

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

February 09, 2014

Volume 34, # 07

Are You Narrow-Minded?

True Christians are often labeled as being "narrow-minded." This is done in a derogatory manner. It is sometimes intended to damage or destroy one's reputation and to cause harm to the cause of truth and righteousness.

We should not be "narrow-minded" in the sense of being unreasonable or prejudiced. We should consider the feelings of others. We should not be unwilling to listen to others, consider what they say, and accept and weight the facts that are presented.

As we consider life, its purpose and destiny we should be committed to a "narrow-minded" approach. We should learn even from observation that in most areas truth is narrow. Consider the following examples:

1. Measures and weights. Twelve inches equals one foot. Three feet equals one yard. Sixteen and a half feet equals one rod. Five thousand, two hundred eighty feet equals one mile.

Sixteen ounces equals one pound, etc. Narrow indeed! It never changes!

2. Medical prescriptions. The pharmaceutical companies, physicians, pharmacists, etc. have to be very careful about the ingredients, prescribing and filling prescriptions. Again, I would say these are pretty narrow, wouldn't you?

3. Mathematics. One plus one equals two. Two plus two equals four. Five times five equals twenty-five. Subtract three from four and you always get one, etc. Wouldn't you say this is pretty narrow? I would.

In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

NOTES:

1. We are told by Jesus Christ to enter "in at the strait gate." The word "strait" means narrow.
2. The "narrow gate" leads into the "narrow way" that leads unto life.
3. Only a "few" people will find and enter the "narrow gate" and travel the "narrow way" which leads unto life. Truth is indeed narrow!

Most people will enter the wide gate and travel the broad way, which leads to destruction.

The following facts are considered "narrow" by most people (and they are narrow). However, they are stubborn facts!

1. Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth and the life" and no man can go to the Father except by Him! (See John 14:6).
2. There is only one true church! (See Mt. 16:18; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6).
3. Faith, repentance and baptism are essential to salvation! (See Heb. 11:6; John 20:30-31; Acts 16:31; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4).

The "narrow gate" and the "narrow way" are so rendered by divine wisdom! Some are "too broad" and others "too narrow" to accept "the narrow way." Are you "narrow minded" enough to accept it?

- Carrol R. Sutton

THE SIN OF GOSSIP

Gossiping sins are listed in 2 Corinthians 12:30: ". . . debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." These sins can cause one to lose his soul, just as lying, stealing, and fornication can. "Gossip" is defined by Webster as "an idle tattler or carrier of tales; groundless rumor." (Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1969 edition.) Gossip is referred to in the

Bible as whispering. It "occurs in an evil sense in Romans 1:29 ... is used of secret slander in 2 Cor. 12:20." (W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 212.)

Although the tongue is one of the body's smallest members it has a great influence over the body. It is often the cause of our troubles. James talks about its power in James 3:3-12. We should be able to control such a small member of the body, yet this is one of the hardest things we find to do. The apostle Paul said of his body: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9: 27.) Jesus tells us the body is the territory of sin. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Matt. 5:29,30.) The source of sin is not in the members of our bodies. Jesus uses this illustration to show the extent one should sacrifice to rid a moral evil of the mind.

Jesus told the Pharisees where the source of sin was: He said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt

be condemned." (Matt. 12:34-37.) Every one of us, from the time he is born, has formed his heart (mind) with a storehouse of thoughts - those he believes to be valuable, good, or bad. From this inward man we form our convictions and make our judgments of every situation. Our tongues only convey to others our inward thoughts.

Gossip is evil and slanderous. Those who gossip sow discord and do much harm. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips is a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife; and a whisperer separateth chief friends." (Prov. 16:27,28.) Gossipers usually put much work in their evil purposes. Their lies produce strife and contention between some of the most peaceful and loving friends. This is why Paul wanted to see the younger widows married so they would not have time to fall into such situations. He described gossipers as ". . . not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." (I Tim. 5:13.) He gives the secret of preventing gossip: overcome it with a busy life and mind proper things.

Those who are not Christians look upon us as firsthand examples of Christ-like people. If they see that gossip and other sins are characteristic of our lives, then we are not "shining lights" to the world. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." (I Pet. 4:15.) When we gossip, we are meddlers in other people's business. We show others that we are covetous, unwise, and misguided. Paul said, ". . . let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. 5:3.) Let us let our lips be "a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.)

— Thomas Icard

How Gullible Are We?

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for plenty of good reasons, since:

1. It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal patients.

He asked fifty people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forth-three said, "Yes," six were undecided, and the last one? Well, only one knew that the chemical, dihydrogen monoxide is water (H₂O).

The title of his prize-winning project: "How Gullible Are We?"

There are many in the religious world who are just as gullible. Millions always believe, without ever investigation whatever their

preacher espouses from the pulpit. Many would not know the difference between truth and error (no matter how obvious). Friends, that is why we need to be like those noble Bereans, where of them it is said, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Being gullible is what leads to religious error that will condemn one's soul. Think about it!

- Tom Moore

- Parents should teach obedience in the playpen rather than try to teach it in the state pen.
 - If the Lord is not first in your life, He is not really in your life (as He should be)!
 - A man preaches "the Word" as it is revealed in the Scriptures, or He does not preach "the Word"!
 - Those who criticize "negative" preaching should quit being so negative!
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Blessing of Forgetting!"* (text: Gen. 41:51); Sunday evening: *"When Worship Has Lost Its Worth!"* (text: Malachi 1:6).