistakes from papers handed in by students. Many of them pertain to World and American History, but the ones I print here are somewhat Bible related. It is amazing what one can learn if he or she is not really concentrating on what is written or said. Here are some genuine bloopers.

"In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree ... God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma."

"The inhabitants of ancient Egypt wee called mummies ... They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot ... The Egyptians built the pyramids in the shape of huge triangular cubes. Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he reached Canada."

"David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times

... Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines."

"Now for a little history, Without the Greeks, we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns – Corinthian, Doric and Ionic .. One myth says the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Styx until he became intolerable. Achilles appears in the Illiad, by Homer ... actually Homer was not written Homer but by another man of that name. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock ... In the Olympic Games they ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw java. "

"Eventually, the Ramons conquered the Geeks. History called people Romans because they never stayed in one place very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlic in their hair ... the ides of March murdered Caesar because they thought he was going to be made king. "

"It was the age of great inventions. Gutenberg invented the Bible and Sir Walter Raleigh invented cigarettes and started smoking. Another important invention was the circulation of the blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper."

How well do you listen?

- Tommy Thornhill

I HEARD A BABY CRY

Author Unknown

As I sat among the faithful
On a Sunday in July.
My attention was diverted
as I heard a baby cry.

Not a wail, that would disturb you,
just a whimper, like a sigh.
But it caused my mind to ponder,
of the child's life, by and by.

I thought about how blessed it was,
that it's young Mother cared,
How she nurtured and caressed it,
and all her love had shared.

I know that it's direction is a part
of Mother's plan,
To teach, and correct it by the rules,
God made for man.

And so, she's starting early in it's life,
of so few days,
To assemble with the saints of God
that "IT" might learn His ways.

It almost went unnoticed
amid the preacher's words,

Just a tiny little whimper.
but I'm sure the Savior heard.

To hear a baby cry in church
is music to my ears
For it can learn to please its God,
Because somebody cares.

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- > "An enemy of God is never a friend to man!"
 - > "The ability to speak many languages is valuable, but ability to keep your mouth shut at the proper time in one language is priceless!"
 - > "Good intentions will not help a man if he takes the wrong road!"
 - > "There is no food value in wild oats!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"My Servant!"* (Text: John 12:26); Sunday evening: "" ().

GOSPEL MEETING 2015: July 19-24, with Jerry Crolius, of Conway, AR, preaching.