

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### SIMPLIFYING THE AUTHORITY OF EXAMPLES

Here is the foundational principle: love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind (see Mark 12:30).

Some may try to pit careful adherence to obedience over against loving God. Arguing as if the Old Covenant was about strict obedience while loving God with all the heart is what living for Jesus is all about; some might fail to connect the fact that such strict obedience under the Old Covenant was closely tied to their need to love God.

Never has there been a time when God did not want or expect His people to love Him with all their hearts. Never has God accepted cold, rote ritual in lieu of loving Him. God has always wanted people to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8), and never has any of this contradicted the need to be careful in diligently obeying Him. Christ did not come to free us from patterns of obedience. He came to free us from the patterns of sin. He didn't change the context or the concepts inherently involved in loving God with all the heart. He strengthened them.

When we look into the New Covenant Scriptures and find God's people doing what pleases Him, should we not want to follow their examples?

If we ask, "But is that example binding?" are we really asking the right question? Such is like asking, "Do I have to?" Wouldn't those who love God with all their heart rather want to follow an example that God saw fit to show us? Shall we not ask why this is here?

Think about it. By God's grace we have an example of something given that He likes. The Scriptures aren't all that large, considering what all might have been included. So when an example is given that shows God's approval, wouldn't His people who love Him with all their heart want to take special notice of this example? If we are able, and if our circumstances are comparable, wouldn't we want to follow the example that God, in His

grace found important enough to include in His message? Following such examples is part of loving Him.

Further, what example of God's people acting in a way that pleases Him is something that we would not want to follow? Is there a specific case of his disciples acting with His approval that we would look at today and say, "No, we don't want to do that?" If we are able, why would we look at something that pleases Him, argue it not necessary, and then ignore it? What kind of an attitude is this? Is it one that demonstrates a total commitment and love for God? But aren't there details in some examples that really are not necessary? Of course there are. Not every detail is as significant as another might be. We need common sense, in keeping matters in context and recognizing the difference between incidentals of telling what happened and core issues that led to the disciples acting as they did in the first place. Are we capable of drawing reasonable conclusions about these? God gave us minds to use. Let's use them.

The point is that God chose to include examples of His people acting for a reason. Those who love Him would, I would think, look at those examples and, as much as within their abilities, and where the circumstances compare, follow them. "Do I have to?" (i.e., "Is it binding?") Why are we asking that question unless we want some way around following what we see? When God has, in His wisdom, provided a look into the actions that He likes, those who love Him would want to do the same. Why would we even debate that? That's a foundational starting point.

- Doy Moyer

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## Did Jesus Condemn?

Often, after pointing out someone's error from the Bible, you will hear, "It's not right to condemn others. Judge not that ye be not judged." Notice that the complaint criticizes criticism — you cannot have it both ways! Is there any biblical precedent for condemning error in the religious world?

Jesus said, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in ... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:13-33). This sounds like condemnation to me.

In another place, Jesus said to an audience of Jews, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Also, “Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you” (John 8:55). The Lord and Savior did not shy away from plainly telling his audience that they were in sin. So, why should we?

When Jesus exposed the error of others, did he love them? Did he have concern for their souls? We submit that it was because Jesus loved men and was concerned for their souls that he exposed their error in no uncertain terms. For, if they continued in their sin, their souls would suffer an eternal damnation. Therefore, to point out where others are wrong and urge them to do what is right, is an expression of genuine love — it is to follow in the steps of the Savior! “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:6).

Won't you have faith in Christ, repent of your sins, confess Jesus as Christ, and be immersed for the remission of your sins (John 8:24; Acts 3:19; 8:36-38; 2:38)?

- Steven F. Deaton, via Truth Magazine, 10/15/98

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## **NO DEPARTURE From the Jerusalem Church!**

If we are to depart from the Jerusalem church because it was in its infancy, and not reproduce the primitive church, we should like to know how far we are to depart from it, and in what. If the faith and practice, the precept and example of the primitive church may not be adopted now and followed, and if in all things we should not now have the same faith and practice, precept and example they had, we should be pleased for some expounder of the new doctrine to explain to us in what the departure shall consist, and what rule we are to adopt now. If we let go of the rule that governed the first church, what rule shall we adopt? If we cut loose from the Divine, shall we adopt a human rule? If so, what human rule—some one of these already made? Or shall we have the presumption and folly to think we can make a better one than these human rules already in use?

We are not ready to cut loose from the Jerusalem Church, its rule of faith and practice, its precept and example. We have more confidence in the old ground than ever, and have no idea of departing from the Jerusalem Church, its faith and practice, precepts and example. The men that will not stand on apostolic ground, the faith and practice of the first church, will not stand on anything long. We want something reliable, permanent, sure, and steadfast—a kingdom that cannot be moved. In the old Bible, the old Gospel, and the

old church, we find it. Here is something to lean, upon living and dying, for this world and the world to come. If we leave this, all is uncertainty, darkness, and night. Let us “hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” and not be of those who “depart from the faith,” giving heed to seducing spirits, and not listen to “unstable souls,” of those who are “ever learning and never able come to the knowledge of the truth.”

- Benjamin Franklin, 19th century Gospel preacher

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## CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.

If a child lives with pity, he learns to feel sorry for himself.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with jealousy, he learns what envy is.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to be appreciative.

If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with recognition, he learns that it is good to have a goal.

If a child lives with sharing, he learns about generosity.

If a child lives with honesty and fairness, he learns what truth and justice are.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and in those about him.

If a child lives with friendliness, he learns that the world is a nice place in which to live.

If you live with serenity, your child will live with peace of mind.

With what is your child living?

- Dorothy Law Nolte (reprinted as a companion to today's sermon)

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> “Many modern ‘Dads’ are more concerned about their golf swing than they are about their off-spring!”

> “Sin cannot be recognized, supervised, and legalized because it will victimize, scandalize, jeopardize and otherwise pulverize the world!”

- > "Pure religion is Bread for daily use, not Cake for special occasions!"
- > "There are four things you can appeal to in a boy: his sense of honor, his conscience, his pride, and lastly, his hide!"
- > "It is better to have no ideas at all than false ones!" - Thomas Jefferson

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "*Do Not Provoke Your Children!*" (Text: Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21); Sunday evening: "*Facing The Truth!*" (John 4:16-26).