

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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LOVE THYSELF

The first command of all is to love God. But the second command is to love thy neighbor as THYSELF. The world desperately needs people who love themselves. A person can easily become his own worst enemy.

Godliness with contentment is great gain (I Tim. 6:6). In spite of this inspired statement, we seek to conquer and out-do everyone else. Consequently, our lives have become complicated and complex. We are striving after the wind; we are spinning our wheels. When life shall have closed for us, we probably will have accomplished (and accumulated) little, and will leave that little behind to be forgotten. In so living we have opposed the very basic principles of Jesus. The end is disastrous. We will not be able to bear it - and yet we must.

Simplicity is the essence of a good life. Truth is the essence of simplicity. The pressure of public opinion and our desire to be publicly approved, kill truth in our lives. One governed by public opinion has a conscience owned by others. God does not hold the public responsible for your conscience, but He does hold you responsible.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit...they that mourn...the meek...they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...the merciful...the pure in heart...the peacemakers...they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake..." These are not popular principles. But the man who loves himself will want to understand them, imbibe their influence, and enjoy their blessings.

One needs to adjust his life to his own ideals (properly learned) rather than to public opinion. This is the royal road to contentment and happiness. Pretense is a confession of inferiority. Simplicity is a display of humility.

Simplicity is also the fortress against the non-essentials of life that enslave us.

Vainglory is our enemy. It can cause a lukewarm church with good physical properties to sit back and say, "We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." It can cause elders to overlook the individual souls of the flock. It can cause preachers to tickle the ears of the members. It will cause all those who are governed by it to be lost. We need to love ourselves.

Simplicity as used in this article is not to be associated with weakness. Neither is it to be associated with the "hear no evil, see no evil, and do no evil" concept. It is a strong force that helps us to remove lying, deceit, treachery, and selfish and low ambition from our lives. It looks truth straight in the eye, and will muster the courage to obey even if the whole world around us does lie in wickedness. (We need the faith of Noah, and of Moses.)

Love thyself.' Would such a person allow his brain to be continually affected by the "bottle" and "pot" or by anything else of like nature? Would he not learn what is important, and what is not important? Would he not try always to seek the good and refuse the evil? Would he not try to look upon the trivial cares, sorrows, worries, and failures of life as interruptions rather than life itself? Would he not want Christ to be the impelling force in his life (Gal. 2:20), even to the point that he could take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing in himself that he would have in heaven a better and an enduring substance? See Heb. 10:31-39.

Christians must learn to sift through the rubbish of life to get the real things of value, just like miners discard tons of dirt to get the precious metal. And yet, God has told us what is important. We must learn to LIVE DOWN what the world is trying so hard to LIVE UP to. What all of us are longing for is not found in the world. It is in the church, the kingdom of Christ. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15). People are looking for peace in the wrong way, and in the wrong place.

Jesus said the person who would humble himself as a little child would be the greatest in the kingdom (Matt. 18:4). "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11).

The greatest story that has ever been told is of the life that served humanity (even those who nailed him to the cross). Among the last words to be uttered by him before his death were: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What a contrast! He knew what life was all about, but they did not. History continues to record that same contrast. Jesus loved the Father, himself, and his neighbor.

- Raymond E. Harville (1981)

Grow!

The difference between the little bush that a human foot can smash and the mighty tree that withstands the storm is growth. The difference between the helpless babe in arms and the stalwart lumberjack is growth. The difference between the babe in Christ and the elder in the church or the faithful gospel preacher is growth. Peter exhorted, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). He gave us the "recipe" for getting the job done in these words: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby. . ." (1 Pet. 2:2). Paul said, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:14). Proper desire for the word coupled with proper exercise of your senses guarantees spiritual growth. Are you growing?

- Ray Ferris, Truth Magazine, 08/03/1972

ARE WE A NATION OF SLOBS?

How long has it been since you heard a sermon on modest dress (or immodest dress)? Someone explained the scarcity of preaching on this subject by noting that preachers who formerly gave lectures on women's clothing have been compelled to turn to other subjects. There just isn't enough material anymore! During "bare" season millions take off their clothes and "get naked" or at least get semi-naked as the days get longer and the weather gets warmer. Many in society are so casual about a personal dress code that at times it seems as if clothing itself has become optional. Mark Twain once observed, "Clothes make the man. Naked

people have little or no influence in society.” But the sad truth about the matter is that nakedness is gaining increasing influence in America as more and more people put on less and less.

A Newsweek article (2/20/95) asked the question, “Have we become a nation of slob?” Jerry Adler, author of the article, answered his own question by saying, “Let’s just say that the concept of proper attire is hanging by a thread.” Adler quotes Judith Martin, the “Miss Manners” columnist - “People are pretending that dress has no symbolic significance, but it does. Adler notes the dramatic change in the way Americans now dress for church- “As for worship, Americans who long ago gave up wearing ties to services are starting to treat socks as optional.” To buttress his point, he then quotes fashion historian Anne Hollander (author of Sex and Suits), “We have lost the ideal of adult self-respect, and we’re dressing like rebellious children. When you get to church...you now have the idea that you do not need to express respect in your costume - that if you do, you somehow feel like one of the oppressed.”

Mac Lyon notes, “God does not have a dress code for worship! Of course He does not. He assumes the humble, worshipping heart will dictate proper attire and behavior. A true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates dignity and propriety in dress and demeanor. God does not command us to kneel or stand or bow our heads in prayer either, but doing so manifests a humbleness of heart that honors and respects the sovereign God whom we praise and petition. So does proper dress” (Gospel Advocate.) 1 Timothy 2:9 confronts a generation of sloppy dressers with these words, “that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation.” Who can read that and believe God wants a church full of slob?

- Dan Gulley

THINGS TO FORGET:

1. The injury any person has done to you.
2. The wrong that hinders your happiness and causes you to think evil of others.
3. The secrets entrusted to your confidence.

4. The kindness you have done to others.
5. The unkind and untrue things others have said about you.
6. The slanderous remarks you have heard about others.
7. The things that would keep you from being your best under any condition.
8. The mistakes you have made in the past, except to make correction if possible and as they may warn you in the future.

- Unknown

Poison!

A worldly-wise lady said, "Oh! Oh! All the religions have so much good in them! We shouldn't criticize or condemn any of them." To this a wise man replied: "So has rat poison a lot of good in it; it is 98% cornmeal, yet the 2% poison in it is enough to kill! Error mixed with truth is dangerous and can be fatal."

- > "Begin where you are, but don't stay there...climb!"
 - > "If you don't climb the mountain, you can't see the view!"
 - > "If you want to sing, you will find a song; if you want to rejoice, you will find joy in Christ!"
 - > "The best things in life are not things!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Successful Marriage!"* (Text: Prov. 18:22); Sunday evening: *"Don't Be Discouraged by Unjust Criticisms!"* (1 Pet. 4:8-9).