

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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## **The Power of a Young Person's Influence**

Children are natural imitators, not only of their parents, but also of each other. Paul alludes to this inborn mimicry when he commands us to "be imitators of God as dear children." (Ephesians 5:1). So, children are "imitators." We know this. But we get so focused on "peer pressure" as a negative thing that we forget that young people can and should influence one another to do good. Yes, it is possible for them to imitate good. In fact, the Bible commands it! The Bible says, "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good" (III John 11).

There are important reasons for young and old alike to work at imitating good. For one thing, we'll have much less to fear in the way of negative consequences for our behavior. In II Peter 3:13, Peter asks, "And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?" It's just not very likely that you'll ever get in much trouble or be punished severely for following a good example. Besides this, the Lord will love and appreciate you if you will allow yourself to be influenced to do good. Proverbs 15:9 says that, "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who follows righteousness."

The fact that young people can be influenced BY others necessarily implies that they can also be influences ON others. The Bible commands the young to be good examples, so that others will have something worthwhile to imitate. The young man Timothy was told, "Let no one despise your youth, but BE AN EXAMPLE to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

So, to the young we say BE INFLUENCED and BE AN INFLUENCE:

- Let yourself be influenced to obey the gospel, and then influence someone else to do the same.

- Let yourself be influenced to use pure speech, and then influence someone else to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to dress modestly, and then influence others to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to reverently participate in worship (no note passing, giggling, whispering), and then influence someone else to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to be kind to others, and then influence someone else to do the same.

- Steve Klein

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## The Power of the Nonverbal

Studying the book of Ezekiel and teaching a survey class through the book this summer, many "secondary lessons" have come to my attention. One is the power of the nonverbal.

In addition to visions, allegories, indictments and judgment passages, one method of communication was symbolic actions or enactments. Ezekiel was told to go through certain actions; to act out or dramatize various things in front of the people. These actions, though often accompanied by words, become examples of how powerful the nonverbal is. {See examples in Ezek. 3:22-27; 4:1-3; 4:9-17; 24:15-24}.

While nobody today lives in the time of the Jewish exile and nobody today is called to do what the prophet did, there is a "secondary lesson" concerning the power of the nonverbal.

While Christians are charged to speak the truth, we are likewise charged to live out that truth in all our behavior. We communicate not only through words but deeds. People see how we live, in addition to hearing what we say.

Therefore, all our self-examination should take into sober account not only what we speak but what we do. One must accompany the other and both must be in submission to God's authority. In fact, this is so important — it becomes critical for us to realize that what we say may have little impact, if what we do contradicts it! Some people who have very little Bible knowledge nevertheless can spot a hypocrite at some distance.

Or as James once said, "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty," (James 2:12).

- Warren E. Berkley

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## Lawlessness

In the Old West, an outlaw was someone who violated the laws of the land. In the spiritual realm, one who practices lawlessness is NOT someone who :

1. is without law. Paul became all things to all men, including "those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law" – 1 Corinthians 9:21.
2. has destroyed the law. We speak of "breaking" the law, but actually the law remains intact; the violator is broken by this law at the judgment. "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty" – James 2:12.
3. is irreligious. Many lawless people are very religious. "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" – Matthew 23:28.
4. violates everything the law of God requires. Lawless people may obey various parts of God's word – the parts they agree with. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Matthew 23:25).

Lawlessness refuses to submit to the Lord's authority. One who says, "we do many things without Bible authority" admits to the practice of sin. The man who says, "I would rather be lost for doing too much than too little" speaks nonsense. Perhaps he seeks to show that there is honor among rebels, but it doesn't do him any good in eternity. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" – Matthew 7:22-23.

- Rick Duggin

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## ***A Matter of Life and Death!***

We've all heard the statement, "It's a matter of life and death." It expresses a sense of urgency, and it's designed to get attention and solicit immediate response. It may be used

in a phone call to the police, the paramedics, or the firemen, or in hospital situations. It's physical life and physical death we're talking about, and when it's a life or death situation involving us or our loved ones, we think anyone would agree that it is an urgent matter indeed.

But for some strange reason, when it becomes a matter of spiritual life or spiritual death, when it involves the salvation of a soul or the eternal destiny of a soul, our own, that of a loved one, that of a friend or neighbor or fellow worker, the urgency is gone, and the matter can wait.

With all too many this is not a priority that should receive immediate attention, and it is put off until it is too late - forever! How do we really feel about the life or death, about the eternal destiny of a soul - yours or someone else's? I really believe that if I were lost and knew it, I could not rest, could not sleep, could not have any peace, until I took care of that matter once and for all. What about you?

- Bill Crews

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## **What Being Married Is Really Like**

Young people sometimes have such rose-tinted glasses about being married that they plan more for the wedding than the marriage! Columnist Dave Barry recently suggested that the vows to be exchanged should be more realistic as to what married life was going to be like.

"Are you, John, troubled by the thought that no matter how large your bathroom is, your half will consist of three square inches, and even that will soon be taken over entirely by the Invasion of the Skin Care Products?"

"Do you, Mary, honestly think you will ever again be able to watch a TV program without John here scanning all of the other 57 cable channels roughly every 30 seconds in case there's something better on, such as a replay of the 1978 Super Bowl?"

As married folks, we laugh — but we know how true it is that being married is far different than getting married. This is why preachers sometimes advise young Christians who are thinking about marriage to define just what marriage is from the Bible view. It's a real eye-opener!

Is marriage defined as being in love? Seems to be more than that. Is it sex? It is more, or perhaps we should say, more basic than that. Is it living together? More basic than that.

It is primarily an agreement or vow. A man and woman are promising to each other and to God that they will be husband and wife — and only to each other throughout their lives. It is this that will keep them together through the changes that life brings, as they find out what marriage is really like. If the couple understands this then whatever problems come as they are "richer or poorer, in sickness and in health" they will deal with them together, just as they have promised. They will be determined all the more to, "love his wife even as himself and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

- Bob Hines

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- "Life is a grindstone, and whether it polishes you up or grinds you down depends on the stuff of which you are made!"
  - "Some 'Christians' are like wheelbarrows - no good unless they are pushed!"
  - "In order to properly train children, it is necessary for both parents and children to spend some time together!"
  - "The most destructive acid in the world is found in a sour disposition!"
  - "Your day goes the way the corners of your mouth turn!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Feel Like Quitting?"* (Text: Jer 20:14-18);  
Sunday evening: *"Work of a Preacher"* (Text: 1 Cor 1:18-21)