

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

*841 Old Hickory Blvd.  
Jackson, TN 38305  
(731) 668-1794*

---

October 03, 2010

Volume 30, # 40

---

# Guarding Your Heart

By Teresa (Mrs. Simon) Harris

Age can bring wisdom and experience. Unfortunately, so much of it is gained from troubles, often those experienced by people around us. The older I get, the more people I know who have divorced, have prodigal children, or have been through a “split” in a congregation. Often we blame the leaders, the men, for these issues - husbands, fathers, elders, preachers. Too often, though, there are subtle forces at work behind the scenes of these tragedies. These subtle forces are discontented, frustrated, angry, and bitter women - wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers.

### **Strong Warning for My Sisters**

How unfortunate it is for a woman to utterly pervert the purpose for which she was created - to glorify God as an example of godliness, as a help meet for her husband, as a companion and support; and instead become a destructive force of discouragement, derision, manipulation, and unrighteousness. While men do fall prey to these temptations, it seems to be much more of an issue with women. **This is a strong warning for sisters in Christ!** These attitudes do not develop overnight and take a formerly sweet and loving wife and turn her into a caustic and hateful woman. These attitudes are often built one incident at a time, each brick fortifying the wall, which can become a nearly irreversible way of looking at and dealing with life.

To prevent this degradation, we must guard our hearts and thoughts. We must realize that we have two choices. Either we control our thoughts through discipline gained from God's word, or our evil thoughts will control and ruin our lives. This is the battle of our lives, spiritual and physical. We need to constantly recall Paul's declaration in 1 Corinthians 6:12b: "I will not be brought under the power of any!"

The Bible is full of teaching on the subject of the heart. In Genesis 6 God destroyed the world with a flood because every intent of man's heart was "only evil continually." Proverbs 4:23 says the issues of life spring from the heart. 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 tells us the battleground of our spiritual warfare is our thoughts. Hebrews 4:12 explains to us that the weapon we use in this spiritual warfare is the word of God, to surgically dissect and remove these wicked thoughts.

**Warning:** This surgery is painful. It hurts to see where we have been destructive rather than constructive. Better to undergo the "knife" before we see the fatal outcome - the death of our marriages, our homes, our relationships with brethren, and our souls.

### **Satan Wants to Sabotage You**

In guarding our hearts, we must be aware of the tricks the Devil uses against us to sabotage our righteousness. One of the subtlest tricks is to convince us that sin and righteousness are juxtaposed up against one another with only a thin line in between the two. Sin, according to the Devil, is crossing that line. The danger of such an understanding is the idea that we can get as close to sin as we can without crossing the line and we will still be righteous.

In the matter of our thoughts, that trick is applied by the idea, "It's alright to think those angry thoughts, as long as you don't say them out loud." or "It's alright to wish evil against your brother, as long as you don't act on it." Just don't cross that line! Let the heart have no restraint as long as you restrain your actions! When we recall Proverbs 4:23, understanding that actions spring from the heart, we can see how futile it is to control the outcome without controlling the factors!

Not only is it vain to suppose we can think all manner of evil thoughts while keeping our actions pure, but Jesus declares He expects BOTH our thoughts and actions to be pure. This is the whole point of Matthew 5:20-28. The kind of righteousness that attempts to have pure actions without pure thoughts is the kind of righteousness for which the Pharisees were famous. How famous as well was their utter failure at finding righteousness in such a manner. Jesus taught that not only adultery is sinful, but lustful

thoughts are as well. Not only murder is sinful, but angry thoughts against your brother are as well. The literal definition of sin is “missing the mark”. Righteousness, therefore, is hitting that mark, not getting as close as you can to sin without “crossing the line”. Let it be known, God sets marks for thoughts as well as actions. Missing either mark will condemn our souls. Let us concentrate on purifying our hearts against such evil thoughts and intents and our actions will be all the more governable.

Discontented, frustrated, angry, and bitter thoughts proceed from some fundamental perspectives. These perspectives are the ways that we process the incidents that occur in our daily lives, which help define our feelings and attitudes. Awareness of such perspectives equips us to make the changes needed in our lives.

