

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### On A Daily Basis

A man, asked recently to describe memories of his college days twenty-five years ago, replied, "A few big moments; many goofs, but, overall, pleasant memories."

Would these words not describe our memories of life generally? As we recall our years, there are always the "big" moments, the emotional "highs," that we love to relish. Then there are the "goofs," the embarrassing occasions that just keep coming back to haunt us. But, through it all, the pleasant memories sufficiently prevail to enable us to feel generally good about life.

But, in reality, success or failure in life is not determined by the "big moments" or "the goofs." We will not be eternally saved on the basis of a few great spiritual achievements or eternally lost on the basis of a few gross mistakes (assuming they have been repented of). Life consists of everyday actions and decisions, and it is these that bring ultimate success or failure, eternal happiness or eternal damnation. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

It is one thing to express concern for our children as we talk of their future spirituality and faithfulness. It is quite another to provide on a daily basis a spiritual atmosphere in the home, a good example of godliness and faithfulness, consistent and loving discipline and a love for God and respect

for fellowman that are so essential to the training of our children. It's the little impressions that are made day by day that prove to be so decisive.

It is one thing to dream of some day being appointed an elder in the church. It is quite another thing to put forth the effort on a daily basis to learn the scriptures, to develop leadership ability, to grow spiritually, and to live as to gain the confidence of a discerning congregation. One does not qualify for the eldership in one big leap. It comes through daily development.

It is one thing to talk a "good line" on priorities. It is quite another thing to put God first on a daily basis. The devil knows so many ways to test our resolve in these realms. Our intentions are good, but, through his subtlety, he has us selling our souls for a mess of pottage or thirty pieces of silver.

It is one thing to think that we would die for the Lord if our faith were so tested. It is quite another thing truly to live for Him on a daily basis. Egos may be fed on the "big moments," but true spirituality develops through daily prayer, study and meditation.

Our lesson is this. Set your goals for the future, and set them high. But recognize that it's the little, day-by-day moments, the often forgotten moments, accumulated through the years, that truly shape our destiny. Tomorrow's success depends upon the choices and decisions that are made today. Make them with care.

- Bill Hall

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## **Detached Members**

Perhaps the most quickly recognized illustration of a member of our body being detached is the retina, that part of the eye that receives the image and sends it through the optic nerve. When it becomes detached, that eye is unable to see.

Paul declared that we are all members of the body, if we are children of God, Christians (1 Corinthians 12:18-20). And he further taught that all of the members must work for the well-being of the whole body (Ephesians 4:16).

But we cannot function if we become detached from the rest of the body. That part of the body that is cut off, or detached from the body, can be no benefit to the body. An arm severed from the body can do no work for the one who has lost that limb. But neither can the body continue to supply life to the part that is detached.

Even so, members of Christ can neither serve Him nor can He be a blessing to them, if they become detached from Him. A close association with the Lord in the body is necessary for the grace of God to save and bless us. Those members who have detached themselves from the church or have so lived as to have the fellowship with God's people broken will die as surely as a severed limb. Jesus said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can you, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). We cannot miss meeting and working with other saints in the church and bear fruit for the Lord. We must stay attached to His body in all things to keep our fellowship with Him, for He is the head of the body. Are you well attached?

Let us keep well involved in worship, in teaching others, in study, in ministering to others' needs to keep our lifelines connected securely. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

- Frank Smith

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# TEMPER

When I have lost my temper,  
I have lost my reason, too.  
I'm never proud of anything,  
Which angrily I do.

When I have talked in anger  
And my cheeks are flaming red,  
I have always uttered something  
Which I wish I had not said.

In anger I have never  
Done a kindly deed or wise,  
But many things for which I felt  
I should apologize.

In looking back across my life,  
At all I asked or made,  
I can't recall a single time  
When fury ever paid.

So I struggle to be patient,  
For I've reached a wiser age;  
I do not want to do a thing  
Or speak a word in rage.

I have learned by sad experience  
That when my temper flies,  
I never do a worthy deed,  
A decent deed or wise.

-Author Unknown

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## Are You Getting Even or Coming Out Ahead?

Little four-year-old Frankie asked his grandmother: "Gramma, do you know what you and God have in common?" Gramma mentally adjusted her halo and made herself look as saintly as possible for the high compliment she was about to receive from her adoring grandson. Piously she said, "No, sweetheart? What?" With no hesitation whatsoever, Frankie said, "You're both really old."

Ouch! Franking was a little too frank, wasn't he?! What do you do when someone insults or otherwise treats you unfairly and unjustly?

Jesus speaks to just this issue in Matthew 5:38-42 with challenging and controversial words. Here they are: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." In these verses Jesus corrects a gross misuse of Old Testament teaching on the part of the scribes and Pharisees of His day. They had completely twisted the teaching of passages like Exodus 21:23-25, Leviticus 24:19-20, and Deuteronomy 19:15-21 which originally sought to limit punishment to the crime. They also put a brake on the human tendency to take back in revenge much more than eye for eye and tooth for tooth! No individual Israelite could decide to take another's eye or tooth. The Law limited such judgments to duly appointed judges/priests in Israel. The Jews had (wrongly) extended this prerogative to a personal level, and were using the teaching not for justice but for revenge and retaliation.

Think carefully about Jesus' words. On the one hand we must avoid an extreme literal interpretation of His words — what if some predator assaults your child or some lust-filled neighbor asks for your wife or some slovenly slouch who refuses to work asks for your paycheck this week so he can

booze it up? On the other hand we must not dismiss ourselves from the high and holy road Christ calls us to walk in this teaching! It is the road He Himself walked — not the road of retaliation and revenge and taking of eye for eye and tooth for tooth and limb for limb — but the road of self-sacrifice, love, and forgiveness. At the cross Jesus did not strike back at those who slapped, beat, spit on, and then crucified Him. In the face of horrible evil and mistreatment He refused to pay back in hatred.

Morgan Freeman once said, "In the harshest place on earth, love finds a way." I can't think of any place on earth more harsh than at Calvary's cross where they crucified the only sinless Man who ever lived. They taunted Him and dared Him to come down from the cross, but He refused to start yanking out eyes and teeth, even though He could have (Matthew 26:53), and would have been completely just in doing so. If we are to truly "follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21) and "walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6b) we will have to let go of the world's vengeful, retaliatory mentality that says "give what you get" and "do unto others as they do unto you." The cross of Christ forcefully reminds us we will come but ahead if we refuse to try and get even. Think about it.

- Dan Gulley

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- > "Plan ahead -- It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark!"
  - > "Grace received but not shared is grace surrendered!"
  - > "Eternity is a long time to think about what you should have done!"
  - > "God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Wet All Over And Clean All Under!"* (Text: Rom. 6:1-7); Sunday evening: *"Would We Have Believed Them?"* (Rom. 10:15b-21).