

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Were you rebuffed when you tried to fix that broken relationship?

Do you know the pain of a broken relationship? You probably do if you have lived and loved long enough. Do you know the sweet joy of a mended relationship? If you have known a broken one, I hope you have also known a mended one! But unfortunately, loving a person and trying to reconcile with that person does not always prove successful. Heartbreakingly, sometimes other people just do not welcome restoration. When another person refuses your attempts to reconcile a broken relationship it can result in a swarm of other agonies: emotional pain, frustration and self-doubt as you continue to search for a way to bring restoration and the joy that accompanies it.

Our Lord has blessed us with a procedure that reflects heavenly wisdom and provides opportunity to mend any broken relationship (Matt. 18:15-17). But a wise and practical procedure, even when followed to the letter has no guarantee that a broken relationship will be restored. Sometimes, all that remains is to grieve over the loss of that relationship, and it may seem that the distress lasts a lifetime. And if this is the case with you, may I remind you of our Lord's perfect example of love? He unselfishly sacrificed Himself to provide the only way for mankind to be reconciled with their Creator (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:21-22).

But remember, most of mankind rejected the reconciliation. In one of the most disappointing verses in the Bible, the Apostle John tells us that Jesus "came to His

own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11). When thinking of the deep anguish and broken-hearted sorrow that Jesus must have felt, my heartache over a broken relationship may begin to appear as something I can endure. How tormented the Saviour must have been when He lamented, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” (Matt. 23:37).

If there had been a “next step” in the process that guaranteed reconciliation our Lord surely would have taken it. But there was not. Likewise, there is not a “next step” in the process for us either. However, when our best efforts are rebuffed we would do well to remember the encouragement offered by the Apostle Paul: “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,” (Phil. 1:29). While a broken relationship continues to be deeply distressing, we can still pray for that person and continue to love that person. Let your goodwill be undefeatable! (cf. John 15:12).

We may desire to have the power within us that would make reconciliation irresistible to others, but there is no possible way we can force others to love us and be reconciled, no matter what we do. And we cannot assume responsibility for other people, only ourselves. If we are willing to take responsibility for any wrong done to them, confess any sins to them (Jas. 5:16), ask for forgiveness and pray with them for reconciliation we are poised for the mending. But if they do not respond in kind, the broken relationship will remain broken. Sometimes the responsibility lies with the other person, and that is just out of my control. It is also out of my responsibility. I must guard against a false guilt that comes from thinking that it all depends on me and there must be something wrong with me because I can't fix it. I cannot make choices for other people.

I am so very thankful that our God is always ready for people to come to Him for reconciliation. Aren't you?

- GFS

Words Are Known By The Company They Keep!

In **Galatians 5:19-21 ASV** we have enumerated a list of words which stand for some of the most degrading human traits in existence. This is a bad list. In fact, it is the worst of

which we can think. But three of these words are considered by some church members to be good and legitimate. In fact, they will be allowed in the best company. These words are, "factions," "divisions," and "parties."

We often look upon these effects in a congregation lightly. But when we consider the terrible company in which these expressions are found, we shall be forced to conclude that they are as bad as "fornication," "idolatry," and "drunkenness."

Church members should be warned regarding the awfulness of divisions. Rather than divide a congregation of saints, it would be much better to be considered a drunkard or an idolater, for these individual sins would not materially affect the entire congregation.

If we could follow the injunction of Paul in **Galatians 5:16 ASV**, "**Walk by the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh,**" we would have better congregations, more influential members, and would come nearer fulfilling the destinies for which we are made.

- W. Claude Hall

Don't Give Up

An elderly lady was once asked by a young man who had grown weary in the fight, whether he ought to give up the struggle. "I am beaten every time," he said dolefully. "I feel I must give up." "Did you ever notice," she replied, smiling into the troubled face before her, "that when the Lord told the discouraged fishermen to cast their nets again, it was right in the same old spot where they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing?"

- unknown

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Perfecting Process!*" (text: Matt. 19:16-22); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *More Opinions & An Evil Woman's Revenge!* (Mark 6:14-29).