

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

841 Old Hickory Blvd.  
Jackson, TN 38305  
*oldhickorycofc.com*

---

**October 21, 2018**

**Volume 38, # 43**

---

### **SEARED WITH A HOT IRON**

Everyone has some sense of right and wrong; what they feel is acceptable or reasonable behavior and what is not. I am even convinced that the most evil people are delusional enough to believe they are right. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes... (Prov. 21:2). People like the terrorists of 9/11, Ben Laden, and Hitler, I am sure, followed their conscience. To say that not everyone's judgment of right and wrong is correct or united is certainly supported by these examples.

If the conscience can be wrong, and it can be, then how do we assure our sense of right and wrong is true? It all begins with what we believe. If people believe the U.S. to be Satan and Americans to be infidels then they can, in all good conscience, do what the hijackers did on 9/11. However, since their convictions are based on a false standard, their moral compass is out of balance.

When people believe error and reject the One True God, their sense of right and wrong cannot be good. Referring to Jesus, inspiration says, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). Practicing Jews do not believe this, and neither do Muslims, agnostics, or atheists. Their consciences, and subsequently their actions, reflect this and are wrong.

That "little voice" in our head is important for many reasons. It encourages us to stop and think before we act. The conscience serves as a governor for our behavior and scolds us when we ignore its direction. Sometimes it moves us to reevaluate our thinking and conduct, and to even make changes. Would we not all agree that the conscience is good and vital to our lives?

Even though the conscience can be wrong, it is not a good practice to defy its boundaries (Rom. 14:23). Paul lived before God in all good conscience while persecuting Christians (Acts 23:1). He was clearly wrong and fighting against Christ. But because Paul was true to what he believed, he had the honesty to accept truth and change the standard of his

conscience (Acts 9). If he had been in the habit of going against his sense of right and wrong, then I doubt he would have made the sacrifices he did to serve Christ.

Scripture warns Christians about having their “conscience seared with a hot iron.” (1 Tim. 4:1-3). The allusion here is one of applying a hot iron to the skin. What happens to the skin? It is cauterized and becomes rigid, stiff, and dead to feeling. This is what happens when someone departs from the faith of the gospel. Their conscience becomes rigid, stiff, and dead to the feelings of right and wrong. It becomes a matter of them doing just what they want to do regardless of the consequences.

Decisions are made knowing they are wrong or without Bible authority. Sometimes people just convince themselves something is right when they used to think it was wrong. Not that we should refuse change when facts supports the change, but often the evidence is missing. What happens is, we give up on truth. Once truth is ours, no error or deception by others should cause us to falter. There is no excuse because the light of truth overwhelms the darkness of error. The Hebrew writer says, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” (Heb. 10:26-27). Keep your conscience pure.

- Terry Starling

---

## Pearls From Proverbs

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold (Prov. 22:1).

We occasionally hear it said about someone, "He is out to make a name for himself." We understand that to mean that he is seeking notoriety or fame. A big name is not necessarily a good name.

### Value of Good Reputation

To have a good name is to possess a good reputation. The name which one earns for himself through righteous deeds is far more important than the name on his birth certificate.

It is said of Jesus during His youthful years, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). What a contrast that is with some of today's youth who care not about being in good standing with either God or man!

Cornelius, the centurion, despite his being a Gentile, was "of good report among all the nation of the Jews" (Acts 10:22).

When seven men were about to be chosen to minister to the temporal needs of certain widows among the disciples in Jerusalem, it was recommended that they be men "of honest report," or "of good reputation" (NASB).

One of the qualifications of a bishop is that "he must have a good report of them which are without" (1 Tim. 3:7). A man with a bad reputation cannot be expected to exert a good influence.

To have a truly good name is a genuine asset. One should guard his reputation against whatever might ruin it. A good past makes an excellent future reference.

### Reputation and Riches

There are several reasons why a good reputation is to be chosen in preference to riches.

(1) A good name will secure what money cannot buy. Some who are loaded with wealth have a bad name, and no amount of money can purchase a good reputation for them. People trust someone who has a good name. The accumulation of wealth does not make one more trustworthy.

