

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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People Needs

I've never agreed with the whole "Everything I needed to know, I learned in Kindergarten" mentality. Unless your kindergarten experience was VERY different from mine (with all due respect and appreciation to Mrs. Banks!), if it was the "be all" and "end all" of your instruction, you're probably grossly undereducated.

Neither do I believe that everything we need to know spiritually can be gleaned from "the Garden" (of Eden) or "the beginning" (the book or first chapters of Genesis). This is not meant to in any way undermine the importance of what can be learned from the opening chapters of the Bible. But, the word "Genesis" refers to beginnings or origins, and as vital as this part of man's story obviously is, it is not "the whole story," but the beginning. However...

If we pay attention, we may learn some valuable lessons about life, God, and ourselves from Eden. This is especially true with regard to what we can glean about "basic human needs." Therefore, People Need:

People - specifically, and generally. Though God said specifically of Adam, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him" in Genesis 2:18, it is also generally true that humans were created to be social creatures. Along with collective worship, one of the things I've heard more brethren say more than anything else is that they miss each other. This is as it should be- at least from the standpoint that if we didn't miss one another, our "fellowship" with, "devotion" to, and "love" and "preference" for each other wasn't and isn't as it should be, cf. Romans 9-13! God created us (generally) and Christians (specifically) to be inter-dependent members of the same "body" - of humanity (generally) and Christianity (specifically) 1Corinthians 12:12-25. If nothing else, "social distancing" has taught us just how much we need and depend on one another.

Employment - something to do. God, who spoke "light" into existence on Day 1 but didn't create the Sun, Moon, and stars until Day 4, didn't need a "gardener" - but Adam needed

something to do. He needed to be engaged and employed. He needed to be productive. We all do. The “sluggard” and “lazy” are oft-fired upon targets in the book of wisdom, Proverbs (see Proverbs 6:9-9; 10:26; 12:27; 15:19; 19:15; 26:13-16 for example). It’s easy to fall into the trap of idleness, but it has many other dangerous habits attached - like “gossip” and generally minding everyone’s business but your own, 1Timothy 5:13; 1Thessalonians 3:11; or even “gluttony” or other “evils,” Titus 1:12. But when we’re busy with something to do, hopefully like gainful employment, we can more easily avoid these associated entrapments, cf. 1Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 2Thessalonians 3:12. As always, God knew and knows what is best for us because He created us. And He created us to “work”- both to feed ourselves and our families, and within His kingdom.

God - fellowship with the Almighty. This aspect can perhaps be discerned more readily by its loss (in a “I didn’t know how much I needed it until I didn’t have it” kind of way). Note carefully Genesis 3:8’s beginning, “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...” Regardless of the interpretation you derive from this line - whether they heard the sound of God walking, or they heard the sound of God while they were walking (translations vary), they could discern the very presence of God audibly. So intimate was their fellowship with Him that they could not only “feel” but also “hear” His proximity! What a beautifully powerful and poignant portrait! And how tragic when it was when they, clearly because of transgression, were driven out and away from the life-sustaining presence of God, Genesis 2:22-24. We all need to “see,” “hear,” and “feel” (and “speak to”) God in our lives! Even more than humanity was created to be dependent upon one another, we were made to be supremely dependent upon our Creator and Sustainer. And sadly, we are indeed “lost” in a hopelessly dead and doomed world with Him.

While a pandemic and “social distancing” can separate us from other people, and can limit or even eliminate our employment, they cannot banish us from the presence of God... unless we acquiesce. Think about it, won’t you? Stay safe. Stay in contact with one another. Stay productive. And most importantly, stay in fellowship with God!

- Philip C. Strong

Your Identity in Jesus Christ

Do not forget these words:

You are not who people say you are and not even who you feel you are! You are who God says you are!

Few things in life shape a person like the words used to describe them. I will never forget the first time someone called me a preacher. I almost panicked and was visibly shaken

by those words. I will always remember being told that I was a loser and would never amount to anything. Words have a way of changing the way we see ourselves that is both good and bad.

