

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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FAMILY!

Micah 7:6 – “For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household.”

God's prophet, Micah, portrayed the complete moral deterioration of God's people when he preached against the sins and dangers in Jerusalem, seven hundred years plus before the coming of Christ. The condemnation for the sins contained in Micah 7:6 indicate how utterly contrary to the law of God these people had allowed themselves to become. God's law had expressly stated, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.” (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; cf. Eph. 6:1-3). In this commandment, God laid down a principle for life that would determine how every relationship in life will turn out. God has established an order that is to be strictly followed. When it is not, it is rebellion against constituted authority and natural relations. That is the situation condemned in Micah 7:6.

Sons were treating fathers contemptuously. It was disgraceful treatment. Paul warned Timothy that in the last days, people would be, among other shameful things, lovers of themselves, disobedient to parents and without natural affection (without family love). If there is no natural affection, the family will disintegrate. In the difficult times people will be so in love with themselves that even the closest family ties will mean nothing to them. Lacking even the basic elements of honor and respect, sons and daughters will reveal it even by the set of their eyes (Prov. 30:17 – “The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.”). This sin is hated by God, which is reflected by His setting of creation to inflict just punishment for it: birds of carrion would scavenge from their bodies. Cursing one's parents resulted in the same punishment as the blaspheming of God (Lev. 20:9; 24:11-16). Charles Bridges wrote in 1865:

“Every village bears sad testimony to this crying sin, that brings down many a parent's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and spreads anarchy

throughout the whole land. No plea of extenuation can be allowed to justify the sin. The authority of parents, even in the lowest degradation, must be respected, even when we dare not – must not, follow their example. ... No commandment in the breach of it is visited with more tremendous threatenings.”¹

Daughters were rising up against their mothers. This is a rebellion that results in hostile actions against her, forcefully defying the woman who brought her into the world and raised her. In her selfishness, she disregards her duty to give proper honor where it is due, resulting in family turmoil. She is without natural affection. It is sin to the same degree and worthy of the same punishments. In later years, Israel was condemned for treating father and mother lightly (Ezek. 22:7).

Daughters-in-law were against their mothers-in-law. This condition would not surprise anyone today, it being common in a society that has departed from God (Rom. 1:18-32). However, take note of this condemnation as expressed by divine authority. Married children were not allowed to claim exemption from their obligation before God.

Enemies were in one's own household. The social order had become so unraveled that beloved family members, one's nearest relations, had become enemies. They had lost the fear of God, so no comfort, no satisfaction could be had among ones who should have been dearest. When Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples, He anticipated the same family treachery in resistance to the gospel (Matt. 10:1, 35-36; Mark 13:12; Luke 12:53).

The times are certainly bad when children are abusive to parents, using harsh and bad language toward or about them, threatening them, needlessly exposing them in disrespect, resisting their authority, displaying contempt for their admonitions, planning to neglect them or harm them, shamelessly denying their obligations with various other abominations. Those thus guilty of trampling underfoot domestic life in the deepest ties of blood-relationship are never likely to come to anything good.

By loosening the bonds of closest relations, mutual confidence, reverence and love, dissolving every family tie reaches the height of treachery. In such an ungodly isolation, friends will not adequately fill such a void. This deeply rooted sinfulness spells trouble down the road. Without fear of God, these children's children will only wax worse as love grows cold. They will not be faithful to God if their parents are not. Your actions toward your own family will speak louder than any words you may speak to them! It should come as no surprise when such children of the disrespectful depart from the faith or never even become Christians. Sometimes children come to realize with deep regret that if they had followed the counsel of God and the counsel of their parents they could have avoided much heartache both for themselves and their family.

Godly children respect their parents in every way, calling to mind the sacrifices they have made to bring them into the world and to nurture them to maturity: the many hours worked to provide food, shelter and clothing, the long nights spent beside the sickbed, the abundant dispensing of love and care. Children have much to be thankful for in their parents. Children that treat their parents with honor and respect will be blessed by the Lord (Eph. 6:3)!

- Gary Smalley

¹ Charles Bridges, *An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1865), 510, 514.

A Circular Rectangle

A circular rectangle. Now, that has a nice scholarly ring to it. It is even simple enough to say. Try to draw one! Circle describes something absolutely different from the term rectangle. The result of joining the words together is an impossible contradiction of terms. It is gibberish. But so much for geometry and verbal gymnastics.

A young brother — just home from the University — in an air of superior scholarship announces, I believe the Genesis account, but I also believe the theory of evolution. Hmmm. The Bible teaches God formed man from dust (Gen. 2:7) and later fashioned the woman from a rib taken from Adam's side (Gen. 2:21-22). The theory of evolution claims man has evolved from some ape-like animal over a period of millions of years. This young brother believes BOTH the Bible and the evolution of the species? I am confused; is that a circle or a rectangle?

Another brother freely quotes, "We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where it is silent." I thought I understood him until he explained a current practice with: "Oh, we do many things for which we have no scripture." Another brother smiles and confidently nods his head. "We do not need authority for everything we do." I am having trouble drawing this one. Should I use a compass or a straight-edge? But brethren are patient with me and continue to explain. You see, it does not really matter how you get the job done, just as long as you do it. That is what counts. And that is the same fellow who said to me earlier, "We do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible Things by Bible names." Is that an optical illusion or does that rectangle actually have curved sides?

Obviously it is not as difficult to find and repeat a good principle as it is to apply it consistently in both speech and life. Also, it does not take a genius to say an impossible thing nor a fool to be inconsistent. Average folk like us easily do both.

- Joe Fitch, *Plain Talk*, April, 1971

Pointed Excerpts:

A. T. Pierson on the importance of context: *“As in any organism, no member or part, however minute, can be fully understood aside from its relation to the whole; so, in Scripture, every paragraph and sentence is part of its totality, and must be studied in relation to all the rest. The text will be illumined by the context, or scripture immediately preceding and following. Every occurrence and utterance should be studied in its surroundings. How, why, when a word was spoken or an act done, helps to explain it, is its local coloring. Hidden relationships must be traced like underground roots and subterranean channels.”*

Steven J. Cole comments on “Factionous” brethren: *“Factionous” comes from a Greek word meaning self-chosen, thus, an opinionated person. He tries to defend his opinions from Scripture, but really he is motivated by pride. He tries to gain a following by forcing people to choose between his views and those of the church leaders, thus creating parties or factions in the church. But in Galatians 5:20, Paul lists “factions” as a deed of the flesh, along with “idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, and dissensions.” In Titus 3:11, Paul says, “such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.”*

By self-condemned, Paul may mean that when such false teachers attack godly church leaders, they expose themselves for what they really are. Often, they take their followers and leave the church, again showing their true colors (1 John 2:19). Arguing with them about their doctrine is pointless, because the real issue isn’t doctrine. The real issue is sin, especially pride. Often those who promote false teaching are using it to cover up other major sins.

➤ “We are not dogs — we do not have to bark back at every snarl!”

➤ “A mentor is someone whose hindsight can become your foresight!”

➤ “Strange that some of us are satisfied with so little in ourselves but demand so much from others!”

- "Do not let Satan deceive you into thinking that when you plan carefully to sin secretly, no one will be harmed!"
 - "Pray as though everything depended on God; work as though everything depended on you!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Sacrifices!*" (Heb. 13:15); Sunday evening: "*The Tragic Irony!*" (John 11:45-57).