

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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WANT TO LIVE FOREVER, OR NOT???

In Creation, "God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ..." (Gen. 1:26). Moses also recorded that, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Gen. 1:27). Moses described the creation of man in this way: "...the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." (Gen. 2:7).

To dust you shall return: Man "became a living being," and it was the Lord's intention that man would live forever (cf. Gen. 2:17; 3:22). But the consequences of sin for man's physical body became: "By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:19). To illustrate the fact that "faith without works is dead," James said, "the body without *the* spirit is dead." (Jas. 2:26). When death comes to man, his physical body will return to dust in natural decay. But what happens to the spirit of man?

Does the spirit die? We read nothing in the Bible about the spirit of man dying. To the contrary, however, we can read this: "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."

(Eccl. 12:7). We can learn two important points here: (1) God gives man a living spirit that is eternal [This appears to be a blessing of being created “in the image of God.” (Gen. 1:26-27)]. The implication from Jas. 2:26 is that the spirit has been given by God and is present as soon as there is a living person, and the Biblical writers take for granted that life begins at conception; and (2) at death (separation) man’s spirit returns to God. [Note: the careful student examines Biblical words in their context to determine meaning and application. This is certainly true for the words translated “spirit” and “soul” in sacred scripture.]

Can one choose not to live forever? You have no choice about this whatsoever. Following conception, when we know that the body and spirit are joined, there is no turning back. Conception results in a living person and only death will return the spirit to God. Suicide will not destroy the spirit or prevent it from returning to God. Abortion will not prevent it either. Most certainly, one’s own desire, no matter how strong, will not prevent the return. Man cannot refuse to allow his spirit to return to God; he has no choice!

Man’s spirit will live forever somewhere. We are not left to wonder where the spirit will live when it returns to God. The Hebrew writer declared, “it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,” (Heb. 9:27). This “judgment” will not result in the annihilation of any spirits that have returned to God, but rather an eternal separation of spirits (Matt. 25:31-46), based upon a judgment according to God’s word (John 12:48) and the manner in which one has lived his life (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13). There are all kinds of quitters in this world. There are people who quit school, quit their jobs, quit their marriages, and even quit trying to live for Christ in His kingdom, but there is not a person whose spirit can quit living forever and ever. The people of this world either serve God or reject Him. This life on earth is the place, and now is the time for you to make the choice to start putting God first in your life so that when your spirit returns to God, you will hear Him say, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34b).

Friend, can we help you find the Lord today?

- GFS

TEN THINGS YOU WILL NEVER REGRET

1. Showing kindness to an aged person.
2. Destroying a letter written in anger.
3. Offering an apology that will save a friendship.
4. Stopping a scandal that was ruining a reputation.
5. Helping a boy or girl find themselves.
6. Taking time to show consideration to parents, friends, brothers and sisters.
7. Refraining from gossip when others around you delight in it.
8. Refusing to do a thing which is wrong, although others do it.
9. Living according to your convictions.
10. Accepting the judgment of God on any question.

- Pulpit Helps, May, 1991

Things You Will Never See At A Pentecostal "Healing" Service . . .

- One raised from the dead, like Jesus did (John 11:38-44)
- One born blind made to see, like Jesus did (John 9:1-12)
- The deaf made to hear, like Jesus did (Mark 7:31-37)
- The lame made to walk, like Jesus did (Mark 2:1-12)
- A severed ear restored, like Jesus did (Luke 22:49-51)
- A leper cleansed, like Jesus did (Matt. 8:1-4)
- Restoration of a withered hand, like Jesus did (Matt. 12:9-13)
- False teachers struck blind, like Paul did (Acts 13:8-12)
- Order maintained, like Paul commanded (1 Cor. 14:26-40)

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1)

- David Padfield

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"No Regrets!"* (text: Matt. 21:28-32); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *The Great Confession!* (Mark 8:27-30).