

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

July 30, 2017

Volume 37, # 31

“Despiteful”

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (Romans 1 :28-32 KJV)

Among the ungodly attitudes of the pagan world who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" was that of being despiteful. It means insolent, bold rudeness, insulting behavior or speech. God says that "they who commit such things are worthy of death" (verse 32).

Maybe it is just our casual, carefree society, but I think I see a disturbing trend among professed Christians toward this sin. Behavior and speech toward those who should command our special respect seems to have deteriorated into a near-insolent stance if not completely so. "Hi Dad," is hardly the way to address the Ruler of the universe as was reportedly done by a young man in a public prayer in a Texas congregation. God is not a mere "buddy," but our Maker and Sustainer, with all the majesty that goes with it. Heads of civil government are being treated with contempt all over the world.

One needs to keep in mind that there are those greater than he for various reasons, before whom he displays special respect and not be approached as peers. It might have been alright for Joseph to have enjoyed the "casual look" in the company of his fellow prisoners, but when the Pharaoh sent for him he "shaved himself, and changed his raiment" (Gen. 41:4). Special respect was called for when standing in the king's presence, so Joseph had some getting ready to do. Insolence grows out of an unholy pride that says

I am equal with anybody and probably better than most. An attitude completely foreign to the very spirit taught by Jesus, our Savior (Matt. 18:1-3).

The first seeds of spitefulness are usually sown in the home. Children are allowed to insult parents without fear of consequences. "Disobedient to parents" is also listed in verse 30. Children need to be aware of the fact that parents have a special place of honor (Eph. 6:2). They may not always be perfect, but they are always parents. One's parents are not to be spoken to or spoken of disrespectfully. It is a shame the way some children give their parents the lip. One may not have to agree with parents always - but he should disagree with respect. The idea that a father should be just like a "buddy" to his son or a mother should be just like a "pal" to her daughter, in my judgment, contributes to the trend toward disrespect. A young man or young lady can find buddies and pals all over the place, but only one dad and one mom to look up to. They are special! They command special respect and consideration.

Special respect for age is a Biblically sound principle. "Thou shalt rise before the hoary (white or gray) head, and honour the face of the old man ... " (Lev. 19:32). Elihu had urgent words for Job, but he "waited until Job had spoken, because they were elder than he" (Job 32:4). The New Testament commands respect for age (1 Tim. 5:1,2). The elder (older man) is to be corrected more gently than a younger man. Older people should be addressed with extra respect, different from one's peers. Older people may need correction from time to time, they should receive it, but it should be with less sharpness than for a younger person.

"Civil disobedience" are words coined in our age to cover up for old-fashioned rebellion and anarchy. A faithful Christian will have no part of it. He is commanded to show respect and obedience to civil authority for conscience sake (Rom. 13:1-5). He shows honor and respect for civil officials (1 Pet. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-2), even when the officials themselves may be less than honorable. Time may come that one must obey the higher authority of God, as the apostles on occasion (Acts 5:29), but even then, he respectfully disobeys civil authorities. It may be necessary to rebuke the moral conduct of public officials, as did John the Baptist in the case of Herod, but even then, it should be done without a spirit of insolence or rancor. In all this, one must not confuse his own likes and dislikes or his own sense of fairness and justice with the will of God. If one must ignore or otherwise disobey public officials - he should be prepared to point out the specific decree of God that prohibits his obeying civil law. This, the apostles could do. They were under orders from heaven to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20), the very things the officials were prohibiting.

In the church, there is a disturbing drift toward despising the spiritually mature. Elders are to be "esteemed very highly in love for their works sake" (1 Thess. 5:12,13) and are to be especially "remembered" and "honored" (Heb. 13:7,17). Yet, in many places elders (and older preachers) are esteemed very lowly. This does not mean to accept, without investigation, anything they might say and do (cf. Acts 17:11). This does not mean to exalt anyone into some kind of "clergy." This does mean to show respect due one for his "works sake." One's years of study and experience in the word of God should count for something. Yet, there is a marked trend in the church to discount the value of such maturity of knowledge and experience. Too often, a young "know-it-all" expects his judgment to be worth just as much as that of more experienced brethren. It is too easy to lightly toss aside the teaching and advice of mature brethren, with a "well-that-is-just-his-opinion" attitude without adequate consideration of the matter in the light of the scriptures; and the fact that experienced brethren are more likely to see dangers easily overlooked by the inexperienced. If after due consideration, it is proved that the mature person has indeed erred in word or deed - the correction process should be set into motion, but with all the respect for the age and experience of the erring one. The fact that one may have spent hours in study means nothing to the novice overcome by pride and a sense of his own importance - he must let folks know that he can "do his own thing" and thinking. For shame! On the other hand, more mature brethren would do well to watch their pride in dealing with others - one can be wrong at any level of experience!

Above all, one must approach God in all reverence. One should respect His name (Matt. 6:19). It should not be profaned as suggested at the beginning of this article. One should reverence the Bible as the word of God. One should worship Him in reverence (John 4:24). When we meet for public worship, we pray to God. We sing to God. We study and preach God's word. We remember Christ's death in the Lord's supper. These things should be approached with all the awe that these facts and the occasion demands and not with a casual attitude. One's appearance and deportment in worship should be above the casualness of a dormitory bull-session, a sports pep rally or just hanging around the house. Yet, I fear that it is often approached with just such informal casualness - even though the service is directed to the most majestic and powerful of all beings, the God of heaven.

The gospel of Christ, applied to the heart, will remove spitefulness from our lives - if believed and obeyed (Rom. 1 :16).

- Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. (1975)

“Everybody Is Doing It!”

The reason some Christians give for engaging in some of the social sins of our day is: “Everybody is doing it!” The best and most popular people in town do it. The high society people do it. Many religious people do it. Everybody is doing it.

What was everybody doing while Noah built his ark? Notice what the Bible says about it:

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’” (Gen. 6:5-7).

Notice further:

“Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. “Make for yourself an ark ...” (Gen. 6:11-14a).

Have you considered the characteristics of “everybody” in Noah’s day? They were: wicked, evil-hearted, corrupt, violent and worthy of destruction (cf. Rom. 1:32). It would not have required much intelligence for those people to have realized that “everybody” committed these sins against God! Why did God not halt His just retribution against them because “everybody is doing it?” Can we please God by using the actions of “everybody” as an excuse?

Certainly, it is strange that otherwise intelligent people will renounce spiritual principles, conviction of truth and good judgment to follow some form of pleasure because, “everybody is doing it!”

- Gary Smalley

> “They that know God will be humble; they that know themselves cannot be proud!”

> “Some people do not have to turn out the lights to be in the dark!”

- > "When a man is rich, God gains a partner or the man loses a soul!"
 - > "The man who expects to go to heaven should take the time to learn what route will get him there!"
 - > "Although some people never know what they are going to say, they say it anyway!"
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Three Great Desires!*" (Text: Matt. 5:6-8);
Sunday evening: "*Reaction In Samaria!*" (John 4:27-34).