

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **Do It Because You Don't Want To**

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

It's healthy to do something every day that we really don't want to do — just for the exercise. There is a great benefit in practicing the art of self-discipline, that is, engaging in it regularly just for the sake of building our mental muscles.

When Paul said that he “disciplined” his body and brought it into “subjection”, he spoke of something that requires a bit of unpleasantness from time to time. By its very nature, training requires us to get out of our comfort zone. If we never call upon our “muscles” to do anything more than what they want to do, then we never gain the ability to do anything more than that. It's just that simple. And so we ought to look for opportunities to do things that we don't want to do. It's one good way that we grow.

Have you ever watched someone “exercising”? Many of the bodily movements by which strength and agility are developed would be ridiculous if we did them for any reason other than training or exercise. Take sit-ups, for example. There is only one reason to do sit-ups: to make your abdominal muscles do things they don't want to do. No one would ever do it for any other reason except ...training ...practice ...exercise ...discipline. When you do sit-ups, you're demonstrating that you grasp one of life's great principles: there is value in doing things that don't want to be done.

Nothing is more valuable than to have our faculties — mental and spiritual, as well as physical — trained and ready to respond to important needs. But having faculties that will respond to important needs is not something that happens overnight or without any effort. When the big tests of life come along, we won't be ready for them if we haven't been training for them before then. So today, if there is some unpleasant little duty that could easily be procrastinated, do it just because you don't want to. Take that little opportunity

to put the flesh in its place. Teach your body to take orders from your spirit. Someday, you'll be mighty glad you did.

"Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. Be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points. Do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test" (William James).

- Gary Henry

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## **CONTEMPLATING: THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (Part 9)**

It has already been shown from the scriptures that all accountable, responsible sinners (unforgiven people) are to hear the word of Christ, believe it, repent of their sins, confess before men that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be immersed (baptized) in order to be forgiven. Let's consider what the Bible has to say about the following question:

**WHO MUST BE BAPTIZED?** Based upon our study, the scriptures provide the answer: individuals that have heard the word of Christ, believed it, repented of their sins, and confessed Christ before men. It is just as simple as that! The one who is ready for baptism is the one who has performed the commandments of the Lord that must be obeyed prior to baptism. Salvation from past sins (forgiveness) comes **AFTER** he is baptized, **NOT BEFORE BAPTISM!** Many need to learn what the Bible teaches on that very point!

To illustrate, let's notice some quotations from various publications which teach doctrines that are in direct opposition to the doctrine of Christ. Please be fully assured that this is provided, not to embarrass, belittle, assault, or ridicule the people who share the convictions of those whom we will quote. These are introduced for your consideration only because it serves to demonstrate the widespread belief and practices of doctrines that do not come directly from the Bible (2 John 9-11; Matt. 15:9). The purpose of these articles is to teach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). "Therefore I esteem right all *Your* precepts concerning everything, I hate every false way." (Psa. 119:128). We love souls, but we hate false doctrines because they will cause souls to be lost.

(1) "... dedicated Christians ... should be baptized." (The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, Watchtower Bible And Tract Society, 1968, p. 183.) Two "Jehovah's Witnesses" were in my home and affirmed that their doctrine is that Christians are to be baptized, and that one receives remission of sins before baptism. They maintain that baptism is an act that

Christians must do to show by "public demonstration" that their sins have already been forgiven. When confronted with passages of scripture which show that remission of sins comes after baptism, their response was, "Why strain a gnat with these trivial things?", and, "Let's get on something important." I cannot think of a more important question than, "What must I do to be saved?", can you?

(2) "If you have been baptized that cannot save you. Baptism does not save. . . It is only an act of duty for those who have already found Christ as their Saviour." ("What Must I Do To Be Saved?", by John R. Rice, p. 8.) Here again we can observe false doctrine being taught when one affirms that salvation from sins precedes baptism.

(3) "After you are saved there are three things to practice daily for spiritual growth: Pray - You talk to God. Read your Bible - God talks to you. Witness - You talk for God. Then you should be baptized ..." ("God's Simple Plan of Salvation", by Ford Porter, p. 4.) Here again, men place salvation before baptism, but God places it AFTER baptism.

(4) Popular in recent times has been a pamphlet entitled, "The Romans Road to Salvation," which uses passages from Paul's letter to the Romans to offer what is advertised as a "concise explanation of God's salvation plan." In all fairness, because of variations in different copies, you may find this statement in some of them: "Because this collection is human assembled, not an official Biblical arrangement, some collections may include more or fewer verses than others." Relative to this study, the Romans Road teaches that belief and confession are to be accomplished in a person desiring salvation. "There are no other religious formulas or rituals. Just call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved!" It will go on to say something like, "... are you ready to accept God's gift of Salvation now? If so, believe in what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross, repent of your sins, and commit the rest of your life to Him. ... If you decided to receive Jesus today, welcome to God's family. Now, as a way to grow closer to Him, the Bible tells us to follow up on our commitment. Get baptized as commanded by Christ." Notice that it is the same man-made plan: "Be saved; then you should be baptized."

SALVATION BEFORE OR AFTER BAPTISM? Notice what the Bible says: (a) Mark 16:16 - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Baptism, then salvation. The Christian is not to be baptized for salvation, but the sinner is. The Christian is a believer who has been baptized and as a result, is at that point, saved. (b) Acts 2:38 - "Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Baptism, then forgiveness. The Christian is not to be baptized for forgiveness, but the sinner is. The Christian is a believer who has repented, been baptized and as a result, is at that point, forgiven. (c) Acts 22:16 - "Now why do you

delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Baptism, then sins washed away. The Christian is not to be baptized in order to have his sins washed away; he already has his sins washed away. The sinner needs to have his sins washed away. (d) 1 Peter 3:21 - "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," Baptism, then salvation. The Christian has already been saved by baptism. The apostle Peter said that baptism saves you. Many modern preachers say that baptism does not save you. Whom will you believe?

There is no need to be baptized in order to receive something that one already has. The Christian already has everything that baptism brings: remission, forgiveness, and salvation. Therefore, the Christian is NOT the one who must be baptized! One is baptized in order to become a Christian! No man can ever change God's order and still have God's truth (2 John 9).

May it be clearly understood that there is nothing "magical" or "mysterious" about baptism. Baptism is an act of obedience unto God which, when the previous requirements have been met, secures for one the blessings we have already indicated. Let us state now as clearly as possible that the purposes served by New Testament baptism are appropriate only to a responsible, mature individual and not to an infant. This statement is made in view of the fact that many religious groups practice the so-called "baptism" of infants. (It is called a "baptism", but I do not know of a case where an infant has been immersed. Thus, the New Testament term is misused in this case.) For those who approve of such, the following facts are submitted: (1) There is no occasion in the New Testament where baptism was administered to infants. There is no express command by the Lord, His apostles, or any inspired individual anywhere in the New Testament for infant "baptism." There is no example where the Lord or some inspired man baptized infants, or an example of the act being performed in His presence, by His consent or approval. There is no passage of scripture from which the baptism of infants is a necessary inference. With the absence of these, it usurps divine authority to believe, teach, and practice infant "baptism." (2) The necessary prerequisites to New Testament baptism can be met only by such persons as are mature enough to personally learn, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ. This excludes the mentally unstable and infants.

- Gary Smalley

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\* "People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing!"

\* "Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see!"

\* "Being at peace with yourself is a direct result of finding peace with God!"

\* “The happiness of every country depends upon the character of its people, rather than the form of its government!”

\* “People may doubt what you say but they will always believe what you do!”

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# ***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)