(2) A good name has a higher quality than material wealth. Riches may bring someone great fame, but there is a difference between great fame and a good name. A good name is "a name for good things with God and good people" (Matthew Henry).

(3) A good name enables one to do more good than riches without a good name can do. A good reputation opens doors of opportunity. Esteem and respect are worth more than silver and gold.

Abraham had a good name and great riches. God promised him, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great" (Gen. 12:2). And the Bible describes him as being "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen. 13:2). The point of our proverb is that if one must choose between a good reputation and riches, the former should be chosen. Moffatt translates Proverbs 22:1 as follows: "Reputation is a better choice than riches; esteem is more than money."

## Reputation and Character

Reputation refers to one's overall qualities as judged by people in general; the estimation in which one is held. Of course, men sometimes err in their estimation of other people. It seems likely that the proverb is referring to a good name as one is judged in the eyes of others who are good and righteous people.

Character refers to the sum of distinctive qualities belonging to an individual. One's reputation is not always a true measure of his character. However, a good name that is based on good character brings goodwill and admiration from all who value goodness.

Both character and reputation are important. Every child of God must endeavor to develop the best qualities of character, and he should try to keep a good name.

Many things can destroy a good reputation. Sometimes vicious people deliberately set out on a character assassination mission. The slanderer differs from a murderer only in that he kills the reputation rather than the body. A careless and foolish act can seriously damage one's reputation. White lies often leave black marks on a reputation. It takes a very short time to lose a good reputation but a long, long time to regain it.

"A good name is better than precious ointment ..." (Eccl. 7:1). If you have a good reputation, be careful to protect and defend it. And do not be guilty of saying or doing anything that would damage the good name of someone else.

- Irvin Himmel, via *Guardian of Truth*, 11/6/1986

"A reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eye on the spot where the crack was." (Josheph Hall, New Dictionary of Thoughts).

---

## New Age: Reincarnation

Overheard while eating in an area restaurant: "Well, I'll tell you, I am just fascinated with Eastern religions ... You know, I like the idea if you don't get it right the first time you get a second chance."

Belief in reincarnation has become quite widespread. Books by New Ager Shirley MacLaine continue to sell by the millions. The most recent statistics available show that

21% of Americans, that is, more than one out of five, believe in reincarnation (The Gallop Poll Monthly: August, 1991).

Though belief in reincarnation takes many forms, the basic idea is that the soul passes through a succession of lives. Allegedly, this process will be repeated until one has progressed to "perfection." Then one will be "reabsorbed" into God and the cycle will stop.

What is the Biblical response to reincarnation, which is a strong belief held so dear by those in the New Age Movement? First, think of the implications of the completeness of Scripture. Jesus promised the apostles inspiration from the Holy Spirit -- "He will guide you into all truth" (John 13:16). Peter wrote that God's "Divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). But reincarnation is not a part of the truth delivered by the Holy Spirit to the apostles; nor does it pertain to life and godliness. My friend, how humbled we should be by the fact that the true and living God who created us has spoken to us; He has revealed His will to us in the Bible. In it we are completely furnished.

The Bible most certainly shows that there will be no "second chances", (even if we do like the idea; cf. Isa. 55:8-9). "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the Judgment" (Heb.9:27). This one passage is enough to destroy the false theory of reincarnation. Each will die once; after this is not a second chance, but the judgment. At death, the spirit of the saved departs to the realm of paradise; if one is lost, his spirit is in the realm of torment. Between these two realms of hades, "there is a great gulf fixed" (Luke 16:19-31). One's spirit will remain there until the resurrection.

This is a major reason for the urgency you sense on the pages of the Bible: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). To neglect salvation in the one life we have is to neglect it forever!

- Leon Mauldin

- 
- > "You cannot hold a man down without staying down with him!" - Booker T. Washington
  - > "Let us make haste to live, since every day to a wise man is a new life!"
  - > "Sure steps toward happiness are the steps into the assembly! Tread them often!"
  - > "He who ceases to learn cannot adequately teach!"

➤ "He who is on the road to heaven will not be content to go there alone!"

---

**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Disregard for Marriage!"* (Text: Heb. 13:4);  
Sunday evening: *"Another is Coming!"* (John 14:15-31).