

# The Old Hickory

## Bulletin

### Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jackson, TN 38305

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## THESE UNDERSTOOD "DISCIPLESHIP"

In Acts 11 we read of Barnabas, “a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (v. 24), who was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch, where some servants of the Lord had been “preaching the Lord Jesus” (v. 20), “and a large number who believed turned to the Lord” (v. 21). “Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and *began* to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain *true* to the Lord” (v. 23). These PEOPLE who had “believed” and “turned” were called “the church,” “the disciples,” and “Christians” (v. 26).

**Barnabas understood discipleship.** He did not go to Antioch to create a personal following or to be a "Brother Big-Name." He did not deceive these believers into thinking that discipleship was dependent upon following "the majority of churches," a "brotherhood paper," preachers, friends, relatives or the traditional "way we have always done it." These people were “brought to the Lord” (v. 24). Barnabas taught these believers to firmly resolve to strictly adhere to JESUS CHRIST (v. 23), not to a “church building” that was built by their grandfathers, nor to any other people.

**Paul understood discipleship.** After warning the Ephesian elders of future apostasy, Paul directed their allegiance “to God and to the word of His grace,

which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32; cf. Acts 14:23). When believers take their aim off of God and His word it is impossible to hit the heavenly target. Other people are not the acceptable standard in spiritual matters. We are not to compare ourselves with others, even if they do commend themselves (2 Cor. 10:12). “For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends” (2 Cor. 10:18). This is a far cry from the man who regards himself as "heaven-bound" because he goes along with everything that some college stands for, worships at a place where the sign out front says "Church of Christ," and reads religious periodicals every week cultivating an allegiance to "brotherhood practices."

**Diotrephes did not understand discipleship.** The apostle John wrote that he “loves to be first among them,” and that he “does not accept what we say” (3 John 9). Here was a man who paid no attention to apostolic teaching (cf. Acts 2:42), undoubtedly maintaining prominence and a considerable amount of influence among the disciples. But that type of pre-eminence never justifies rejection of the authority of any apostle. John pointed to his evil deeds: “unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church” (3 John 10). Since one man cannot exercise such power in the church by himself, he must have had the backing and endorsement of other misguided disciples. Even a wicked character can gain a following in the church when people stop following Christ. John followed his rebuke of Diotrephes with this appeal to the disciples: “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God” (3 John 11).

If you claim to be a member of the church that belongs to Christ you need to ask yourself some questions: Is my loyalty directed toward Christ and His doctrine, or to a "party" and "their doctrine"? Am I objectively seeking to know God's will, taking every opportunity to study, learn, correct mistakes when brought to my attention, or am I content to follow an eldership that practices "what the mainstream churches are doing," while being unconcerned about serious warnings penned under the direction of the Holy Spirit?

I think I remember Peter having said something about CHRIST as our example – “follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). The Lord told us to follow somebody; WHO WAS IT? (Read Luke 9:23.) God promised to save people who “conformed to the image of His Son,” NOT those who conform to "the brotherhood" (Rom. 8:29). “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Church members: think on these things!

- GFS

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## THE FIGHT FOR TRUTH

When two brothers, presumed to be saints, have differences in understanding concerning some scriptural matter, their sainthood prescribes their conduct. They love each other, have nothing but good will toward one another — which means each wishes the other to have truth and profit by it. "Self" has been pushed into the background, if not eliminated (Phil. 1:27--2:4). They stand fast in one (or, the same) spirit (attitude), with one (the same) mind (desire) as they strive together (mutually helpful) for the faith of the gospel.

Honest now — is that the impression you get when two brethren meet on platform or printed page to discuss religious differences? How come a large percentage of readers or hearers get the impression each is out to **smear** the other, tack on an uncomplimentary "label," and "finish" him? We frequently hear some paper is just promoting self with such "issues."

We know that such charges can be more of the very tactics they criticize; can be efforts to stop any exposure of error; and we do not suggest that brethren should allow **false** charges to stop legitimate discussion. On the other hand, the presentation of gospel truth does not justify unethical and ungodly treatment of our opponents. When great segments of our audience — folk who agree with our conclusions — turn away in disgust from our tactics, we

should at least realize we are not "coming across" as saints, primarily interested in truth.

Aye, here is the true test! Are we **teaching** truth, or are we using carnal pressures to build up a "party," and keep the members in line? Do our pupils know which flag to follow, but do not know WHY? Do our tactics promote a fanaticism that cries "Communist," "Calvinist," or "Liberal" at everyone who differs with us; or are we really interested in facts, and in constructive presentation of truth in love that "suffereth long and is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4-f). The "party and prejudice" route is the easy one — if you want that kind of members; but truth properly taught will free the recipient from sin, and make true brothers. **WE MUST LEARN TO STAND UP FOR TRUTH WITHOUT KNEELING TO THE DEVIL!!**

- Robert F. Turner, *Plain Talk*, April 1983

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He is *on* the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray. (Prov. 10:17)

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**SUNDAY'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: "A Look At Loyalty!" (text: Ruth 1:1-18); Sunday evening: "Compromise In Egypt!" (text: Exodus 7:1-6).

**SCHEDULE:** Our Fall Gospel Meeting will be July 29-Aug. 3, with Aaron Andrews.