

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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DROP OUTS

“Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” -- Jesus, Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:14

Frequently members of the church, apparently for no reason at all, quit attending the services. This is usually preceded by a period of indifference and spasmodic attendance. Upon closer investigation it will be found that back of it all there is usually a hindering cause. It may be that the individual has become in some entanglement with sin, so that he feels so uncomfortable when studying God's Word in class, or listening to a gospel sermon, that he prefers to quit attending, rather than be constantly reminded of his ungodliness. His sin may be that of gambling, drinking, filthy speech, unethical business transactions, or some other equally sinful thing. There are many reasons why an individual should not act so. The following are some of them:

1) He owes God a life of service, and if every day that he lives upon the earth were spent in faithful service, he could never compensate for all that God has done for him.

2) Eternity is too long, hell is too hot, and heaven is too beautiful to spend life here in pursuit of things that will cause one to be lost.

3) Setting the proper example before others is the obligation of every professing Christian. It would be tragic to so live as to miss heaven, but it would be doubly tragic to lead others to the place of eternal suffering. Be an example to your family and friends.

4) No one has a lease on life. James said, 'Life is as a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away' (James 4:14). No doubt many will be lost who intended to do something about their condition, but death overtook them before they had prepared to meet God. Don't let it happen to you!

We need drop-ins, not drop-outs. Be faithful to the Lord when the weather is bad, when you feel bad, when it is tough to do so. Never surrender convictions to the evil of dropping out of Christ.

- unknown

You'll Get Dizzy

A certain man was troubled with dizzy spells, redness in his face and bulging eyes. Every day when he went to his office, he experienced these things. Weekends were not so bad, so he concluded his work was causing his physical discomfort.

He went from one doctor to another and none could tell him what the problem was. He consulted psychiatrists, psychologists and psychics. What was wrong? Why was he constantly suffering from dizzy spells, redness in his face and bulging eyes?

He tried everything, it seemed. Nothing helped. He finally resigned himself to the fact that whatever was causing all this was fatal. It bothered him so much he began to lose weight. He couldn't sleep at night. He feared he would never overcome this. He became a nervous wreck and his health began to deteriorate. He had lost hope that he would ever recover.

He decided to prepare for the worst. He made out his will, bought a cemetery plot, instructed the preacher what he wanted at his funeral, and even made arrangements with the local undertaker. He was fully convinced of his soon demise. He even decided to buy a new suit of clothes to be buried in.

When he went into the clothing store he was measured for everything. He picked out shoes, socks, coat, and pants. The sales person asked, "What size shirt will you be needing, sir?" "Size 15, please," he replied. The clerk said, "But, sir, I believe that is a bit small. Let me measure your neck size." After the

measurement, the sales person said, "I'm sorry sir, but you will need a 16 1/2, not a size 15." But the man insisted, "No, I have worn a size 15 for years."

The sales person tried several times to convince his customer that he needed a 16 1/2, but the man would have nothing of it. Finally, the exasperated sales person said, "Well, sir, if you insist, we'll get out a size 15, but I must warn you, you will have dizzy spells, get red in the face, and your eyes will bulge out."

Some people are so set in their ways, they will never admit the obvious. Some are so unwilling to change they appear to prefer to remain spiritually without comfort. Long ago, a very wise man wrote: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15).

- unknown

Using God's Mirror

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:22-25).

Most of us used a mirror this morning. In fact, most people use a mirror several times a day. The reasons are obvious. We want to know how we look and we want to look our best. A mirror is a tool we use to improve our appearance. Vanity ought not to place us before the mirror, but good common sense should. For you see, we all need to improve our appearance from time to time!

James says the person who hears God's word but will not obey it is like a man who looks into a mirror, sees his appearance, but fails to improve himself. He forgets what he saw - it makes no impression on him.

Since we all can make spiritual improvement in our lives, we must not be like this self-deluded man. Consider these comparisons of God's word, the gospel of Christ, to a mirror:

- We must know how we look to God (James 1:23). God's word gives us God's picture of us. We must see ourselves as God sees us. So, we should examine ourselves with the law of liberty (2 Corinthians 13:5). It will show us our sin and teach us what to do about them (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Acts 2:38-42).
- We should want to improve our spiritual appearance (James 1:24). Nothing is gained by using God's word to learn of our spiritual condition yet refusing to repent and obey God. One will be blessed by making the necessary improvements revealed by God's word (James 1:25).

- God's word is a reliable mirror (James 1:25). Some mirrors distort images instead of giving off a true reflection. Man-made doctrines are spiritual mirrors of this sort (Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:8). Unreliable, they distort truth. But, God's word is reliable and able to improve our spiritual condition before God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2:15). Let us use God's mirror to equip ourselves to be blessed and approved before Him.

- Joe R. Price

Something Learned From Mules

A mule can't pull while he's kicking, and when he is pulling he won't be kicking. It is the same in the church. When saints have their feet in the sand pulling hard to do the will of God, there is no time for kicking, nit-picking and complaining. To the contrary, when we are given to kicking, gossip, and idleness we never move the gospel chariot forward. Also, when one has two or more mules hitched together they have to pull at the same time to move the load. This is also true in the Lord's church. Pulling together accomplishes great things.

- W.R. Jones

This was a favorite from my Aunt Melba:

Foot peddlers came through often with packs on their backs. Sometimes they'd ask to spend the night. When they left the next morning, they would leave towels, handkerchiefs, and the last ones to come through had a few spices. A peddler told at Grandma Clarissa's house of a place he'd spent the night. The lady there was deaf. When he finished eating, he pushed back his plate and said, *"I've eaten sufficient."* The lady said, *"Say you been fishing?"* He said, *"I've eaten plenty."* She said, *"You caught twenty?"* He said, *"Poor old soul!"* She said, *"You broke your pole! Uh, uh, uh!"*

Just a reminder:

When you speak in the assembly or lead in prayer or song, please take advantage of the PA system or otherwise speak loudly enough for everyone to hear, even the hard-of-hearing ones while the HVAC fan is running. The saints cannot be edified if they cannot hear what is intended to build them up. *Thanks so much!*

- > "The real enemy of faith in God is the man who says God is alive and then acts as if He were dead!"
 - > "If you are a Christian, remember that men judge your Lord by you!"
 - > "It is good to be saved and know it, but it is better to be saved and show it!"
 - > "It is easy to have a balanced personality: just forget your troubles as easily as you forget your blessings!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Mixture of Good and Bad!*" (Matt. 13:24-30); Sunday evening: "Wonders of the Cross!" (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 6:14).