

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

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October 25, 2015

Volume 35, # 44

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## BAITING ANTS

Our home's master bath had an ant problem. There were ants everywhere. I think the main attraction for them was the water in the shower, but they were making a nuisance of themselves all over the bathroom. Ants are like that, you know. The wise man used them as an example of diligence and industry that the lazy human would do well to consider: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise. Which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest" (Pro. 6:6-7). Brother, the wise man was not kidding; our colony of ants was pestering the daylights out of Amy and me with their incessant work schedule! Something had to be done!

So, something I did. I went to a local hardware store, told them of my plight, and asked their recommendation for getting rid of our little pests. The hardware store sold me some Terro Liquid Ant Bait. The salesman said it was the best thing he had ever used for ants who have invaded the inside of a home.

According to the packaging, Terro Liquid Ant Bait contains 94.6 percent “other ingredients.” That is the stuff that ants really like and is actually quite good for them (sugar, water, etc.). The ants are drawn to the bait by the 94.6 percent ingredients. But Terro Liquid Ant Bait contains 5.4 percent sodium tetraborate dehydrate (common name Borax), which is lethal to ants (and to all other living things in high enough dosages).

The ant bait did the trick. The ants came to the bait in droves. The Borax fulfilled its mission. By the second day there were only a few ants milling around. By the third day all ant activity had ceased in the master bath.

Do you know that sin is like that Borax concealed in Terro Liquid Ant Bait?

Sin is poison to the soul. Its effect is spiritual death to those who participate in it, even a little bit (Rom. 5:12; 6:23). Sin does not advertise itself for what it really is, but rather hides itself within promises of pleasure. Hebrews 11:25 tells us that Moses chose to suffer with his captive brethren rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. The challenge for Moses is the same challenge for all of us, to see through the pleasure sin advertises and recognize it for what it really is, spiritual poison.

In 2 Peter 2:18-19, Peter makes the same point about the false advertisement of sin. He describes false teachers – presumptuous, self-willed men who bring destructive doctrines into the Lord’s church – who hide their spiritual poison behind great swelling words and allure the spiritually weak with teachings that appeal to the desires of the flesh. Peter writes that such men

make empty promises of freedom, but in fact their teaching turns saints into slaves of corruption. The doctrines espoused by such false teachers are spiritual Borax.

Evidently God did not equip ants with the ability to think through the warning signs of ant bait. They must be totally incapable of suspicion. I mean, think about it: All of a sudden, here is this ample supply of really tasty sugar water, in a nice little package that is tailor made for ants to enter, mysteriously appearing right in front of the ants' entrance into the house. That should raise about a dozen red flags to any creature capable of raising them. And even more suspicious, there are dead ants all over the place! I am not sure what is the ant equivalent of a skull and crossbones, but whatever it is, the ants should have seen it in their minds plastered all over the Terro Liquid Ant Bait station. But they are ants, and so they did not.

Fortunately, God has equipped mankind with the capacity for suspicion, to think through the warning signs, to identify the spiritual poison hidden behind feel-good activities and empty promises. It is only to man that God has given the capacity for seeing the "poison" in the "sugar water," to understand when something is not what it seems, to see through a lie. The Corinthian church was notorious for not being able to identify the warning signs of spiritual poison, and so Paul encourages them in 1 Cor. 14:20 to "not be children in understanding . . . but in understanding be mature." And it is through God's word that we come to understand just what, to us is spiritual poison.

The psalmist wrote in Psa. 119:104, “Through Your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.” Paul wrote in Rom. 7:7 about the value of God’s precepts in this regard, “I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’” He is speaking of the Law of Moses in that passage, but what he says applies to all of God’s words; they identify the spiritual Borax that Satan tries so diligently to mask as harmless or even helpful.

The point of all this? There are two points, really. One: Read your Bible. Read it to learn what sin is and how Satan has disguised it. And two: Live circumspectly. Stay sensible. Keep a watch out for hidden dangers to your spiritual life. “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21-22). Remain constant in those two points, and you can avoid the deception that destroys the ant.

- Jerry King

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## **Are you satisfied with your religion?**

Through the years I have invited many people to attend Bible studies and worship services with me. Many times, their refusal has been accompanied by the statement, “I am satisfied with my religion.”

