

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"Your Rights" and "My Rights"

We read in the newspapers and hear over television and radio about "people's rights." I readily agree that each of us have certain rights. We need to be aware of what our rights really are before we make such a fuss over "my rights and your rights." We all must agree that, in the business world, the employer and the employee both have rights. When each understands the rights of the other, a pleasant working condition prevails.

The Bible teaches us that men, women, boys and girls have rights. When such rights are governed by what God's word teaches, proper respect for others is certain. I have no right to demand that you respect my rights, so long as I disrespect your rights. My rights end where your rights begin; your rights end where my rights begin. I believe if this principle was practiced by all people, it would make a better lot out of all of us.

A man and woman may choose either to marry or not to marry. While single, each has rights which are not present after marriage. Before marriage, each may date others, spend their

own money without consideration of the other, make their own decisions, etc. After marriage each must then consider the other. Their rights are now different. The joining together of man and woman in marriage (never man to man or woman to woman - Rom. 1:24-27) is God's ordained law (Gen. 2:24). "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). When two people marry, they must readjust their rights to be compatible with each other. "Let the husband render unto his wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. 7:3-4). After marriage, the husband has the right to expect his wife to submit unto him (Eph. 5:22). The husband has the right to be head over the wife (Eph. 5:23). The husband has the right to have his wife reverence him (Eph. 5:33). The wife has the right to have her husband love her and not be bitter against her (Col. 3:19). The wife has the right to expect honor as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). Yes, the husband and wife have rights, but neither has the right to infringe upon the rights of the other.

God said to the first man and woman, "Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth . . ." (Gen. 1:28). When children are born the parents must sacrifice their rights so as to consider the rights of the child. The child must be loved and provided for. The mother does not have the right to forsake her child (Tit. 2:4-5). Such is not the mother's right. The father is charged with the proper training of the child (Eph. 6:4); he does not have the right to neglect this responsibility. Each parent is required to sacrifice his rights if they conflict with the rights of their child. Children do not

have the right to disobey or disrespect their parents (Gal. 6:1). "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3:20).

We each should be aware that an alien sinner is lost and without hope while in sin. Paul declared that all were sinners (Rom. 3:23). Isaiah said that iniquities (the condition of one without law . . . either because of ignorance of it or in violation of it) and sins separate man from God (Isa. 59:2). Paul wrote that the wages of sin is (spiritual) death (Rom. 6:23). God has made provisions for the sinner to remove himself from sin and enter into the church (Col. 1:13; Acts 2:47). In order for sins to be forgiven, the practice must be stopped. He does not, after he has obeyed the plan of salvation, have the right to continue in sin (read Col. 3:1-11; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

The command to "repent" (Luke 13:3) means that one has a change of heart which leads to a change of life. If one stole before, he steals no longer (Eph. 4:28). If one lied before, he no longer lies (Eph. 4:25). If one was a fornicator before, he no longer engages in such lust (Col. 3:5). So the person who truly repents of his sins, no longer has the right to continue in sin.

Before the sinner obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ, he walks in sin while he serves Satan. After his conversion, he no longer has the right to serve Satan. Before the sinner obeys the gospel, he does not have the privilege of prayer (John 9:31; 1 Pet. 3:12) nor can he enjoy any of the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). Every right the sinner thought he had to pursue his own

selfish pleasures and lustful desires must be given up in order to please God.

Once the sinner obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has the right to demand obedience (read Mt. 7:21; Rev. 2:10; 2 John 9). If God's requirements are not met, then God has the right to punish that person and He surely will (read Rom. 11:22; 2 Pet. 2:22; Luke 9:62). When the sinner obeys the plan of salvation, which consists of faith (John 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Acts 8:37) and baptism (Acts 2:38), his rights are then different from what they were before his conversion. This saved person has the right to worship God in song (Eph. 5:19), prayer (Acts 2:42), preaching (Acts 20:7), giving (1 Cor. 16:2), and observing the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). Not only does he have this right to worship, but he has no right to forsake the worship.

The child of God has the right to contend for the truth (Jude 3), to bear fruit for Christ (Jn. 15:1-6), to add the graces (2 Pet. 1:5-11), to let his light shine for Christ (Mt. 5:16), to abstain from all works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:15-17), to practice pure religion (Jas. 1:27), to control his tongue (Jas. 1:26), to seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33), etc. Not only does the child of God have this right, but he does not have the right to neglect these things.

God has assigned each of us rights, but our rights are to be regulated by the word, the New Testament law of Christ (2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 4:6). What a person may consider to be his rights may or may not be his rights. The rights of husband and wife, parents and children, and Christians, when governed by divine

instructions, will make for peace, unity, happiness; they will bring glory to God, honor and respect to Christ, and help the Lord's church be what God wants it to be.

- Carol R. Lumpkin

Does Anyone Believe A Child Of God Can So Live As To Be Lost?

Can a child of God live in such a manner that they will stand before their Father in the final day and hear the words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"? (Matthew 25:41)

(1) *Do you believe that a child of God can deny the faith?*

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

(2) *Do you believe a child of God can cast off their faith?*

"Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith" (1 Timothy 5:12).

(3) *Does the Holy Spirit suggest that a child of God can depart from the faith?*

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1).

(4) *Can it happen that a child of God can shipwreck his faith?*

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Timothy 1:19).

(5) *Is it possible that a child of God can overthrow their faith and err concerning the truth?*

"Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:18).

(6) *Would Peter write that a child of God would even deny the Lord?*

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1).

(7) *Would the Hebrew writer pen that a child of God (called "brethren") should beware lest he have an evil heart and depart from God?*

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 10:29).

(8) *Will the child of God be saved if he goes further and fails of the grace of God?*

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15).

Does anyone believe that a child of God can so live as to be lost?

According to the Scriptures, the answer is "YES."

- by Kent E. Heaton Sr.

INFLUENCE

A woman asked, “How can I win my husband to Christ?”

“You can’t,” was the surprising answer from the preacher. “You never attend worship regularly. If your husband wants to go for a drive on Sunday, you neglect the Lord and go with him. And if you don’t have a way to come to church, you never call some other member to come for you. You will never win your husband unless you let him know, and all those about you, that your religion means more to you than anything else under heaven. This alone is the kind of influence that wins souls.”

- unknown

› “It is easier to suppress the first evil desire than to satisfy all that follow.”

› “The chief cause of failure and unhappiness is trading what we want most for what we want at the moment.”

› The best index to a person's character is (a) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and (b) how he treats people who can't fight back.

- Abigail Van Buren

THIS WEEK’S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*A Word Fitly Spoken!*” (text: Prov. 25:11); Sunday evening: “*EZEKIEL: Preacher of the Exile!*”

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.