

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Friday Night Lights, School Spirit, and Soft Porn

In writing this article, I know I run the risk of offending someone because their son or daughter may be involved in what I am addressing. I know I run the risk of being dismissed as just another “old foggy” trying to impose my standards on others. I know I also run the risk of being accused of simply having a “dirty mind.” But if I don’t write articles like this, I run the risk being unfaithful to my calling as a Christian, and one who is charged with proclaiming the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27; 2 Timothy 4:1-4). It’s this risk that I am unwilling to take, so I want to share some thoughts that I believe are much-needed.

My wife loves Fall because of its beauty. For her, it’s about decorating, crisp temperatures, and the beauty of nature. Me? I love Fall because of football, Friday night lights, and watching my son perform in the band.

So for the last two Friday nights, my wife and I have attended two High School football games. Both times, I left the stadium feeling sad, disgusted, frightened for my children, and overwhelmed by the work that is ahead of me and other Christians who live in a culture that has embraced what God abhors.

While we sat in the stands trying to watch the game and the halftime performance, we noticed how many girls were wearing short-shorts. I'm talking about shorts that couldn't have had more than a one-inch inseam. We saw several girls who came to the game wearing loose-fitting shirts with the sides cut out, so that when you looked at them from the side, you could see everything underneath. We saw several girls come to the game only wearing sport bras and short-shorts. We saw girls that had painted hand prints all over their bodies, including on their breasts as well as backside as though they had been groped (which they had been by someone). We also saw young men come to the game shirtless, with their bodies painted with the same hand prints placed in strategic locations.

Those were some of the things we saw in the stands. Then the "sanctioned" activities began. Though we went to watch a high school football game and a halftime performance by the band, we were exposed to cheerleaders and dance teams thrusting, gyrating, shimmying and even twerking. This activity was done by girls in skin-tight clothing and in skirts so short that each one of them, by design, exposed their underwear, countless times, during the evening.

Someone might say, "okay, okay, I get the point you're making, but to call it soft porn...isn't that a bit over the top?" Not at all. Pornography isn't limited to a genre of activity that is seen in "XXX movies." In addition to "Hardcore Porn," our culture has also come to recognize the term "Softcore Porn." This form of pornography isn't as sexually explicit as hardcore porn, but is used to describe dress or actions that are intended to be sexually arousing.

It's time we quit pretending to be too sophisticated to be affected by baser things, such as sexually arousing dress and conduct. How is it that parents can sit and clap for girls, their daughters,

expressing themselves sexually before a gathering of men and young men? (And really, what does that have to do with team spirit?) How is it that parents can allow their sons and daughters to go to a ball game dressed in a way that is designed to sexually arouse the opposite sex?

Hans Christian Anderson wrote a story entitled, "The Emperor's New Clothes?" It was about a King who was tricked into believing that he was wearing clothing that only the wise and sophisticated could see. In reality, he was naked. But because of pride and sophistication, he and his citizens pretended to see his clothing. However, it took the honesty and innocence of a little child to say what others deep-down knew, but didn't have the courage to say, "The King doesn't have any clothes on!"

This is precisely what is taking place today. I sat and witnessed adults and parents clap approvingly of little more than "softcore peep shows," while at the same time, I've overheard what the young men had to say about the same performance as they hooted and hollered for very different reasons. I'm convinced that in our pursuit for sophistication, we pretend that the immodest isn't immodest, the obscene isn't obscene, the sexually provocative isn't sexually provocative, and the immoral isn't really immoral. We pretend to be stoics, unmoved by passion and lust. However, our young people are much more honest. They just haven't learned how to play the game yet.

Friends, while we may not be able to stop the world from being the world, we can stop ourselves from being influenced by the world. We can stop giving approval to actions that are impure. We can look away and teach our youth to look away rather than looking on at indecency. We can stop encouraging our daughters to participate in activities which require them to flaunt their bodies, tease and arouse those who may be looking on. We can prevent our sons and daughters from leaving home dressed immodestly

and suggestively. Let's stop trying to justify the unjustifiable. Let's stop trying to defend the indefensible. Let's quit making excuses. Let's quit lowering the standard to justify our actions. Instead, let us flee fleshly lusts (2 Timothy 2:22) which war against the soul and the souls of our children (1 Peter 2:11).

- Steve Higginbotham

God Knows Your Name

Do you ever have problems remembering names? Many say, "I remember their face but not their name." Our Almighty Father in heaven never forgets your name. "The Lord answers, Can a woman forget the baby she nurses? Can she feel no kindness for the child to which she gave birth? Even if she could forget her children, I will not forget you. See, I have written your name on my hand. Jerusalem, I always think about your walls" (Isaiah 49:15-16).

The historical background was Isaiah's comfort to the Jewish exiles in Babylonian captivity. Far away from home, they wondered if God had forgotten them. Does God still care? Yes, Isaiah proclaims! A human mother surely remembers her infant child, yet greater than this is God's concern for His people. The 70 year Babylonian captivity was ordained to purify the Jews from idolatry and to allow the land of Israel to enjoy its Sabbaths rest that the Jews failed to observe (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 50:20; Ezekiel 6:9, 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Leviticus 26:33-36).

God's delays are not His denials. We have to patiently trust God's timetable, not our own, and wait on Him to fulfill His own good purpose in His own good time. Have you ever written something urgent on your hand to make sure you don't forget? God has written your name on His hand (metaphor for His active involvement in the world). He will not forget you! So, if you are a true child of God by obedient faith, God knows your name! You are not an afterthought in the world. You were created with a divine purpose in this world. You are at the center of God's loving concern. He remembers and cares for you! How comforting is Isaiah's message to God's captive people: "Comfort, oh, comfort my people" (Isaiah 40:1).

Do You Know God's Name?

For God to know your name in a tender, loving, saved relationship, you must come to know Him by name. "The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble; and those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You" (Psalm 9:10-11).

There is salvation only in the name (person) of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Have you been baptized in the name of (by the authority of His person) Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5)? Has God enrolled your name in the book of Life? Why not obey the gospel today?

Do you sincerely strive by faith to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God" (Colossians 3:17, cf. 1

Corinthians 5:4, 2 Thessalonians 3:6). This is faithfully and respectfully staying only within what the Lord has authorized in His word. "We believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us" (1 John 3:23). If God knows our name, we can always take refuge in His name (Proverbs 18:10).

Does God know your name?

- W. Frank Walton

A Builder Or a Wrecker

As I watched them tear a building down
A gang of men in a busy town
With a ho-heave-ho, and a lusty yell
They swung a beam and the side wall fell

I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
And the men you'd hire if you wanted to build?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed,
Just common labor is all I need."

"I can easily wreck in a day or two,
What builders have taken years to do."
And I thought to myself, as I went my way
Which of these roles have I tried to play?

Am I a builder who works with care,

Measuring life by rule and square?
Am I shaping my work to a well-made plan
Patiently doing the best I can?

Or am I a wrecker who walks to town
Content with the labor of tearing down?
"O Lord let my life and my labors be
That which will build for eternity!"

Author Unknown

- > "True friends are those who, when you've made a fool of yourself, don't think you've done a permanent job!"
- > "Of all the troubles great or small, the greatest are those that don't happen at all!"
- > "The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you!"
- > "It is easier to stay away from temptation than it is to withstand temptation!"
- > "Hell is truth seen too late!"

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"I Was Blind, But Now I See!"*
(John 9:1-7); Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly Singing!*