

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"Unto The End... "

How do you feel about someone who starts a sentence and never...? How about someone who starts a job but never gets around to completing it? Do you feel that you owe a man pay when he does not finish a job for which he has been contracted? Do you expect to win the prize, if you do not cross the finish line? For some reason we understand that truth as it applies to our physical world, but seem to think that it will not apply in eternity.

We do not receive the crown of life until the end (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6-8) — "...I have finished the course..." Paul said, "henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." The crown does not adorn the head of the weak, indifferent, worldly minded, negligent, quitters. It is always our prayer, as it was the Hebrew writer's, that "...we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:11-12).

Starting is the easy part — it is the finishing, the grinding it out when it hurts, the bearing up under exasperation, the enduring

when it seems there is no end in sight - that is the hard part. Sometimes folks start walking the narrow way but it becomes too difficult and the price is too great to pay. Like the shallow soil, there is no depth and they quickly fall away (Matthew 13:5, 21). If we do not faithfully endure to the end, there is no crown of life.

- Jim R. Everett

What Is Wrong?

Something is bad wrong when we cannot have all of the members of the church, and their children, in attendance for Bible study. If you are a habitual absentee, consider that your eternal welfare depends upon your finding and correcting what is wrong. A few possibilities are listed:

1. If a person is too sick to go, something is wrong with his health. He should consult a doctor.
2. If he thinks he does not need the help that comes from Bible study, something is wrong with his education. He does not know enough to know what he needs most.
3. If he sleeps too late, he is too lazy. He needs to study Proverbs 6:6-11.
4. If he does not have the interest to go, something is terribly wrong with his attitude. Indifference causes people to be lost.
5. If he is too busy to go, something is wrong with his schedule. The person who is "too busy" to serve the Lord is "too busy" to go to heaven.

6. If he lets company keep him away, then something is wrong with his courage. He should have the grit to serve the Lord even if the company is missed or offended.

7. If he thinks his clothes are not good enough, something is wrong with his pride. This excuse is over exalted, for the persons who use it can usually go anywhere else in the same town.

And when any of the above, excepting the first, are the reasons one will not regularly worship and study, something is wrong with the heart. Do not deceive yourself by thinking that everything will "work out alright" if everything is not all right with your heart - check yours.

- Unknown

TEMPERANCE

"Temperance" (KJV) is a fruit of the Spirit among others in Galatians 5:22-23. The word brings to mind a group of women marching down the street with signs condemning the drinking of alcoholic beverages, but this concept alone would be an incorrect narrowing of the definition. In its original sense, and in the Bible, temperance means "self-control." (The ASV is one version which gives this meaning.) Drinking intoxicating beverages is only one way that people can be without self-control.

Drinking intoxicating beverages is one of the main evils of our culture. The word of God has always condemned drunkenness. Drunkenness can make an otherwise decent person into a cruel animal. Many drunkards have brought poverty to themselves and their families by exchanging the family provisions for intoxication;

they very quickly rob themselves of ability to do efficient work and to earn necessary support. And this is not the limit of abuse that the innocent must suffer. When a drunkard gets behind the wheel of an automobile countless other innocent people will suffer injury, many times irreparable, and death. Foolish is the person who believes that only the drunkard suffers from his sin. Christians do not drink intoxicating beverages; and any person who has decent regard for self, family, and other people will not seek intoxicating beverages. (Study 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:1-4).

Many have been intemperate in the area of speech also. Here we would do well to control our thoughts and not allow foolish notions to lodge in the cranial area. As a matter of fact, this effort would not only benefit our speech, but other actions as well. Remember that Jesus showed that "evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." (See Mark 7:21-23). Vulgar or profane words are commonplace today; some people are just downright verbally mean. Paul commanded, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth..." (Eph. 4:29). Thinking before speaking would help, and one whose heart is set on pleasing God and exercising self-control would tell the truth and nothing but the truth at all times. Christ died to free us from sins, one of which is lying: "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor..." (Eph. 4:25).

Do you get angry when people or things displease you? Have you ever realized that temperance (self-control) must be used over anger? Have you ever lost your temper? Gone into a rage? If so, effort needs to be made to gain the proper control of self. Ephesians 4:26 teaches that we are not to allow our anger to unite with sin. When we become angry at other people we could

be in danger of cultivating hatred and resentment. Remember, Satan seeks every opportunity to overthrow us, and will put forth effort even when we are angry (cf. Eph. 4:27). He could even entice us to have an unforgiving spirit, consequences of which are in Matthew 6:14.

In carrying out our whole duty of fearing God and keeping His commandments (Eccl. 12:13) we will miserably fail without temperance. We must not be slaves of Satan, but rather we must render ourselves servants unto God, and this, friend, is the ultimate in self-control.

- GFS

TRUTH MAKES CHRISTIANS

A perverted gospel cannot save. Jesus declared that it is the knowledge of truth, not the belief of error that makes men free. (John 8:32). Though a perverted gospel may have in it all the elements of the true gospel, its power to save is lost in perversion. Bread is God's power to quell the hunger, but the admixture of a poisonous element - a spoonful of arsenic, for instance, in a loaf of bread - would destroy its power. Water is God's power to quench the thirst, but the admixture of salt will destroy the quenching power of water.

The gospel is God's power to save the soul, but its admixture with error - the doctrines and commandments of men, when heard and believed - destroys its saving power. Hence, Paul's alarm concerning the perverters at Galatia: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto

another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (Gal. 1:6-7)
Error preached, error heard, and error believed cannot result in the truth obeyed. No man can accidentally obey God. The truth preached, the truth believed, and the truth obeyed makes a Christian. Nothing else does. How careful then men should be in their handling of it!

- Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Commitment

Commitment is the act of committing, pledging or engaging oneself. It is regarded as a pledge or a promise. When we became Christians, we committed ourselves to take up our cross and follow Christ daily. This commitment was for a lifetime. In Christianity there is no such thing as a temporary commitment or a partial commitment.

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When the pilot of a giant airliner is speeding down the runway, there is a certain point where he cannot decide to remain on the ground. When he crosses that line, he is committed to the air. If he doesn't, the plane will crash disastrously. That pilot cannot change his mind when the plane is two-thirds of the way down the runway. He must make his decision from the beginning and stay with it to become airborne.

Many members of the church have obeyed the gospel, leaving the old man of sin; but they seem to sit at the beginning of the runway revving the engines but never moving. They have been saved but have never gotten engaged in their faith. Christianity is not a spectator sport, everyone must compete against an enemy who is out to get their souls (Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8). This is not a competition where winning or losing does not matter. It is a competition with eternal consequences.

Jesus told the church at Smyrna, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10, ESV). Our faith in Christ is a commitment with no end. Let’s not spend our time gunning the engine on the runway. Let’s get involved!

- Phil Sanders

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- The Bible has been given for our information and our transformation.
 - If you are too busy for God, you are busier than God wants you to be.
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THIS WEEK’S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*Behold, the Lamb of God!*” (text: John 1:19-20, 23, 29); Sunday evening: “*The Limitations of Man!*” (text: Ezek. 28:6-10).

OUR GOSPEL MEETING: July 27 – Aug. 1, 2014, Sunday through Friday, with Jeremy Paschall preaching. Sunday at our regularly scheduled times, and Monday through Friday at 7:00 p.m.