

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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An Anonymous Letter To One Thinking About Divorce

Dear Brother and Sister,

I am having a terrible time getting this letter started and just don't know quite how to begin, because it deals with a subject which I have had to deal with twice in my life and have learned to detest. When I hear of others who are about to get a divorce, a heavy feeling of sadness weighs me down. I have never written others about these feelings but I am compelled to write you as I have always seen both of you as very beautiful people and I love you both. I don't want you or your families to experience what I and my family have gone through and continue to go through because of my divorce.

I am sure that you have been counseled by others who have discussed this from a religious stand point. You are aware of what God has said on this subject. I have probably listened to every argument that man has to offer on the subject of divorce and remarriage. From one extreme to the other. After the dust settles on all the excuses, reasons, and arguments for divorce I come back to a passage in Malachi 2:16. "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." It doesn't get any plainer. God hates divorce and those who get divorces deal treacherously with one another and God. From experience I have learned that we continue with

our wants and feelings and let them dictate what we will do instead of doing what God wants us to do. We want to do what is right in our own eyes. Solomon addresses this problem in Proverbs 3:7. "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil." And again in Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel." I beg you to listen to his counsel. You cannot fight God and expect to win in this life or the life after.

Brother, if I may, let me tell you a little about what my life has been like without living with my son. My son has grown up without a father. On the surface, this doesn't mean much, but when I consider that a child has every right to expect his father to be there in the home as he grows up, it becomes a tragedy for both of us. I wasn't there to help him when he had a problem. I wasn't there to play ball with him or work on his bicycle. We are not together enough to enjoy hobbies or just to take a walk together and talk about the joys of life or the problems of life. I wasn't there to teach him about family and show him how a husband and wife ought to be. I wasn't there when he needed to sit in my lap and be held. I wasn't there every night to say prayers with him and kiss him good night and to let him know that he was loved and that everything would be alright. I wasn't there to enjoy the simple things like helping him with his home work or doing the dishes together or help him clean up his room. I wasn't there to cheer him on at his soccer games. I wasn't there to talk to him before he went out on his first date. And most of all, I wasn't there to see to it that he grew up in a Christian home. My son never had a chance to be a kid. He grew up being the man of the house. Sometimes when I think about what he and I have missed, it is hard to hold back the tears. And speaking of tears, when I returned my son to his mother after having him for the weekend, he would cry and cry. Even now that he is nearly grown, when we part there will be a tear in both of our eyes.

My son and I didn't choose the relationship that we had as it was forced on us. Brother, I understand that you have filed for a divorce. If that is the case, than you have the power to decide the relationship that you and

your daughter will have. You have the power to choose to take from her what belongs to her. You can choose to take from her the right to have two loving parents to grow up with her. You can choose to be the cause of the tears that will be in her eyes.

To both of you I would like to offer the following for your consideration: At this stage of your marriage either one or both of you are probably saying that "I just don't love him or her anymore."

To this I have learned to respond by saying, that you do not have the right to make the decision to not love one another. You made a covenant between each other and the Lord to love one another through good times and bad. So you are having a bad time. So love each other anyway. You say you can not. I say you must and can. We often forget what love is all about. Love is not something that appears all on its own. Please read God's definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. All of those things listed in those verses takes effort on the part of the one that loves. They are things that require us to work at and if necessary to change our way of thinking. Ask yourself this question after reading the above scripture! Have I worked at doing all of these things? I pray that you would work at leaning to love each other. Put your efforts into building love instead of putting your efforts into tearing it down.

If you steal a man's goods and later have remorse for your theft, you can go to that man and restore his goods and make him whole again. But when you take from your daughter the right to have two loving parents and she grows up without one of you, how will you make amends to her? Can you give those years back to her?

Brother: If you break your promises to Sister and divorce her and in later years understand that you wronged the bride of your youth, how will you right the wrong you have done? Can you take those years of misery back and start over again? Can you take away the tears that you caused to flow from the one that you promised to have and to hold, to love and to cherish?

Sister: If you are not willing to keep your promises to Brother and in later years come to the knowledge that you have wronged the husband of your youth, how can you make him whole again? Can you give back the love you withheld? How can you give back time?

Both of you are on the brink of opportunity. You have the opportunity to spit on your commitment to each other and cause pain for your God, yourselves, your daughter, your family and all those that love you. Or, you can decide to put your house in order and to be what you ought to be to each other. You can learn to love each other again and be the example to others. You can grow old in each other's arms.

I pray at this point you would ask the question, how do we start to rebuild? My answer would be to quote Solomon in Proverbs 1:7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." Listen to God's instructions and seek counsel from righteous men.

Pray together. If I can help you in any way, please give me a call. I love you both and will be praying for you.

Your brother,
Name Withheld, 1996

We Can't Save Ourselves

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isa. 64:6)

Let us suppose that a plane crashes into the water with three men aboard, and there is no boat, ship, or land within hundreds of miles. One of the

men is able to swim only a few hundred feet. The second can manage to stay afloat an hour or two. The third is a world champion long-distance swimmer. What is the fate of the three?

It doesn't matter if the third is a great swimmer or not. He is in the same fate as the other two. The first will drown in twenty minutes; the second in an hour or two; and the third in fifteen hours. All three need a savior, for without one, all three will drown.

So it is with all men. Being a good moral person alone amounts to nothing more than filthy rags. We all are sinners, and without a Savior are doomed to destruction.

- David Riggs

What Did Peter Do?

Peter left all and followed the Lord, and later left Christ at the cross. He said that he would die before he would deny Him, and later denied Him three times.

Peter was told to strengthen the brethren when he was converted, and this he did in word and writing. He wrote two letters and reminded the brethren of their duty, and gave the seven Christian graces which will be a strength to any of the brethren if they will follow them. He was the great speaker on Pentecost, and began the binding and loosing on earth.

Peter made many blunders, but he was ready to make all right, and that is the redeeming feature of his life. Peter denied the Lord three times in succession, and then went out and wept bitterly. Some church members deny the Lord all day long, and then laugh about it. Peter was later restored and became one of the greatest workers the Lord had.

It is not so bad to go wrong, provided that you see the wrong in time and turn before it is too late. If we deny the Lord, we may expect Him to deny us (Matthew 10:32-34). We must change and own Him, as did Peter, in order to be forgiven and be a worker for the Lord. Peter was a great talker, but the Lord got him to talking right. What have we done?

- H.M. Phillips

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Where Is Jesus Now?*" (text: Luke 24:50-52); Sunday evening: "*Making Sense of Life!*" (text: Eccl. 3:1-15).

SCHEDULE: Our Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regularly scheduled times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.