

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"SWAPPING OUT" IS "LOSING OUT"

"My sweetheart and I are swapping out; we worship there one week and we will worship here the next," someone is apt to say. Others put it like this: "I will go with my companion, so he will come to services with me." But I will have you know that "swapping out" is "losing out."

I've been preaching for over thirty years, and I don't recall one Christian who ever converted anyone by swapping out. You just don't convert people to Christ by compromising. I have known of young people, whose "true loves" even attended "regularly" with them at the church of Christ "until after the wedding was over;" then presto, the "religious honeymoon" was over.' After a week, month, or six weeks of marriage, the unbeliever had gotten "offended" at something about the church and stops attending FOREVER.

Christians, don't get hooked with that old line. It won't work; and is one of the most subtle devices Satan ever invented. Some will even plan a fake conversion and receive baptism. Human nature has not changed. Solomon's unbelieving wives turned his heart away from God (I Kings 11:3-8). And there's hardly anyone among us today as

wise as Solomon was! But HE FAILED with mixed marriages. God's people in Nehemiah's time were condemned for marrying outside the faith; and the Lord showed how THE CHILDREN in such marriages suffer and are corrupted (Nehemiah 14:23-27).

This article is not written in order to offend one soul; but it is our prayer that someone in the reading audience may be benefited by this brief study and perhaps save his soul from apostasy. I don't think any of our readers ever set out to fall away from the truth; and I feel that the honest truth-seeker might be redeemed by this article.

Swapping out with a friend or companion, by attending services where error is practiced and/or taught, involves the following factors:

1. You are missing the services where you have a personal obligation, and are forsaking the assembling with those who compose the family of which you are a member. You are failing to let your light shine (Eph. 4:16; Heb. 10:24-25).
2. You, by missing your own services and attending with those in error, are bidding God-speed, by partaking with them in their error, to false religion (2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11).
3. You are setting a bad example for those where you are supposed to be worshipping. If you have a right to leave and go elsewhere, the whole congregation has that same right (1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 10:24-26).
4. You are failing to be in subjection to the elders of the congregation where you are a member (Heb. 13:17).
5. You are showing those in error that you have NO CONVICTIONS after all; for you are forsaking those who are attempting to stand for the "old paths" and helping to hold up the hands of the enemy. This is a violation of 2 Corinthians 6:17

-- "wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

6. You will either end up departing from the faith, and join the friend or companion in apostasy, and be lost (2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 4:1; 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:18; 3:8-9); or the friend will attempt to "join the church" with you and end up making both of you as weak in the faith as proverbial dish-water. These are the element in a congregation who are always wanting the preacher to lay off the "hard preaching: and talk more on love." They may be at the services, in body, but when it comes to standing up for the truth, they don't.

But the whole point we are discussing today is this: don't ever miss the services of the local church to go with your sweetheart or companion to a church which teaches or practices error. You are wasting your time; people aren't converted to the truth that way. That old dodge that flies can be attracted by honey better than vinegar, may work OK for FLIES; but it takes the two-edged sword of the Spirit in order to convert PEOPLE.

- Guthrie Dean

"HERE IS WATER"

These were the words of the Ethiopian eunuch after Philip had preached Christ to him (Acts 8:35, 36). It suggests that the eunuch was a man of strong conviction. When he was convinced of a truth, he was determined to

submit to that truth. He did not have to be persuaded to respond to the truth that he had heard. He did not decide to wait for a more convenient season. In fact, if we look at the conversions recorded in the book of Acts, we won't find a single one that had to be persuaded to obey the gospel. Each of them either made inquiry as to what to do or responded immediately, "the same hour of the night." There were no reluctant candidates; none that had to be sold.

When we realize what is involved in conversion we aren't likely to hesitate. Our souls are at stake. We are all involved in the problem of sin and subject to the wages of sin, death (Rom. 6:23). If we die apart from Christ, we die unjust, without hope. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). That's man in sin, but the man who cares for his soul will not take it lightly.

Every preacher has known those to whom they have had to sell the gospel. We have spent long hours teaching the condition of the soul in sin and the remedy of God in Christ, only to see the prospect hesitate. We all have been tempted to persuade and to coax, fearful that a soul may get away. I remember one such that I persuaded with until past midnight and finally convinced him to be baptized. He perhaps attended 2 services after that. He wasn't ready to surrender his life to Christ. I have often wondered if his baptism was valid.

On another occasion I spent hours trying to overcome the objection a woman offered for not obeying. I finally told her that when she was ready to obey Christ not one of these objections would keep her from it. When one is convicted of "sin, righteousness and judgment," that one will cry out, "What must I do?" or, "Here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized?" There will be no force on earth that will hold one back from obedience.

There is never a convenient time for one to surrender to Christ. There is always a valid reason the devil can make for not obeying. "Today is the day of salvation."

- M. D. Norman

People Do Change

People do change but they do not often change churches. They change from one make of automobile to another. They change their places of residence. Many change husbands or wives. Many change jobs. But there seems to be a kind of stigma against changing churches.

People will readily change with churches — that is, if they are becoming more liberal. They don't change so readily with a church if its change is toward conservatism or more strict adherence to the Scriptures. People are ten times more afraid of being narrow than of being unscriptural. They are more afraid of being out of step with the crowds than of being out of step with Christ.

The one thing that should cause dissatisfaction with a church is its departure from the Scriptures. The best reason for making a change is to be with one who studies the Scriptures and strives in all of its phases to follow them. A church should be scriptural in name, doctrine, government, worship, and work.

Jesus convinced some people who would not change. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the

synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12: 42, 43.) Joseph of Arimathaea was a secret disciple. (John 19:38.) He kept his discipleship secret for fear of the Jews.

We, as the church of Christ, believe that a church must be scriptural to be pleasing to Christ. This should make us stand well in the favor of men. But instead we get criticism. Our greatest opposition stems from the fact that we warn against unscriptural things in religion and will not co-operate with those who practice them. We are called narrow. The promoters of unscriptural practices in religion assert that they are scriptural; this satisfies persons who have not taken the pains to search the Scriptures to see. They have confidence in "men of the cloth." If they say they are scriptural, they are. But we who have examined the Scriptures daily to see if they are scriptural, have learned that they are not. And when we challenge the "men of the cloth" to show that their practices are not scriptural, they evade us. They become jittery and sometimes cross.

May all of us strive toward being scriptural rather than being popular!
— Gardner S. Hall

The real skeptic is the man who has so little faith in his own position that he is afraid to have it critically examined; who has so little confidence in truth that he fears to have more of it discovered; who is tormented by the thought that if he knew more he might believe less.

— Earnest Fremont Tittle

- > Be what you want others to be — but beat them to it.
 - > An awareness of ignorance is the first step to obtaining knowledge. The Bible can teach no man until he realizes his need for its instruction.
 - > Some people spend more time developing their wishbone than they do developing their backbone.
 - > People seldom "lose their religion" by a blowout - it's usually a slow leak.
 - > You will never get ahead of the person you are trying to get even with.
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: Guest speaker: Erin Percell; Sunday evening: Gregg Needham. Thank you for accepting invitations on short notice!