

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jackson, TN 38305

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September 22, 2013

Volume 33, # 39

Permissive Parents

Children can influence their parents just as parents can influence their children. The following story about an imaginary couple may have been duplicated in the lives of many of our readers.

George and Mary were a wonderful couple as they began their life together. Throughout their youth they had received strong teaching concerning worldliness, and their conduct showed the effects of that teaching.

They had been taught faithfulness in attendance, and they never missed a service for "anything." In character and conviction, they were blameless.

This young couple failed, however, to instill into the hearts of their children these same convictions. Consequently, as the children reached their teens, they began to put pressure on their parents to let them do what all the other young people were doing. Gradually the will of the parents was broken down, and they began to permit their children to do things they never dreamed their children would do.

Rationalization came easy for George and Mary. "After all, the Bible is not specific in these matters," they thought. "The Bible says 'modest apparel,' but it doesn't define modesty." "And, they're only planning to go to the dance; they aren't planning to dance." "We can't say 'no' to everything," they said. When Junior began to show unusual athletic ability, the question of attending services became a problem. At first they took Junior out of games and brought him to midweek services, but then the team began to depend more and more on him. The play-offs came, and the team's only hope in the play-offs was for Junior to play. George and Mary gave in. And once they had given in, they had no more argument for the future. Junior never missed another game to "go to church."

George and Mary often found themselves on the defensive in Bible classes. They began to argue for their children's behavior. And, the more accustomed they became to their children's actions, the more innocent their actions seemed to be. Eventually, their own conduct became affected. They reached the point where they thought nothing of missing on Friday night during a meeting to see Junior play ball. Mary even adopted some of the daughter's dress habits, although remaining sufficiently "discreet" to stay in the good graces of the brethren. Yes, George and Mary are still in good standing in the church, and their change has been so gradual that many fail to realize that they are not the strong Christians they formerly were. What happened to George and Mary? Instead of bringing their children "up" in the nurture and admonition of the "Lord," their children brought them "down" in the nurture and admonition of the "devil."

Our children may do wrong, but they must not do wrong with our permission! We do not seek anger, but repentance. Parents, would your names fit in the place of "George" and "Mary" in the above story?

- Bill Hall

On The Failure of Creeds

"But there are so many creeds, all claiming to be right, that I should not know which to take. They were all made by learned men, and if they can not agree on the kind of a creed, how am I to decide which is right?" says one. It is a matter of great moment and of much relief that, aside from all these conflicting, clashing, and erring creeds, there is one book that all parties concede is right. They all agree that the Bible is right - that it came from God. They all further agree that it contains the law of God - that the law of the Lord is perfect. The only wonder is, that man ever attempted to make any other creed or law for the Church. Such an undertaking could not have commenced without two wicked assumptions:

1. That the law of God, as set forth in the Bible, is not sufficient - is a failure.
2. That the insufficiency or failure can be remedied by weak, erring, and uninspired men.

No man of intelligence will affirm, in plain terms, that the Bible is not sufficient for the government of the saints; or that man - uninspired man - can make a creed that will serve a better purpose than the Bible. Still such affirmations are implied in every attempt made by uninspired men to make a creed. If you admit, as all are bound to do, that the law of God is in the Bible; that nothing may be added to it, nothing taken from it, and that no part of it may be changed, there is not an excuse in the world for making another law. The law of God in the Bible is the law, the divine law, the supreme law, in the kingdom of God; and it is a treasonable movement to attempt to get up another constitution, law, name, body, or officers, apart from the constitution, law, name, body, and officers as found in the Bible.

But the matter now in hand is to find a safe course to pursue. Can this be done? All admit the Bible is right. All admit that the law of God in the Bible is right. All admit that those who follow the Bible honestly and faithfully, in faith and practice, will be saved. All admit that wherever any creed differs from the Bible is wrong. Then it is infallibly safe to take the Bible and follow it. When men undertake to prove that a human creed is a good one, they argue that it is like the Bible. If a creed like the Bible is a good one, why will not the Bible itself do? If the Bible will not serve the purpose - is insufficient and a failure - a creed like it would be equally insufficient. When men make a creed to do what the Bible would not do, they should certainly make it different from the Bible, or it would serve no better purpose than the Bible itself.

- Benjamin Franklin,
excerpt from "The Infallibly Safe Course," New Testament Christianity, ed. by
Z.T. Sweeney [note: Benjamin Franklin was a nineteenth century gospel preacher,
not to be confused with our eighteenth century "founding father."]

Little Things in Evangelism

A number of studies and surveys on evangelism have shown that as high as ninety percent of all "conversions" are directly related to a personal invitation from a family member, neighbor, or fellow worker. Yet, the tremendous potential of a personal invitation has not impressed many church members.

Many aids and schemes have been tried in the area of personal evangelism. But, there is nothing more effective than one person sitting down at a table with another person with a Bible between them.

It will not be our programs, our advertising, our gimmicks, that will lead the world to Christ. It will be God's power working in us through the gospel coupled with our fervent prayers that will accomplish the task. Unless we pray daily (even with tears) for their salvation, and unless we commit ourselves to doing something specific every week in the interest of those souls, we are not walking in the footsteps of those who cried and died for the lost (Luke 10:42; Matthew 9:38; Romans 9:2; 10:1).

- Peter Wilson (edited for length)

- "What you do for yourself will be soon forgotten, but what you do for others will be long remembered."
 - "The true disciple is obedient rather than ambitious, committed rather than competitive. For him, nothing is more important than pleasing the one who called him."
 - "The world belongs to the man who is wise enough to change his mind in the presence of facts."
 - "Lord, when I am wrong, make me willing to change; when I am right, make me easy to live with."
 - "The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism."
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"How Faith Works!"* (text: Heb. 11:7); Sunday evening: *"You Stood Aloof!"* (text: Obadiah 10-15).