Bible readers will notice very quickly that Old Testament idol worshippers were satisfied with their religion to the degree that they would suffer self-inflicted wounds for it, but God’s servant, Elijah, put them to death upon the command of the Lord (1 Kings

18:20-40). The men of first-century Athens were satisfied with their many religions and philosophies, but Paul, by the inspiration of God, informed them that they worshipped in ignorance and needed to repent in view of the coming universal judgment by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:16-31). The rich man with very productive land was satisfied with his abundant harvests, but God called him a fool and required his soul that very night (Luke 12:16-21). The Pharisee who went to the temple to pray was satisfied that he was not as contemptible as others, like the tax collector, but Jesus said that the humble, sin-conscious tax collector was justified rather than the self-exalted Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). The rich young ruler was satisfied that his law keeping would result in his inheritance of eternal life, but Jesus told him that he needed to sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor in order to have treasures in heaven (Luke 18:18-23). The twelve disciples in Ephesus were evidently satisfied with their religion, having been baptized into John's baptism, but Paul taught them that they had not received the Holy Spirit, which was given to believers in Christ, and they acknowledged that they had not heard whether there was a Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). The church at Laodicea was satisfied, viewing themselves as rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing, but Jesus said they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, and in need of repentance (Rev. 3:17-18).

Friend, a satisfied person can be wrong and out of favor with the Lord. "There is a way *which seems* right to a man, But its end is the way of death." (Prov. 14:12). To be right with God, we must "be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you" (2 Pet. 1:10).

- Gary F. Smalley

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# Can We Have Unity

I took a package to the post office at Murfreesboro and had the clerk weigh it. He consulted his map to find the zone to which it was going. He turned to his guidebook and told me the amount of the postage. I took the same package to our neighboring town of Woodbury and went into the post office. The clerk gave me the amount of the postage -- and it was the same. This same package I then took to a little country post office in the back of a store in one of our rural districts. There the post master weighed it. With some degree of slowness -- for he was an uneducated man -- he consulted his postal rate book and came up with the same answer. These postal employees had not met in convention and decided to charge me a certain amount for the mailing of this package.

They probably did not know one another. THEY ALL HAD ON OFFICIAL GUIDE BOOK AND WENT BY IT. They had unity. As long as men insist on using their own creeds and opinions in religion, we will have division.

WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO USE THE OFFICIAL GUIDE BOOK -- THE BIBLE -- WE WILL HAVE UNITY.

- George DeHoff

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# I Don't Care What It Says

In the course of a discussion the other day, I asked a man to read a certain chapter from the Bible and get back to me about our topic. He said he would read it, but it would not matter what it says, because he would continue in his practice anyway. He said God would have to come down and speak to him from a burning bush before he would change his mind. Many people have this attitude, that is dead wrong.

The attitude of "I don't care what it says," reveals a lack of respect for God's word. The Bible is inspired, therefore it is authoritative (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:15). God revealed it to men through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). No spiritual truth was left out (John 16:13; Jude 3). Hence, men can read all they need to know about pleasing God and going to heaven (2 Peter 1:3).

Further, God's word was confirmed by miracles (Hebrews 2:3-4). There is no need for further revelation, nor a miracle to confirm it.

The bottom line is, men are simply not satisfied with what God has authorized. They want something more or different. They want what "feels" good to them, not what honors God. Though they may draw near to God with their mouth, in works they deny Him (Matthew 15:7-9; Titus 1:16).

What about you? Does it matter to you what God says? Is there a belief or practice you are unwilling to give up or change though God's word does not authorize it?

Instead of saying, "I don't care what it says, I'm going to do it anyway," our attitude needs to be, "I don't care what anyone says, I'm going to do what God says" (cf. Galatians 1:10).

- Steven F. Deaton

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- > "Bearing one another's burdens is different from bearing down on them!"
  - > "Sufficient faith will make us helpful and hopeful!"
  - > "It is not how fast but how well we do a job that really counts!"
  - > "If you would be a true giver, then give yourself!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Peter's Denial of Jesus!"*  
(Text: Matt. 26:69-75); Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly Singing!*