To make matters worse, we cannot unhear the things that people have said about us, but we can choose to replace those words with what God says about us. As soon as you can, take some time and meditate on these passages. Each one speaks powerfully to your identity in Jesus Christ.

You are royalty – 1 John 3:1-2.

In this passage, we see our new standing given to us in Jesus Christ. You are the Child of God, who has been lavished with all of His love and blessings. Do not ever accept that you are anything less than royalty, meant to rule this life as conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

You are righteous – 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Maybe people do not see you as special, as this great, holy Christian. Perhaps you don't see yourself as some great Christian. Perhaps you've had a long history of being less than Christ-like (join the crowd), but God looks at you and says that you have become His Righteousness. He sees you as special, righteous, and holy.

You are wonderfully made – Psalm 139:13-16.

When God looks at you, He sees you as beautiful and perfect in every way. You do not need to impress anyone with your looks or accomplishments. You are His creation, and that makes you the most important person in this world. Do not let anything take that away from you.

You are His masterpiece (Eph. 2:10), Heirs to God's Kingdom (James 2:5), and have been given every Spiritual Blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). You have been gifted and empowered by God (1 Peter 4:10-11) so that you lack nothing in this life. You have everything needed to be a great Child of God (2 Peter 1:3-4).

You have [sic] invaluable in Christ, not because of what you have done but because of what Jesus did for you. When it comes to understanding and owning your identity in Christ, the biggest roadblock will be your own feelings. Just remember...

*You are not who people say you are!
You are not who you feel you are!
You are who He says you are!*

- Jeff Arnette

Worth Quoting ...

Sometimes, the proponents of salvation by faith only say that if one insists on baptism for remission of sins, he is arguing that there is the saving power in water baptism and not the blood of Christ. However, God's word attributes salvation to faith (Eph. 2:8), repentance (Acts 11:18), and baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). Salvation is also attributed to the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:14, 20; Heb. 9:12, 14; 10:19, 29; 13:12, 20; 1 Pet. 1:2, 19; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9), and to his death (Rom. 5:10), and to his life (Rom. 5:10). Now, the only logical conclusion to this biblical evidence is as follows: all these are complementary and consistent statements; they involve no contradictions. Each of them in proper perspective has something to do with one's deliverance from sin and the final judgment. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life and therefore could be a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of others. This sacrifice occurred in his death when his blood was shed for the remission of sins. All of these in proper relation to one another are essential. His having shed his blood enables men to make a proper response to him in a logical sequence. One is convinced that he is the Savior and the sacrifice for sins as the Son of God. This conviction is so strong: that one moves to obey him in repenting and being baptized for the remission of sins. This is the point at which the inward man is cleansed because the inward man moves to obey God as he instructed. Everything fits perfectly.

- Clinton D. Hamilton, *Truth Commentary on 1 Peter*, p. 198.

A Helpful Quote ...

“The greatest legacy we can leave our kids is how to find refuge in God when everything is on the line. Inevitably life gets harder than we ever dreamed it would be. At those moments of intense anguish, when godly parents bow down and trust Christ, they are teaching their children by a powerful example. They are teaching their children how to draw strength from God in suffering. And those kids in their day will also find a refuge in God when they suffer, as inevitably they will.”

- Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Proverbs: Wisdom That Works* (2012), 155-156.

* “If you can’t or won’t forgive others when they sin, then make sure you never sin!”

* “Bitterness is drinking poison and hoping someone else dies!”

* “It's not the snake biting you that does the greatest harm. It's chasing him down that drives the poison to the heart!”

* “Only the disciplined person will rise to his highest powers. He is able to lead because he has conquered himself!” - J. Oswald Sanders

* “The best exercise program: run from the devil and walk with God!”

THIS WEEK’S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *The Place and Purpose of Baptism!* (Text: 1 Pet. 3:20b-22).

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)