

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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

March 01, 2020

Volume 40, # 09

Our Children: A Source of Gladness or Grief?

(All quotations from Proverbs unless noted.)

A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother" (10:1). "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him" (17:25). Every life has its share of heartaches and disappointments, but few heartbreaking experiences can compare to the pain foolish or rebellious children can bring. Think of David's bitter weeping for Absalom as he wished that he could have died instead of his son—a son who was disloyal, treasonous, and an adulterer (see 2 Samuel 13-19). We could think of other biblical examples and countless modern ones, but is such really necessary? Is there anyone who does not understand the pain children can cause their parents? Because children are endowed by God with a free-will and are capable of choosing to do evil, it may not always be possible to prevent this heartache, but the Scriptures are clear that the children of the righteous turning to evil should be the exception and not the rule. As parents we can and are expected to make a difference in our children's lives.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (22:6). Though this statement should not be taken to mean that parents could strip children of their ability to choose evil, it does emphasize the trainability of children. From the day they are born we must set ourselves to the task of bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). In 1:8 Solomon urged his son, "Hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother." Very similar words are found in 6:20 where we read, "My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother." In these two admonitions it is assumed that instruction has been given; commands have been issued; law has been laid down. Let us commit ourselves to teaching God's holy word to our children at every opportunity (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Teach them at home; bring them to Bible classes; make certain they pay attention to sermons; in every way make the word of God a vital part of their lives, so that we might confidently and truthfully say to them, "Keep the commandments of your father and the law of your mother and all will be well with your soul."

To properly train our children we must provide them with instruction in the faith-building word of God (Romans 10:17), but in addition, we must provide them with the discipline necessary to complete the training. We live in a time when parental permissiveness is the norm and disciplinarians are viewed as harsh practitioners of archaic, perhaps even barbaric, methods, but this is not the teaching of the Lord. Parents must realize that "no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful" for both the giver and the receiver, yet we have assurance that "it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11). To put it in very simple terms: firm, painful discipline works!

Too often today's parents are reduced to begging and pleading with their children to "stop the foolishness" because they have neglected the relatively simple method God decreed. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (22:15). Parents are often governed by the fear they will be guilty of child abuse, and while child abuse is an inexcusable, horrific crime, allowing a child to grow up unrestrained and undisciplined is as abusive as the use of excessive force. "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul. Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (29:15, 17; 23:13, 14).

- John Gibson

Rules of the Road

Without rules and regulations driving on today's roads would be chaotic and dangerous. Proper knowledge of them and adhering to them is important. But not everyone driving on the roads follows the rules. Either ignorantly or knowingly they disobey and become a danger to all other travelers.

KNOW THE RULES

Rules and regulations for traveling on Life's Road are found in the Scriptures. Knowledge of them is important. And it's essential to follow them. Be advised that not everyone on the road follows the rules. As such, they pose a danger because of their ignorance or disobedience.

FOLLOW THE RULES

Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of a Christian. Keep alert for bad “drivers.” Understand that some may be under the influence of dangerous ideas and habits. And especially be aware of those who may need help.

"Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life" (Proverbs 4:13).

"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity" (Colossians 4:5).

"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).

- Ron Adams

Buy the Truth and Sell It Not

One of the most important attitudes one can have in striving to go to heaven is that of intense zeal for the truth of God. Too often, people settle on something far less than the truth. Remember, a counterfeit, though it may look relatively genuine, is nevertheless worthless. Likewise, we cannot enjoy the benefits of truth just by getting pretty close. We must take our position firmly and foursquare on the truth. “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

There are many among us who, like Pilate, would ask, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). Many do not believe in absolute truth. The Bible, however, is absolute, unchanging truth. “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalms 119:89). The belief that there is absolute truth is fundamental to one who desires to “buy the truth and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23).

One Can Be Wrong

It is a fact that anyone can mistakenly be wrong. Paul, when speaking of his past manner of life, before his conversion, said, “I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day” (Acts 23:1). Yet he was before a “persecutor, and a blasphemer, and injurious” (1 Timothy 1:13). How could he have lived in all good conscience when he had been so wrong? The answer is simple. He thought he was right. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25). The fact that we can be wrong means that it does not behoove us to close our minds to further investigation. Jeremiah said, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,

where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16).

Faith vs. Opinion

Naturally, study brings us to certain conclusions. All of us live by certain principles. But upon what do our conclusions rest? All too often they rest upon mere opinion. Realize that if something is a matter of faith, then God must have said something about it. We cannot know the words of eternal life by opinions. One man’s opinion is just as good as another man’s; but no man’s opinion is worthy to be compared to God’s.

You would not want to risk crossing the ice over a river merely because somebody thinks you can. Neither should we risk trying to go to heaven by the opinions of men. The difference between an opinion and conviction is that an opinion is usually a spur-of-the-moment conclusion someone comes up with based upon skimpy premises, if any. A conviction is a conclusion based upon evidence which has been thoroughly studied and meditated upon. God has given us a wonderful book. It furnishes man with doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that he may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible is our evidence. It is the truth. When believed, it becomes subjective faith. The Bible did not come from men, so there need be no question about its reliability. It was given unto men though, and designed so they could understand it when they read it (Ephesians 3:3-5). This is not to say that all the Bible is simple to understand. There are difficult portions of it that demand much study. The matters of conversion to God and everyday living are simple and easy to understand. What many find difficult about such matters is the application of that which may be so simple to understand.

Feelings — A Poor Standard

Do not base your conviction upon some peculiar feeling you might have. Feelings are a poor standard of truth. We have already mentioned Paul. We might mention Jacob also who believed with all his heart that his son Joseph was dead, but that did not make it true. Remember, God has given us revelation, facts. Our convictions must rest upon these facts or else we will find ourselves upon shifting sand.

Conscience — Not a Reliable Guide

Neither is conscience a reliable guide in determining whether your convictions are sound or not. The conscience is very pliable to begin with. Our conscience is usually formed at

a tender age. At that time it may be trained to approve good or evil. When we reach maturity our conscience alters and becomes almost unchangeable. From then on it tells us only whether we have done as we learned to do or not.

Changing the conscience then is a slow, difficult project. If your conscience were trained correctly, well and good. If it were trained incorrectly, then it will approve even when you do things that are really wrong, because it was taught that which was wrong. "Let your conscience be your guide" is therefore poor advice.

This brings us back again to the fact that we must ultimately make our stand upon the word of God. Everything is to be judged by it.

- Bob Waldron

-
- > Ask your preacher where the Bible says obedience is not required in order to be saved. Compare his answer with Hebrews 5:8-9!
 - > "It is better to be despised for doing right than praised for doing wrong!"
 - > "The man who gets too hot cooks his own goose!"
 - > "Bible heroes spent their time doing what they knew God required, not worrying about things they didn't understand!"
 - > "Today is the harvest of yesterday's sowings. Tomorrow will be harvest of today!"

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Going Back Down Into Egypt For Help!"* (Text: Numbers 14:1-4); Sunday evening: Why Believe the Bible? *The Problem of Unbelief*, p. 68.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)