

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

*841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305*

September 02, 2012

Volume 32, # 36

The Value of Good Homes to the Local Church!

It should be obvious that many of the ills of our society are traced to breakdowns in homes and families. When husbands are not what they should be before God, when wives ignore God's instructions and when children have no respect or knowledge for the ways of the righteous, how can there be anything but trouble in the neighborhood? Good homes are the strengthening fabric of any society. Responsible citizens of any community are made there.

In so many ways, good homes and strong families serve to strengthen the church. It takes a good home to provide biblical teaching so young family members will gain knowledge and older family members will be reminded of what God said, in order to "subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Knowledge is essential (Col. 1:9-10; Eph. 1:17-18; 4:13; Phil. 1:9-10; cf. 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 10:5). When lovers of Christ and His truth come together in fellowship, service and worship, the result is a strong church.

It takes a good home to provide training, practice and exercise in spiritual thought and righteous living. The demonstration of Christ-like behavior takes very much prayerful effort and practice to get it right and keep it right. Wide varieties of situations and circumstances will always provide a challenge to the thought, words and actions of every family member. The devil takes no vacations. The home is where we live, love, grow and thrive. When young steps falter, other committed family members are there to lend help and support. Within strong families, where powerful relationships thrive, members learn love and care for other people. They learn how to share with others, respect the rights of others, and eliminate selfish

interests for the sake of getting along. It is not possible to over-emphasize the importance of this foundation in building brotherly love within the local church. Far too many misguided brethren have failed to cultivate love for every other member of the body of Christ. Brotherly love begins in the home! Good homes demonstrate love for others and diligently teach it by precept and example. Conscientious parents know that one cannot love God if he does not love his brethren (1 John 4:20), and this truth is desperately needed in local churches. What an impact godly parents can have in strengthening the church in this way!

It takes a good home to provide discipline (Eph. 6:4). Without it children grow to maintain only selfishness in their disposition. Respect for authority and the mature is nonexistent without discipline, and there can be no real love without it (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7; Rev. 3:19). The Lord's church will not be strong in this "perverse generation" if those who seek to be part of the body know little or nothing of discipline.

Most certainly, sleeping parents have contributed to the spiritual weaknesses of children across this land by failing to teach them what they need in order to be strong in the faith and stand against the devil. The spiritual decay in the home contributes to spiritual decay in the church and in our nation. Far too many parents have relied solely on the church to teach their children what they need to overcome the world, only to see their blessed offspring turn away from the faith, becoming lovers of the world. Parents must teach their children the will of the Lord, and woe to those who attempt to shift that responsibility on to someone else! Families who have shouldered the responsibility are great contributors to the strength of God's people in any community.

Spiritually strong homes and families make for strong local churches. Strength is needed to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3), to "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11), and "extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*" (Eph. 6:16). Parents, are you fighting "the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) so that the church will be strong? Brother and sister, can the Lord count on you?

- GFS

Why I Want To Go To Heaven

Deep within the recesses of our hearts the reasons for making heaven our home swell like the ocean's tide. The current of God's word along with some of our hymns brings these reasons to the surface of our lips as a crystal clear fountain to a thirsty soul and proves beneficial in living the Christian life. Let's consider some reasons "why I want to go to heaven" from the pages of God's revelation.

The beloved John, while "on the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" wrote concerning the "new heaven and new earth," saying, "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*" (Rev. 21: 4) We sometimes sing, "No tears in heaven, no sorrows given, All will be glory in that land ..." The tears which flow down cheeks unbidden in this world will be wiped from every eye by the hand of God in heaven. No aches and pains nor sorrow and death will be known in heaven. That is why I want to go to heaven.

I want to go to heaven because of those who will be present. Jesus said, "*That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 8: 11) Imagine being able to sit with the great patriarchs of the past! Consider for a moment being able to join that great "cloud of witnesses" around the throne of God. Think of the reunion of faithful loved ones upon shores eternal! (II Cor. 1:14; I Thess. 2:19-20.) And above all, imagine what it will be like to be with the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit forever (John 14:3).

I want to go to heaven because Jesus has gone to prepare a place for me. "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would*

have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3) Some translators, without any regard or respect for God's word, replace the word "mansions" to "rooms" with the idea that a house could not have mansions in it. Well, God's house could and does. But "in my Father's house" carries the idea of the entire habitation of God, and "mansions" describes the beauty and magnificence. Remember, too, that "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." When the Lord comes again, he will not take an unprepared person to his Father's prepared house.

I want to go to heaven because it will be a place where sin is not known. When Christ comes the second time to judge the world, the devil will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" which was prepared for him and his angels. (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10.) If the tempter is gone, then temptation will cease and sin will be no more (James 1:14-15). Sin brings sorrow, pain and death; but if these things will be unknown in heaven, then, evidently, sin will not be known there. Where God dwells, sin is not known. (Isa. 59:1-2) God will be in heaven (Rev. 7:14-17). Therefore, sin will not be present. John writes, "*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*" (Rev. 21:27)

I want to go to heaven because I do not want to go to hell. Have you considered the horrors of hell? Paul wrote, "*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...*" (II Cor. 5:11) It is a place of outer darkness (Matt. 25:30). It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. The book of Revelation refers to it as "*the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*" (Rev. 21:8) It will be a place of "*everlasting punishment,*" "*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*" (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48.) It's a place all should want to avoid. Hell is a prepared place for the unprepared people (II Thess. 1:6-9).

Those who enjoy worshipping around God's footstool in spirit and in truth now, will one day be blessed in worshipping around His throne forever. *"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."* (Rev. 7:15) If, as David, one is glad to go into "the house of God" to worship, imagine the delight which will come when we enter into his heavenly kingdom! I want to go to heaven so I can join the throngs of those who sing of Moses and the Lamb and worship forever and ever. (Revelation 5:13-14; 15:3.)

I want to go to heaven because it is a place of rest. *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."* (Rev. 14:13) Heaven will be a "fair haven of rest for the weary." But in order to rest, one must first labor. "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother?" Rest for the laboring man is sweet (Eccl. 5:12).

There are many other reasons for wanting heaven as our home. Heaven will surely be worth all the struggles and strife in this life. Please read First Corinthians 15:58 for a challenge and promise to all Christians.

- Ben F. Vick, Jr.

A Parent's Prayer

May I a good example be;
For little eyes are watching me.
In every single thing I do;
May I always be pure and true.

Help me to guard my speech each day,
For little ears hear what I say.
And may my words be kind and sweet,
And my paths straight for little feet.

Help me to mold this little child,
With tender care, and living smile.
And may its little heart aye be;
A holy temple, God, for Thee.

Lord, I know I often fail Thee,
When the cares of life assail me.
Replace my fear with spirit mild;
And help me trust as this wee child.

- Guthrie Dean

-
- > If you don't want to end in failure, be sure to begin with God.
 - > The true measure of a person is what's in the heart.
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Outward Appearance!"* (text: 1 Sam. 16:4-7); Sunday evening: *"1 Kings: The Rise and Fall of the Israelite Empire!"*