

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Do the Simple Things!

I took the car to have the tires rotated and balanced and the alignment checked and adjusted. There was the customary wait, but when I noticed that my car was being driven onto the alignment rack, I stepped outside to watch and chat as I usually do. I talked with the alignment technician.

His work was efficient and the conversation enjoyable. As he was finishing I asked, "What causes most of the problems that you have to correct?" His answer was interesting: "Failing to do the simple things (checking air pressure, regular rotation and alignment, etc.) consistently." I saw immediate applications to faithfully serving God.

Too many times we are like Naaman or the Israelites of Ezra's day. From a desire to do some great thing (2 Kings 5:13), we despise the little things we can do (Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3; Zech. 4:10). While faithfully serving God may call upon us to do great things from time to time, more frequently it is the day-to-day, routine acts of devotion and service which keep us faithful. In short, it is doing the simple things, consistently. Simple things like:

- Studying God's word each day. There is special emphasis on this in the Scriptures (see Deut. 6:6-9; Ps. 1:1-2; Acts 17:11; etc.). This is preventive in its nature (Ps. 119:11).
- Praying to God each day. This is also emphasized in Scripture (Ps. 55:17; Dan. 6:10; Luke 18:1; Acts 3:1; 10:2-3, 30; 1 Thess. 5:17). We cannot cling to sin and pray acceptably at the same time (1 Tim. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:10-12). Prayer will help to stop sin, or sin will stop prayer!
- Speaking to others about God each day. We are God's instruments for teaching his word (Eph. 4:15; 2 Cor. 4:7). We must use every opportunity we have, as Dorcas did "while she was with them" (Acts 9:39).
- Doing what is right each day. What we do shines our lights as much as what we refrain from doing (Matt. 5:13-16). As Jesus did, we must go about "doing good" (Acts 10:38). "Good" works are revealed to us in God's word (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

How can we faithfully serve God? By doing the simple things, consistently!

- Richard Boone

# Good Success At Home

In the very first part of the book of Joshua the Lord gave this capable leader of Israel counsel on how he could have "good success" in his work in bringing the Israelites into their promised land. The Lord promised that He would not fail or forsake him, but He would see to it that Joshua would divide the land unto the people. That was the divine side of the plan. Joshua was to be strong and of good courage; he was to obey the law of God, turning not to the right hand or to the left; and he was to meditate on the law constantly. Joshua did his part, and God kept His promise. There was "good success" (Josh. 21:45; 23:14).

That kind of reverence for God and respect for His law today will make it possible for a happy young couple to have "good success" in the task of home making. Happiness is a by-product of humble obedience to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). Open violation of this law brings failure in all precious spiritual endeavors.

Finding a good wife who is faithful and worthy, and having a family of well-trained children, is the greatest find a man can make. This is "good success" (Prov. 18:22; 31:10-31; Psa. 127:3-5). If he has a wonderful home so do his wife and children. If his home is a failure for him, it is a sad experience for his family also. The success or failure of the home affects every member of the family and many more.

Does anyone know of anything worse in this life than an ungodly home and the divorce which marks the final crash of the failure? Each day of life after that brings some of the bitter taste of the failure to keep God's laws that relate to family life. The aftermath of this spectacle comes to the guilty parties and to the innocent. None escapes the horror. Relatives, the church, and the community suffer also in many such cases. Even the welfare of the nation is harmed many ways by the instability of so many families.

## A Divorce to Think About

My telephone rang one day a few decades ago. A woman to whom I sometimes preached called to tell me that her husband had asked for a divorce. There were five young children each only a little younger than the brother or sister just older. They had been living on a very limited budget. It was heart rending just to hear of that husband and father's request.

I went to the man to try to learn his viewpoint. He did talk. He told about a day when at lunch time he happened to eat at the same table with one of the women who worked at the plant where he worked. They talked and laughed and found it pleasant together. They soon sat down together again, and then it became a habit. One day she asked if he were

happily married. He thought about that question and "realized" that he was not. I got in on the story when he was ready to desert his family and live with that woman who ate lunch at his table.

You may use your imagination to tell the story of the future. Was he very happy with the woman that was willing to take him away from his wife and children? Would she be a worthy wife like the woman of Proverbs 31?

What would the future be for the wife who was left with the children? We may suppose that she, too, had at first been a pleasant companion to the one who became her husband and the father of her children. But now things have changed! He would find bills to pay, noise at his house when he came home, and a tired wife to talk with. He decided that he was not happily married. I wonder if he would have recognized happiness if he met it in the road?

That family of nominal church members were not faithful Christians. I could not list her faults and his, but they were, at least, guilty of not being all they should have been. Repenting and removing the faults would have been the way for them to find a happier situation. Violating the marriage law and deserting the wife he had married and deserting his children is not the way to go looking for happiness or heaven. A man who will not provide for the physical and spiritual needs of his own family has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8). He and his own wife could have made a much better home.

Think of what may have happened to the children. They would grow up without a father. Each and every child needs a father to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children cannot provide for themselves things that cost money. A mother of five young children is in no position to be a bread winner. Those five children, if they still live, are now adults. They were not in those early days taught to be Christians. Do you suppose they are now walking in the steps of Jesus? They did not ask to be born, but their very existence presented a crying need for tender love and care. Each had a soul worth more than the world.

Think of the woman who talked and laughed at the lunch table. Do you think her life has been worth living? She is now old enough for social security if she still lives. Death will soon come to her if it has not already. What then?

Who wins when there are such divorces? Circumstances vary from one divorce to another, but each brings something other than the best. Each is a giant step down toward disappointment for some. A divorce is a legal document obtained by paying court costs,

and a copy may be kept as a badge of failure in life's most important undertaking. Some have trophies for outstanding athletic accomplishment, plaques for special honor for faithful work over a period of years, or for some very heroic deed. Divorce papers are not framed and placed with such trophies.

Are you working at the challenge of being a good marriage companion and a good parent? If not, why not? Will the divorce rate ever come down in a wonderful way in America? The influence of Christ is in that direction, so a great religious awakening would bless our country that is now so much under the influence of immoral atheists. "Awake thou that sleepest" (Eph. 5:14-17; Rom. 13:10-14). Think of how rewarding "good success" in the family would be to all and how serious failure and divorce would be. See that you walk circumspectly.

- Irven Lee, Guardian of Truth, July 16, 1987

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- > "Plan ahead -- It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark!"
  - > "Be an organ donor. Give your heart to Jesus!"
  - > "It is easier to build strong children than to repair adults!"
  - > "The best vitamin for the Christian is B1!"
  - > "Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives!"
  - > "Friends don't let friends die without Jesus!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Leading Our Children to Believe in God!"* (Text: Heb. 11:6); Sunday evening: *"For Those Who Desire Life!"* (1 Pet. 3:8-12).