

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Reinstated?

We are hearing some rather strange expressions these days. A man was telling us recently that he had gone forward the Sunday before to be "reinstated." A woman said she was thinking of "going back into the church."

Are such expressions a problem in terminology? Or are we faced with a problem in concept? Are people thinking of the church as an organization similar to the P.T.A., in and out of which they can go at will, returning simply to be "reinstated"?

Unfaithfulness is not just a matter of dropping out of the church for a while. It is a matter of trampling "the Son of God underfoot"; of insulting "the Spirit of grace"; of giving "occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme"; of turning one's back on the Lord and His promises; of living in sin and flirting with eternal damnation. Imagine a person's being in such a position, and then coming forward to be "reinstated"!!! What that person needs to do is repent, fall on his knees before God, confess to Him and to his brethren, "I have sinned," and cry to God for mercy.

We are not questioning God's mercy. He is prepared to forgive His wayward child; to run to him, fall on his neck, and kiss him; to place the best robe on his back, a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet; to kill the fatted calf and be merry. But this abundant forgiveness is for that wayward child who returns with a full recognition of his sin and unworthiness, who confesses his sins, who asks, not to be "reinstated" as a son, but to be received back only as a hired servant. Forgiveness is for the penitent.

May the Lord help us to see sin in its true ugliness, to "abhor what is evil" and "cling to what is good," to remember the price paid by our Lord for our forgiveness, to be faithful, and to humbly acknowledge our sins when we do fall. And when we are forgiven, let us not speak glibly of "going back into the church," but let us speak of the grace of God that could save "a wretch like me."

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted"
(Matthew
5:4).

- Bill Hall

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER

Too often people divide their time into two parts: the part during which they serve God (attending church services, "talking religion," etc.) and the part during which they forget God and do

as they please! The truth is that Christianity is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year responsibility.

Each child of God would do well to take inventory of himself / herself to determine whether or not progress was made last year in service to God and others. Also, weaknesses can be identified and corrected in the coming year. Study the following questions candidly; enlarge on them; add your own.

Regarding YOUR relationship to God:

1. Did you pray to God daily last year? -- I Thess. 5:17
2. Did you thank God daily for your many blessings? -- Eph. 5:20
3. Did you study God's word daily for divine guidance? -- Acts 17:11
4. Did you meditate on the majesty, glory and greatness of God to give proper reverence for Him? -- Psalms
5. Did you worship God in spirit and in truth whenever possible? -- John 4:24
6. Did you worship God out of love and devotion or out of habit?
7. Did you obey God's word in all areas of your life? -- Prov. 3:5, 6

Regarding YOUR relationship to others:

1. Did you render the best service to others of which you are capable?
2. Did you render the amount of service of which you are capable? -- James 4:17

3. Did you have a harmonious and cooperative spirit at all times? -- Phil. 2
4. Were you unfair in your thoughts, actions and words? -- Eph. 4:31, 32
5. Was your conduct toward others such that they respect you now?
6. Did you treat others as you'd want them to treat you? -- Matt. 7:12
7. Did you improve your ability to serve others last year? -- Gal. 5:13, 14

Regarding YOUR relationship to yourself:

1. Did you grow in grace and knowledge? -- 2 Pet. 3:18; 1:3-10
2. Were you honest and open-minded regarding truth? -- Acts 17:11
3. Did you practice self-control last year? -- 2 Pet. 1:6
4. Did you violate your conscience? -- Rom. 14:23
5. Did you keep your goal of going to heaven uppermost in your mind? -- Col. 3 6.
6. Have you thought about ways whereby you can grow in the coming year?

-Tommy Hagedwood

The Basic Message of the Bible

The fundamental teaching of the Bible, God's revelation to man, is that Jesus is the Son of God. It is the basis of the New Testament Scriptures (John 20:30-31) and the theme of New Testament

preaching (See Acts 2:36; 17:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:2). The Scriptures contain many facts that give positive evidence to support its main theme.

Consider what they reveal about the life of Jesus. They show He had an immeasurable influence on people, that His teachings were the greatest words ever spoken (John 7:44-46) and that His life was sinless (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-22; John 8:46). Even the enemies of Jesus admitted His innocence (Acts 2). Compare His sinlessness to the rest of mankind and you will find Him to be the only one ever to live in sinless perfection (Romans 3:10, 23).

Consider also what the Scriptures say about the miraculous works Jesus performed. Those works, done by the power of God (John 3:2), gave evidence that He was from the Father and gave support to His claim to be the Son of God (John 5:36). No one, not even those who opposed Him, ever denied His ability to work miracles. They may have attributed the power to work them to an evil source, but they could not deny that He worked wonders before them.

The Scriptures also tell how Jesus fulfilled every one of the more than 300 Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. He used those prophecies to further establish and confirm His identity (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-40). It would have been impossible for an impostor to manipulate events and occurrences in such a way as to appear to be the genuine fulfillment of these prophecies. Many of the prophecies were minute in their details. Others were impossible for a human to control.

Among those Old Testament prophecies was the prophecy of the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead (Psalm 16:10). The resurrection is the greatest evidence the Scriptures give in support of Jesus as the Son of God. If one accepts His resurrection as true, there can be no question of His divinity. Romans 1:4 says that the resurrection demonstrated to all that He is the "Son of God with power." Though efforts have been made to explain it away, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is an undeniable fact. It shows without doubt that the basic message of the Bible is true -- Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

- Gene Taylor

No Room for Depression

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:4

Are you unhappy today? Do you find yourself depressed of late? Have you considered what the cause of your depression might be? Usually unhappiness stems from some circumstance of life in which you find yourself. You may be depressed by some physical ailment. Perhaps you are frustrated because you cannot have something you feel you need or want. It could be that you are disturbed by disadvantages or difficulties that appear to be insurmountable. Maybe you are disappointed with yourself and your station in life, or with someone else and what they may have done or failed to do.

Whatever the reason for your unhappiness, there is no reason for you to remain in that state. Have you stopped to count your blessings lately? When was the last time you spent a few minutes reflecting on the things for which you should be thankful? Instead of continuing to take these things for granted, why not ponder their worth and consider the treasure of happiness that they hold. Let your mind dwell on your blessing if you want a brighter outlook.

Do you have eyes with which to behold the wonders and beauty of God's creation? Remember that many are blind. Do you not live in a warm, comfortable house and have plenty to eat? Imagine the plight of those who are homeless and starving. Are you able to hear, speak, and write? Consider a life without expression, understanding, and education. Do you have friends, relatives, loved ones? Contemplate how lonely it would be if you were the only person alive. Have you found salvation in Christ Jesus? Do not forget the countless billions who are lost and dying in a sin-sick world.

Depression and unhappiness find no room in the heart of the child of God who counts his blessings, thanks his Father, and places his trust in Him. .

"Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." - Proverbs 16:20

- Bob Dickey

- > "One of the hardest jobs facing children today is learning good manners without seeing any."
 - > "He does not really believe who does not live according to his belief."
 - > "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
 - > "Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character."
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Four National Problems!"* (Text: Jer. 6:9-15); Sunday evening: *"Thankful for Our National Freedom!"* (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

GOSPEL MEETING 2016: Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 24-29, with Josh Thornhill, of Wildersville, preaching.