

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### "Dear Mom, I Think Of You-"

A Christian "honors" his parents. This is so obviously "right" that the Apostle Paul appeals to children on an axiomatic basis (Eph. 6:1). Would any person in his right mind think to deny the truthfulness of it?

Yet, in every age, men have sinned by ignoring their obligation to their parents. Gentile pagans, not under a codified law as were the Jews, could know "by nature" that "this is right" and were adjudged sinners when they were "disobedient to parents" (Rom. 1:30; 2:14-ff). Paul wrote to Timothy, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8).

The "first commandment with promise" was "honor thy father and mother;" (Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:2) and while this promise was physical in nature, there can be no doubt that many will miss heaven because their narrow, selfish hearts shut out feeble and needy parents. It is a shame compounded by the willingness to lose this precious relationship in the "General welfare" category, and "let the government do it -- after all, we pay taxes".

"Honor" is translated from a word meaning "to make heavy" hence, a valuing, a price paid or received. It signifies "to hold dear" "an object of value." There are times when the word seems to point directly to financial support (1 Tim.5:17) -- and "honorarium" we might say -- and always, the "honoring" of parents includes the exercise of concern, and a willingness to supply their needs. We shelter and protect those we "hold dear." Paul indicates that an infidel does this much for "his own," so we cannot say that all who care for their parents are Christians. But how "in the Name of Jesus Christ" (and I write this reverently) can we call a man or woman a Christian, who will not honor his parents?

It hurts me to the core to know of church members who live in good homes, drive fine cars, pulling expensive boats, whose parents are in need of attention they never get. Sometimes I visit these senior citizens. If I ask about the son or daughter a wrinkled, palsied head drops and I am told, "No, John -- or Mary -- haven't been here for some

time". And then, ever the parent in defense of the child, "But they are very busy you know. John has such a responsible position -- and he really doesn't have much time -- -!!"

I feel like telling John that his beautiful home needs remodeling. Not air-conditioning, or a new den-room; but an additional bedroom and bath for his aged mother. A place she can call her own -- apart, and yet a part of the family she suffered to start.

True, some aged people need care we may be unable to give in our house; but we can accept the responsibility. We can write something more than the "bills we have to pay" to explain why we will not send them assistance. If "Corban" for God was hypocritical, (Mark 7:6-13) what of "Corban" for the country club, unneeded clothes, etc.?

Aged people are often "difficult"; not unlike your tantrums as a child. Will "our Father" honor your excuses?

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, April, 1966

*Editor's Note:* "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';" (Mark 7:10)

The Old Testament passages that are referenced here clearly indicate that the "honor" that is required by the Lord goes much further than financial care given to them in old age (cf. Exod. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20). Those brethren who are sticklers for "book, chapter and verse" authorizations (as they should be) will find it impossible to find the "exception" passage in God's Book! The Pharisees and scribes in Jesus' day could not find a passage of Scripture, so they made up their own rule. Jesus condemned them for "neglecting the commandment of God," being "experts at setting aside the commandment of God ... thus invalidating the word of God" (Mark 7:8-9, 13). Honor your father and mother (cf. Micah 7:6 – in-laws included) or face the righteous Judge, the Judge of all!

- GFS

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## Neglected Issues

A preacher friend once told me of his intention to get his brethren all straightened out on the "issues" —just as soon as he could find all of them sober at the same time! What we call "doctrinal" issues still need dealing with, but so do moral issues! It is disturbing to hear of "sound" churches with members involved in such things as fornication, homosexuality, social drinking, shady and dishonest business dealings, lying, profanity, neglected debts, and other like sins that ought not to be named among God's people (Eph. 5:3). Besides these should be mentioned the more "dignified" and "sophisticated"

sins of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice (Eph. 4:31); strife, enmities, jealousies, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, and such like (Gal. 5:20, 21). Some have said they had just as soon fellowship doctrinal error as immorality. But, why condone either? Why not take a stand for all that is right and against all that is wrong? Can God's people afford to do less?

What Paul set forth in declaring the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) still needs setting forth because, according to divine wisdom, it is exactly what men need to hear and apply. We do need to learn about the nature and work of the church — but not to the neglect of developing the Christian's character and integrity. If the cause of Truth is to be defended and advanced, it must be by such people as will apply it both objectively and subjectively to all circumstances and situations. But the first application of any truth must be to self. Otherwise, we repeat the Jew's mistake of practicing what we condemn (Rom. 2: 1-3).

