

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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On A Daily Basis

A man, asked recently to describe memories of his college days twenty-five years ago, replied, "A few big moments; many goofs, but, overall, pleasant memories."

Would these words not describe our memories of life generally? As we recall our years, there are always the "big" moments, the emotional "highs," that we love to relish. Then there are the "goofs," the embarrassing occasions that just keep coming back to haunt us. But, through it all, the pleasant memories sufficiently prevail to enable us to feel generally good about life.

But, in reality, success or failure in life is not determined by the "big moments" or "the goofs." We will not be eternally saved on the basis of a few great spiritual achievements or eternally lost on the basis of a few gross mistakes (assuming they have been repented of). Life consists of everyday actions and decisions, and it is these that bring ultimate success or failure, eternal happiness or eternal damnation. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

It is one thing to express concern for our children as we talk of their future spirituality and faithfulness. It is quite another to provide on a daily basis a spiritual atmosphere in the home, a good example of godliness and faithfulness, consistent and loving discipline and a love for God and respect for fellowman that are so essential to the training of our children. It's the little impressions that are made day by day that prove to be so decisive.

It is one thing to dream of some day being appointed an elder in the church. It is quite another thing to put forth the effort on a daily basis to learn the scriptures, to develop leadership ability, to grow spiritually, and to live as to gain the confidence of a discerning congregation. One does not qualify for the eldership in one big leap. It comes through daily development.

It is one thing to talk a "good line" on priorities. It is quite another thing to put God first on a daily basis. The devil knows so many ways to test our resolve in these realms. Our intentions are good, but, through his subtlety, he has us selling our souls for a mess of pottage or thirty pieces of silver.

It is one thing to think that we would die for the Lord if our faith were so tested. It is quite another thing truly to live for Him on a daily basis. Egos may be fed on the "big moments," but true spirituality develops through daily prayer, study and meditation.

Our lesson is this. Set your goals for the future, and set them high. But recognize that it's the little, day-by-day moments, the often forgotten moments, accumulated through the years, that truly shape our destiny. Tomorrow's success depends upon the choices and decisions that are made today. Make them with care.

- Bill Hall

“Hard To Understand”

". . . our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." - 2 Peter 3:15-16

Does this passage say that Bible study and true understanding is out of reach for most of us? Not at all! We should reread the verses carefully and think about the matter.

What the passage does not say:

- That some of Paul's writings are impossible to understand
- That all of Paul's writings are hard to understand
- That Paul's writings are unclear or uncertain
- That all Scripture is hard to understand

What the passage does say:

- Paul's writings are part of the Scriptures
- Paul wrote according to the wisdom given him
- Some of what Paul wrote was hard to understand
- All Scripture can be twisted by the untaught and unstable
- The result can be our destruction, fall, being led away with error

The problem is not with Scripture. It is often with us! It may be our level of spiritual maturity. It may be our reluctance to accept the truth. It may be our surrender to the views of others. It may be our tendency to read too much in a passage. It may be our failure to search the other Scriptures to have an overall grasp of

God's will. That some Bible matters are more difficult than others calls for our more careful attention, not for our surrender. That is how we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 3:18).

- Robert Hines

Your Heart's Desire

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

Stop and consider the apostle's affection and concern for people. Paul's desire was genuine: he wanted lost souls to be saved.

Christians need to have the same attitude today. The "heart's desire" is a strong feeling of sympathy and compassion. This cannot be created without proper cultivation.

Consider our loved ones who need to be saved. Generating interest in seeing them obey the gospel should not be a hard task. The question is, Are we as concerned for their souls as Paul was for all Israel? Paul expressed what his desire was; have we?

Next time opportunity knocks, go up to your loved one and say something like, "I want you to know that my desire and prayer to God is that you might be saved. Will you obey?"

People have told me that they long for the day when a certain one will be baptized. The truth is, the best thing that can help that to come about is to express it openly to the individual.

Jesus, when seeing the sinful state of the people, cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

Our Lord illustrates perfectly that a meaningful spiritual concern comes when seeing the true state of the lost. Many opportunities to express our heartfelt desires are missed because we close our eyes to the sinful state people are in. We may love someone, but if they are not a Christian, they must be viewed as being in bondage to sin.

When we see the end of their way, which is everlasting destruction, then efforts are put forth. It may be hard to see that the Lord would damn one who loves you so much, but remember, it's not their love for you that will get them into heaven; it's their love for the Lord.

Go ahead; say something today while today still is.

- Chuck Bartlett

Establishing Principles for Participation in School Related Activities

1. God said that godliness profits us in ALL things (1 Tim. 4:8).
2. Have a talk with God about the responsibilities of members in His church. Make some determinations therefrom concerning your school related activities. Then – At the outset of the Activity:

3. Compose a letter to your coach/activity sponsor. Tell what practices and events you cannot attend. Explain your commitment to the priorities that you have set. Be ready to carry out every single commitment. Be where you say you'll be; do what you say you'll do. Suggest that you will do whatever is assigned to help you serve as an effective contributor in the organization for practices or events that you miss. Go the extra mile as a free man.
4. Submit a copy of this letter to your principal. You might include your athletic director if sports are involved.

- Howard Whittlesey

Howard Whittlesey is a retired Choral Music Director having taught 39 years in grades 7-12. He also taught Band for 6 years. His last 32 years were spent at North Miami High School in Denver, Indiana.

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Second Coming of Christ!*" (text: John 14:2-3); Sunday evening: "*Heart-felt Repentance!*" (text: Joel 2:11-13).