

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

*oldhickorycofc.com*

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**December 25, 2016**

**Volume 36, # 52**

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### **"I'm At Peace with My God"**

It is not uncommon -- while trying to rebuke or admonish someone concerning their spiritual condition -- to have them reply with this statement: "I'm at peace with my God." Just recently we got this reply from a fella who left the Lord's church and joined a denomination. Not long ago a Christian, after admitting his homosexual lifestyle, used the same defense. Apparently these folks think that this feeling of "peace" is the absolute standard by which their conduct should be judged. They could not be more wrong!

In ancient Judah, the prophet Jeremiah bemoaned the unfaithfulness of God's people. One of the great problems was that they were oblivious to their lost condition. This was largely due to the fact that "from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealt falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 6:13,14) Do you see it? They believed they were at peace with God. Their religious leaders even told them that there was peace with God. But in reality, there was no peace.

People today, like those in Jeremiah's day, are deceived into thinking that they are at peace with God even as they continue in their rebellion against Him. False teachers contribute to the problem with "good words and fair speeches that deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:18)

The only true basis for peace with God is in humble obedience to His will. The apostle Paul urged: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:9) Faith and obedience produce true peace. Anything other than that is simply the deception of subjective feelings. Think!

- Greg Gwin

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# Fundamentals

When signing up for classes my first year in high school, there were some courses that I was not allowed to attempt. The indicator on the course description for required courses that must be mastered in advance was always consistent: “prerequisites required.” I was not allowed to take College Algebra until I mastered Algebra 1 and Algebra 2. These were the fundamentals necessary to succeed in mastering College Algebra. I recall my college Calculus instructor lecturing his class regarding the improbability of successful course completion because the first exam indicated there were students in the class that were “drowning” because they had not mastered the Algebra fundamentals.

Some things in life are impossible to accomplish until we master the fundamentals. When you try to make the basketball team you had better be able to dribble and accurately throw a basketball, run up and down the court without exhaustion, and score a free-throw shot consistently. When you sign on to play football, you better forget about playing football until you bulk up in the weight room and learn how to block and tackle. Yes, some things in life are impossible to accomplish until we master the fundamentals.

Mastering fundamentals is also required to be a successful disciple of Christ. Jesus’ closest disciples, who were appointed to be His special apostles, after sitting at the feet of the Master for years were told shortly before the Lord’s death, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.” (John 16:12). They still retained misconceptions about His kingdom that would have to be corrected (cf. Acts 1:6). Mastering the fundamentals of discipleship was mandatory for those who would be “fishers of men.”

Much of the time, the fundamentals are not the most exciting and enjoyable part of an endeavor. Who wants to spent hours pumping iron in the weight room when you signed up to play football? Let’s get on the field!

Sometimes we may not properly value fundamentals, but they are essential if we are to master what we are trying to learn and do. To converts, Peter expressed the need to master fundamentals in this way: “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,” (1 Peter 2:2). Failure to master the fundamental may call forth this rebuke: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Have you mastered the fundamentals of the gospel of Christ? Have you learned the “elementary principles of the oracles of God?” If not, the “solid food” will be too much for you to successfully bear. Press on to maturity by mastering the fundamentals! Practice in training in “the oracle of God” for the ability “to discern good and evil.” Brother, the fundamentals are indispensable!

- Gary Smalley

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## **ABOUT ELDERS**

I have a great love for elders and, for the most part, I think they are the hardest working and least appreciated of any group I know. They are men who have been screened under the exacting standards of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and have proven themselves over a period of years to those who know them best - brothers and sisters in Christ.

Elders are not perfect. They have faults and weaknesses just like the rest of us, but I am convinced that they have fewer of them than most of us. The ones I know are humble, dedicated men, earnestly striving to do the will of God and praying constantly for wisdom from above. They talk and pray and agonize. Countless hours are spent in conference and consultations, in planning and pleading. And most of it is done without so much as a “thank you.”

They are the first to be criticized and the last to be praised. When things are going well, the elders typically praise others for making it so. But in times of trouble, they suffer the slings and arrows of the critics in silence. They are called upon daily to make decisions which are difficult and, many times, unpopular to some of the congregation. Actions which often seem mystifying could be readily explained if they were willing to break a confidence and tell it like it is. But rather than see any member suffer, elders frequently take abuse without offering any defense. If any men in the world are deserving of our support and love and appreciation and cooperation, the elders should have it.

- John Gipson

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## **Why Know the Bible?**

After 55 years of studying and preaching the word of God, the author gives the following reasons why we should all seek to know the Bible. Why must you know your Bible?

*Know Your Bible in order to have everlasting life.* In praying to the Father, Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The Bible is the only source of perfect, saving knowledge of God and Christ.

*Know Your Bible to know the greatest book ever written.* The Bible is the best book because God is its author. There were forty penmen, but only one author. All of the writers were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). No other book can compare with the Bible. It is truly God's book!

*Know Your Bible so that you will know who you are.* Only from the Bible can you know your origin, mission, and destiny – where you came from, why you are here, and where you are going. You are not a product of evolution, but of divine creation. God made man in His image, and man became a morally responsible, living soul (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7). Our mission is to glorify God and become as Godlike as possible in preparation for the judgment and our personal accountability to God (Romans 14:11,12).

*Know Your Bible to be saved from sin.* The Bible is the only book that has as its main message the salvation of sinners. The Bible alone answers the world's greatest question, "What must I do to be saved?" "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). He saves sinners by His gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Therefore, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16).

*Know Your Bible in order to identify the church of the Lord and know its importance.* When one obeys the gospel by being baptized into Christ, he is born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5), into the family of God. This is the spiritual body of Christ, the church of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Christ has only one body (Ephesians 4:4); church (Acts 2:47). In the New Testament, members of the Lord's church were Christians only (Acts 11:26), and they were the only Christians.

*Know Your Bible to find the Christian way of life, worship and service.* The inspired Scriptures are the only doctrine of the New Testament church. The Scriptures alone furnish us completely unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The inspired word teaches us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

*Know Your Bible in order to reach the highest goal, "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).* Paul counted all things "but loss for the excellency of

the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8). We should strive to be like Paul, who near the time of his departure from this life could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

- Frank Dunn

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- "Facing duty is always easier and more profitable than running away!"
  - "The faith you claim in your heart should be visible to others in your life!"
  - "It is when we forget ourselves that we do things that are remembered!"
  - "God will only stand with us as we stand with Him and for Him only in the truth!"
  - "Share your joy - make someone else happy!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Don't Forget to Pray!"* (Text: Luke 18:1-8);  
Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly Singing!*