

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### ***Our Tattling Priorities***

As someone has wisely noted, life is governed by esteemed values. It's what men consider important that really counts in the ordering of personal priorities. Obviously, not all consider the same things important. What one views as trivial may be another's treasure, and vice versa. But this much is sure: no man ever treats his own treasure as a trivial thing.

On the contrary, one's devotion to his special interests will likely be conspicuously manifest, even when he might wish it otherwise. As Jesus has said, for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also (Matt. 6:21). Again, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt. 12:3b). The heart is where the treasure is and the mouth will soon reveal where the heart is. Our priorities tell on us because we like to tell about them. Sooner or later, the topic of conversation will be centered on our interests — maybe not with the enthusiasm of a golf or fishing nut, but like ants at a picnic, they'll keep on showing up. Our auditors hear what we are concerned about. What do they hear? Is it ever spiritual subjects? It may be enlightening to see a list of what our friends consider to be our priorities. Chances are, they wouldn't be far off because if our conversations didn't tell on us, our schedules would.

Like our speech, the employment of free time says much about our interests. That's why we always seem to find time for doing what we want and seldom find time for the don't-wants. Worse, we may even become unconscious to making such distinctions — even to the extent of habitually first doing what we want, then, if necessary, invent excuses for our failures.

Mostly, Christians with excuses are just Christians with wrong priorities. Think, for instance, of how Christians could redeem the time, not only by attending Bible studies and worship, but by visiting the sick and weak and teaching the lost. Yet, it is not unusual to hear of those who put in more time watching TV in one or two evenings than on all of these activities put together for a whole week! We ought to be ashamed! — not for watching TV, but for neglecting the other. Redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16) becomes an impossible task without right priorities.

Finally, the use made of financial resources says something about what we consider important. In fact, some say it says most and loudest. Anyway, like time and tongue, it does tell where the heart is and its use can be a proof of love (2 Cor. 8:24). Certainly, that which we profess to be the most important and urgent cause on earth deserves to be supported accordingly, financially and otherwise.

Remember, our priorities do tell on us. And they always tell the truth! The Lord hears what they say. The brethren hear. So does the world. The real question is, do we? If so, we may conclude that changes are needed. Not superficial changes that force external improvement, but the kind that get to the heart of the matter — the kind that come from facing up to our true condition and real needs and make us see the need for the Lord and seeking Him FIRST.

- Dan S. Shipley

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## **Traditional vs. Non-Traditional**

It seems that many of our brethren are determined to be ‘nontraditional’ in their beliefs and practices. It has almost reached the point where being ‘traditional’ is now the uncommon thing! The approach and mindset of some is apparently: ‘If this is the way it has always been done, it must be wrong – let’s change it.’

Concerning this ‘non-traditional’ way of thinking, let us offer these observations:

1. If any 'tradition' is being bound in place of, or in favor of, God's law, then such 'tradition' should be immediately exposed, denounced, and discarded. In rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said: "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition . . ." (Mark 7:8-13). Let us never be guilty of binding our human traditions as they did.

2. Remember that some 'traditions' are handed down to us by divine inspiration, and these are important and necessary to our salvation. Paul said: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). And he instructed this: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). Therefore it is essential that we honor every God-given 'tradition'.

3. Finally, think about this: Things that are done 'traditionally' (based upon lawful areas of judgment) have become 'traditional' for a reason. Basically, these specific ways and means have been chosen because they work well. Good and wise brethren have seen the expediency of these methods over time, and thus they have grown to be the 'norm'. Changing these things just to demonstrate that we are 'non-traditional' is neither prudent nor necessary.

Think!

- Greg Gwin

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## **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..." (Psalm 33:12)**

"When America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great," said Alexis de Tocqueville. In this statement we are reminded that the greatness of a

nation does not rest in its military power, social advancements, political acumen or its national wealth. A nation's greatness is found in the quotient of its righteousness. Righteousness is the determining factor in a country's future. Solomon, the wisest of men, said "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Theodore Roosevelt warned, "The things that will destroy America are prosperity-at-any-price, safety-first instead of duty-first, the love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life." Is it possible that this day is drawing near? To a great extent our objectives have become: success, status, and security. These are followed closely by self-indulgence, pleasure, and comfort. Our permissive society turns freedom into license, rights into riots, and pornography into profit.

Concerned about a higher standard of living, we often fail to live by a standard. Riches are elevated above righteousness; power over piety; and science above the Savior. We abandon the moral law then shake our heads in disbelief as crime increases. Look out, America! Remember the words of Will Durant: "No great nation has ever been overcome until it has destroyed itself."

If you really desire to be a patriot; if you are truly concerned about America; if you earnestly want God to bless her – Then live a life in harmony with the will of God.

- John Gipson

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## **THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE**

This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.  
It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure.

It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the Judgment, and is established forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents.

- author unknown

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