### **It’s All About “Me”**

For example, take the perspective of selfishness: the attitude that it is all about **me**. It is all about getting what I want, what I need, when I want it, and how I want it done. Life is about doing for ME, rather than what I can do for others. Examine closely your motivation throughout the mundane tasks of your life today and ask yourself, “*Why* am I doing this?” Even good actions can be done for selfish reasons. You may take food to an ailing sister so that others may see your good works and praise you or so that you are now “owed” something. Daily try to implement the teaching of Philippians 2:1-4, going about your work out of lowliness of mind, rather than in selfish ambition or conceit.

From selfishness grows another dangerous perspective: pride. I am more important than others and I am so much better than others. The proud feel they know the answers and have it all figured out. Some warning signs of pride are statements such as “How dare you treat ME in such a way” or “That will never happen to me” or “I am so glad *I’m* not like that.” This pride condemns sin in others while being blind to that same sin or temptation in our own lives. Remember the warning from 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

Another closely related perspective to selfishness and pride is self-righteousness: tallying up for yourself a stockpile of good deeds. You use this tally of good deeds to promote yourself above others, to place yourself outside the realm of the need for instruction, and to negate your bad deeds. What folly!! The thrust of the first three chapters of Romans is to teach that NO ONE is more righteous than another. Jew is not better than Gentile, nor the other way around, because “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Proverbs 9:7-9 teaches us that scoffers despise rebuke, but the wise love those who correct. Ask yourself about the last time the

preacher or an elder offered a rebuke. Did you accept it with humility in your heart or reject it with indignation? The concept of negating our evil deeds with good deeds is one that causes us to fall from the grace of God, having no need of redemption through Christ's sacrifice. What arrogance! Let us not trample upon this greatest of gifts by thinking we have no need of it.

The common denominator in all these perspectives is SELF. Philippians 2:5-8 tells us to take on the mind of Christ, who gave Himself up for others. Let us do as Jesus directs and "let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Let us focus our attention upon our thoughts, intents, and motivations, discerning if we are promoting or denying self. Only then can we equip ourselves to root out the weeds of discontentment, frustration, anger, and bitterness.

- via Biblical Insights, August, 2010, pp. 12-13.

---

## FAITHFUL SERVANT

The faithful servant is the one  
Who does his duty well;  
And by his very faithfulness  
Forever will excel;  
Who keeps the promises he makes  
However great they are;  
And even though fulfilling them,  
May cover up his star.

He never misses meetings when  
He says he will be there,  
And when the work is passed around  
He gladly takes his share.  
He does not mumble or complain  
When things are not all right,  
But he is always brave enough  
To carry on the fight.

He is not one who changes with  
The weather of the day,  
But he may be depended on  
In every single way.

- > If a tombstone is all that's left to remind the world we've been here, it's a grave mistake.
  - > If your problems are long-standing, or deep-seated, try kneeling.
  - > Men will do most anything for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it, anything but live for it.
  - > Neutrality in religion means surrender to the Devil.
  - > Emotions are no substitute for the Word of God.
  - > If God is your co-pilot . . . SWAP SEATS!!!
- 

## **Chris & Sarah**

The time came this past week to bid Chris, Sarah, Elijah and Samiah a sad farewell. The time they have been among us has been too short. I will miss their youthful enthusiasm, positive encouragement, the upbeat smiles, never frowns, and their labor for the Master. It has been quite refreshing to see one of “our own” who has grown up here and found the type of husband she wanted, and together they committed their lives to preaching the gospel of Christ. I am so very happy and excited for them because it is a clear demonstration of the strong faith that resides within. What joy we share to see “our children” walking in truth! (2 John 4). Please pray for them (and their parents)! Please take opportunities to check on them and see if they need anything that you can supply – remember, they are “our children.” They will face opposition from Satan and his associates, and from false brethren. Please pray for them to be

strong and find encouragement from those that love the Lord. The Lord will open doors for them. May God bless the Bensons! - GFS

---

**SUNDAY'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *“Jesus: the Optimist!”* (text: Heb. 10:19-23); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Teaching Many Things in Parables!* (Mark 4:1-20).