For instance, can we expect to set forth God's counsel concerning the work of the church while ignoring His counsel that relates to longsuffering, kindness, and love? Can it be right to teach the plan of salvation with a hateful and bitter disposition -- and without genuine love for lost souls? Is it consistent for me to teach a sinner that he needs to become a Christian while I am not willing to live like one? That he needs to have his sins forgiven while I practice sin — or fellowship others who do so? We who reprove Christians that forsake assembling with the saints, do we speak evil one of another? Which is not the counsel of God? Can we in good conscience teach love for enemies while not loving our own brethren; while not forgiving them and refusing to have wrongs made right? Something is drastically wrong when we who should be bearing one another's burdens wind up being one another's burden!

Nowhere is the kingdom character better pictured than in the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7). Someone has called this sermon the essence of Christianity and the beatitudes the essence of this great sermon. Study them! Poor in spirit; sin mourners; meek; hungering and thirsting after righteousness; merciful and pure in heart — these are fundamental to the Christian personality. We must not forget or neglect them! Rather, we must cultivate these and kindred qualities and allow them to flavor every facet of life!

- Dan S. Shipley, via *Plain Talk*, March, 1982

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## I Have Sinned

"And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man ...And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah (2 Sam. 12:7, 13). When Nathan went to David to reprove him for his sin with Bathsheba, David was honest enough with himself to admit his sin. He did

not try to rationalize or conceal or place the blame elsewhere — he simply accepted the fact that he had sinned, took responsibility for his actions, and confessed to Nathan and God, "I have sinned."

Many Christians today find it hard, if not impossible, to face the fact that they have sinned. This usually results in unnecessary anxiety and guilt that often hinders their full potential as Christians. David was not able to deal with his sin until he had faced it. We must also have this ability to be honest with ourselves if we are to deal with our sin. We must accept the fact that we sin, take responsibility for our actions, and confess our sins to God and our brethren.

The publican, in Luke 18:13, exclaimed, "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." Paul wrote that "There is none righteous, no, not one" and "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:10, 23). If we accept the fact that we are human, then we must also accept the fact that we are not perfect. "In admitting to yourself that you are or have been guilty of lust, or greed, of pride and of judging, of an unforgiving nature, you are not saying that you are worse than others... You are simply joining the human race and confessing that you are in need of God's help and forgiveness." (Cecil Osborne)

After we can face the fact that we sin, we must then take the responsibility for our sin. We often try to blame others for our actions. We tend to say that "we are mad because he did this!" rather than admitting that we are mad because we let ourselves get mad. Someone reminded me that I was not responsible for what people did to me — I was responsible only for the way I reacted to them. John tells us that we will be judged according to our works (Rev. 20:12) — not according to what others did to us. It's a waste of time to recount the mistakes of others that "made" us react in one way or another. David did not try to make any excuses for his sin; he simply admitted, "I have sinned."

When we're finally able to make this admission without making any excuses, then we can begin to deal with our sin by relying on our brethren and God. Paul tells us that we are to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal.6:2). James says that we are to "confess our faults one to another" (Jas. 5:16). I'm not advocating that we confess our sins to every brother. It would be foolish to think that every brother will understand your weaknesses and can help you with them. Yet to refuse to confess our sins to those who can give us mature and sound advice and solutions is to neglect a very effective way to deal with our sins. We must, however, also rely on God and His word. David, who admitted that he had sinned, who accepted the responsibility for his sin, and who confessed this to God before Nathan, also wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119:11).

- Kevan O'Banion, via Plain Talk, Sept., 1979

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Deceitful - "having a tendency or disposition to deceive; not honest: MISLEADING ... DOUBLE DEALING suggests treachery or at least action contrary to a professed attitude; SUBTERFUGE suggests the adoption of a stratagem or the telling of a lie in order to escape guilt or to gain an end." [-Webster's Dictionary]

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- > "Each should decide what is right for himself, though others do say it is wrong; for public opinion can hurt just the weak, it's too weak to injure the strong!"
  - > "Sinners hate Christians because they make them conscious of their sins!"
  - > "Striving for Christ-like character may seem like pursuing a distant goal, but remember, it is better to pursue a deer and lose it than to chase a skunk and catch it!"
  - > "If you are ready to give someone a piece of your mind, be sure you can get along on what's left!"
  - > "Most people are quite happy to suffer in silence - if they are sure everyone knows they are doing it!"
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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"What The Bible Says About Nothing!"* (Text: 1 Cor. 13:1-3); Sunday evening: *"A Prophecy of Betrayal and Denial!"* (John 13:18-38 – Part 1).