

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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THE WHISPERER

Of the many sins into which men fall, the position of the whisperer is to be despised by all right-thinking people. The whisperer is engaged in a devilish work. Envyng the honor and good name of another, he does all he can to destroy it by baseless insinuations and misrepresentations. He declares secretly, and with great reserve the supposed faults of others (always in the absence of those he seeks to defame).

The whisperer is a cowardly sneak. He has not the courage to come out in the open and say the damaging things about others. He dares not have the light of fair investigation turned upon the false things he tells. Secretly he peddles his slanderous statements and insinuations against the object of his campaign of spite. If he can, he will destroy a good name, and then gloat over what he has been able to accomplish.

The whisperer sows discord among brethren. Such is an abomination unto God (Prov. 6:19). Yet, as a result of his efforts to accomplish his unholy purposes, discord and division often results. But this does not bother the whisperer; it merely gives him opportunity for further practice of his nefarious work. He will simply get busy with his whispering campaign and seek to place the blame on someone else for the division that he, himself, caused.

The whisperer is not particular as to the truth of what he tells. The very method he employs bears testimony to this fact. He may include a smattering of the truth to make his lies sound plausible. But if he does, he so perverts that truth, that it is false when he spouts it forth. Yes, his very method belies what he tells. No, his interest is not in the truth. He will not tell the truth! He is interested in defaming and destroying the good name of another. He will tell what he thinks will accomplish this.

It is no wonder that the New Testament twice catalogues the sin of whispering along with such sins as fornication, wickedness, maliciousness, haters of God, strife, malignity, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, swelling tumults, etc. (Rom. 1:29, 30; 2 Cor. 12:20).

Whispering has earned its place among the blackest and vilest sins. The whisperer is not worthy of a place among decent people. Only the Lord can properly reward such a character. And the Lord will!

- Paul C. Keller

Nothing To Live For

Somebody once said, "Many people have everything to live with and nothing to live for." How true that is. Many wealthy people live hollow, meaningless lives. They have more than enough possessions to make life comfortable, but they have little purpose in life to make it meaningful.

It takes decades before some people eventually realize that life lived for mere self-indulgence is ultimately an empty life. A time can come, however, when even the shiniest new car, or the biggest house, or the flashiest jewelry, can't mask the hollowness of a life without high purpose.

The Bible doesn't condemn all wealth, and new cars and nice houses are not wrong. But lasting satisfaction doesn't come from mere things or self-indulgence. On the other hand, people with little to live with may have much to live for. For example, Jesus' apostles were not wealthy (Acts 3:6), but their lives had real purpose.

The scriptures assure us that God can bring purpose into our lives too. He can give us something to live for that is missing from the lives of people whose lives are hollow and without purpose. It has been said that a man who has not lost himself in a cause bigger than himself, has missed one of life's mountaintop experience that can last the rest of your life -- it can ultimately take you to be with God.

- David Watts

SIN: THE GREAT SEPARATOR

Long ago Isaiah declared: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:6). Such is also an accurate description of conditions today. Man indeed has turned his back on God and has walked away from His righteousness, His rule, His favor, and His blessings.

Isaiah said that every one had turned "to his own way." This idea prevails today: "I'll go my way, you go your way." It is next to impossible to find two people who choose identical ways, and so the path of departure from God has as many directions as there are opinions and ideas of people. Of course, should they be asked, most people would deny any departure. And every one would be thinking that he is right. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; But Jehovah weigheth the hearts." (Prov. 21:2). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; But he that is wise

hearkeneth unto counsel." (Prov. 12:15). Jeremiah uttered a great truth that mankind desperately needs to learn: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23). We must heed the warning of wise Solomon: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). Only God's way is perfect and right (Ps. 18:30; Isa. 55:8-9).

We must realize that divine warnings such as the ones above include the practice of following different religions that SEEM to be right. Even while trying to be "religious" we can be guilty of unbelief, rejection of God's will, rebelliousness, negligence, unconcern, procrastination, hypocrisy, and vain formalism in a "show" of religion.

Man would not go his own way in departure from God if he would not exalt his own will against the will of God. This is why Jesus, in showing the way to the Father, said, "if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

Among accountable, responsible people, since ALL have gone astray, ALL are guilty. Paul declared: "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;" (Rom. 3:23). All have missed the mark (sinned), all have disregarded and forsaken Him.

Choosing a way other than God's way erects a barrier between man and God. Isaiah said: "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1-2). Solomon warned: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28:9). (Read I Peter 3:10-12.) Man certainly needs an avenue to speak to his Creator. However, God will not answer the prayers of any who are walking away from Him. (Read James 4:2-4.)

Vain is the life that is lived without God. Such people are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, separated from Christ, without hope, and without God (Eph. 2:1, 12). Who could describe the value of what is lost when one dies outside of Christ? But worse is when one learns and obeys the gospel, then later departs from it. "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20).

Friends, we must choose God's way and deliberately walk therein. When we do, our sins are forgiven, we enjoy numerous blessings, and we will have heaven. May we assist you in obeying the gospel?

- GFS

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!
Where there is hatred...let me sow love.
Where there is injury...pardon.
Where there is doubt...hope.
Where there is darkness...light.
Where there is sadness...joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled...as to console,
To be understood...as to understand,
To be loved...as to love.*

*For
It is in giving...that we receive,
It is in pardoning...that we are pardoned,
It is in dying...that we are born to eternal life.*

- Francis of Assisi

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "A Blind Spot!" (text: Matt. 23:16-26); Sunday evening: "PSALMS: The Jews' Song Book!"