

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Evil Counsel

The Psalmist said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly . . ." (Psa. 1:1).

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, asked for advice when he was about to be made king. The people wanted their burdens made lighter. The older men advised Rehoboam to be considerate of the people. "But he forsook the counsel of the old men . . ." (1 Ki. 12:8). Turning to the younger men, his contemporaries, Rehoboam was advised to answer the people sternly and to warn that he would increase their burdens. Speaking to them after the counsel of the young men, he said, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Rebellion broke out. Ten tribes revolted and made Jeroboam their king.

Not long after Jeroboam took command of the newly formed ten-tribe kingdom, he said in his heart that the people must not be allowed to go up to Jerusalem to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord. He feared that going to Jerusalem for worship would turn the hearts of the people back to Rehoboam, and they would slay Jeroboam. "Wherefore the king took counsel . . ." (1 Kgs. 12:28). Whoever his advisers were, their counsel must have been wicked. The king set up calves of gold, one in Dan and one in Bethel, and urged the people to worship in their own kingdom. He argued that it was too much to go all the way to Jerusalem. He changed the feast day and ordained men to the priesthood who were not of the tribe of Levi. His greatest desire was to insure his political position.

In the days when Ahaziah, grandson of Jehoshaphat, was ruling in Judah, evil counsel had a strong influence. Ahaziah's mother was a daughter of the notorious Ahab. It was said of Ahaziah, "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab: for they were his counselors after the death of his father to his destruction" (2 Chron. 22:2-4).

Often men feel the need for advice. How careful we must be that counsel we receive is not evil.

### **Twentieth-Century Examples**

Sometimes people with marriage problems turn to professional counselors. A lot of these "experts" in the field of marriage know nothing about the teaching of the Scriptures. They give advice which sets their clients on a course directly opposed to the will of the Lord. Beware of the counselors who are not Christians!

People with emotional problems sometimes seek the advice of psychiatrists. Not a few professionals in the field of psychiatry are anti-religious. They see religion as a major cause of mental disorders. Take heed that your faith be not wrecked by such evil counselors!

And people are constantly looking to preachers and religious leaders for spiritual advice. Unfortunately, many of these do not respect the authority of Jesus Christ. Preachers who are bound up in sectarianism are not good counselors. Preachers who deny the miracles of the Bible are unfit to counsel others in spiritual matters. Preachers who interpret the Bible to suit themselves are not safe advisers. Beware of religious leaders whose counsel disagrees with the word of God!

High school teachers and college professors frequently give advice to their students. Some of these instructors know not God. Many are rank evolutionists. Some of them glory in human wisdom and delight in making fun of the Bible. It is not uncommon for college professors to urge young people to throw off restraints of morality. Beware of these wicked counselors!

One who feels the need of advice about something that affects the course of his life or the destiny of his souls should seek a godly, wise, and respected person to be his counselor. Mature persons are better prepared to give advice, generally speaking, than are the inexperienced.

Weigh all advice carefully by the word of God. No matter what men may say, God's word is right. His word should be the final word. The only truly infallible guide that we have is the Bible.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsel. . ." (Prov. 1:5). "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end" (Prov. 19:20).

When people are taught to expect the Holy Spirit to guide them apart from God's word and they wait for a mysterious operation, the counsel is evil.

When Christians are encouraged to believe that in some manner the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to them simply because they are children of God, no matter how they live nor what they believe, that counsel is evil.

When men and women are advised to expect salvation from sin by faith without obedience to the gospel, that counsel is evil.

When people are advised that all truth is relative and none absolute, and that right and wrong depend solely on one's situation rather than a fixed standard, that counsel is evil.

Do not misled by wicked counsel.

- Irvin Himmel, Truth Magazine, January 20, 1977

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## Pouting

Anyone who has raised children or ever meet one has seen him or her pout. Mommy doesn't fork over a quarter for the gum ball machine or Daddy tells him to stop hitting his sister with the dog and the pout is on. Lower lip protrudes, chin droops, tears well, spirit disappears.

Children pout when they don't get their way and often when they are chastened for doing the wrong thing. Sometimes you tell them not to play with their food, and they exclaim, "Fine, I won't eat at all." They pout because they think they are punishing their parents, and if parents cave into the pout, they will never see an end to the behavior.

Pouting, however, is not a behavior that automatically ceases on the day of one's baptism or eighteenth, birthday, whichever comes first. Husbands and wives pout when unwillingly put on the compromising side of some matter. Church members have even been known to pout.

Should an elder or parent make a critical comment to a Bible class teacher, some will exclaim, "Fine, I just won't teach class anymore." If their pout is in low gear, they may choose the silent approach instead and just refuse ever to sign up again.

Maybe someone makes a suggestion about the communion preparation, building cleaning or something else. The person responsible for things feels reprov'd and rejected and throws on the pout face. "Fine, I just won't do anything anymore!"

Some pouters go so far as to threaten to take their membership elsewhere when they receive the slightest criticism or the sincerest rebuke. Friend, this is not what Jesus had in mind when he admonished people to come to him "as little children." Childlike trust, yes; childish immaturity, no.

Can you imagine Apollos pouting because of the correction wrought by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18)? Can you see Peter's lower lip sticking out after Paul rebuked him for hypocrisy (Gal. 2)?

Spiritual maturity includes the ability to accept suggestions and even corrections without going to pieces and putting on a martyr face. God chastens us because he loves us and our parents have done the same (Heb. 12:1-11). Usually, when a brother in Christ conjures up the courage to suggest or correct, he has the same selfless motive — to help. Either he is trying to save a soul from death (James 5:19-20) or he is just trying to help me be a more effective steward of God's gifts and opportunities. Not all suggestions are good, just as not all rebukes hit their mark, but it takes honest meditation to determine what is actually helpful. Rather than resorting to defensiveness and pouting, accept another's assistance in the spirit it is given and do all to the glory of God, even if that means sacrificing a little of your own.

- J.S. Smith

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## Man's Purpose in Life

We need God to give substance and meaning to our lives. Apart from God, man would not know his origin, purpose, or destiny. Knowing these things is essential to man's experiencing the substance, and understanding the meaning, of life.

God, in Genesis chapter 1, tells us of our origin. He said in verse 27, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

God has also told us why we're here. Solomon declared in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing,

whether good or evil.” This declaration was made after Solomon had explored all the avenues and indulgences of life in an effort to discover substance and true pleasure. He found it only in God.

Thus, the whole (the essence or substance) of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. Obeying God out of dependence upon Him results in having a good foundation upon which to build. Doing God’s will results in living a satisfying, rewarding and fulfilling life here, and gives the promise of being in heaven with Him when this life is over.

How about you? What’s your purpose in life? Serving God and keeping His commandments is what life is all about.

- Richard Thetford

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- > “One can be too big for God to use, but one can never be too small!”
  - > “A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor can a Christian be perfected without adversity!”
  - > “Do what you can, where you are, and with what you have!”
  - > “No matter how long you nurse a grudge it won't get better!”
  - > “When life knocks you to your knees, you are then in the best position to pray!”
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: “*Teenage Dating!*” (Text: 1 Peter 2:11-12); Sunday evening: “*Jesus Cleanses the Temple!*” (Text: John 2:13-25).