

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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NO PLACE LIKE HOME

It really is true! There is no place like home! Well, maybe we should say there is no place like the home God designed. THAT really is true! When husbands, wives, fathers, mothers and children all fulfill their God-ordained roles and responsibilities in the home, family life is delightful.

Most families, however, have not experienced the joys of a Bible-based family life. A significant number of families have suffered the ravages of a war - the result of the modern humanistic attack and bombardment of all that is sacred in the home. A host of influences have challenged the husband's and father's position as loving leader of the family, the wife's and mother's role of a submissive at home and the children's place of honor and obedience to their parents. Succumbing to humanistic influences, the structure of the home has collapsed and family life is seemingly in hopeless disarray.

The collapse results from both the rejection of God's way and the implementation of man's will. The real culprit is the humanistic influence in modern society of selfishness. The influences of modern society are constantly stressing the view of "do your own thing." Or, as one mother who felt the burden of motherhood said, "I need to do something for myself." One author even wrote a book on THE ART OF SELFISHNESS.

Husbands and fathers, armed with this humanistic philosophy, show no hesitation at leaving a wife and children to move in with their secretaries or other women laden with sins. Wives and mothers display no embarrassment in announcing on the PHIL DONAHUE SHOW how they walked out on their families to feed their egos in furthering a career. Children are often left to nursery schools, baby sitters or even the watchful eye of the TV. The result? Home life as God ordained it is gone.

Family life as God ordained it can, however, be restored. It begins, of course, with parents becoming or being Christians. Genuine Christians have learned to "deny" themselves (Luke 9:28) and unselfishly give themselves to others - including their own families. This is the basis of family life as God views it. It all begins with recognizing and

trusting both the wisdom and authority of God. God created man, then woman, and God designed, then instituted the home. Who knows the basis of happy family life better than its designer? God has revealed in the Scriptures His plan for family life.

- L. A. Stauffer, via Pause, Ponder, Profit, Dec., 1983.

A Plan That Actually Works

In 1923 Otto Schnering came up with a plan to promote his new chocolate bar, Baby Ruth. He settled on a candy drop. A pilot was recruited for a plane, complete with the Baby Ruth logo, to perform some trick flying over Pittsburgh. As crowds gathered and curiosity rose hundreds of candy bars with little parachutes attached began falling from the plane. What happened next was not part of Schnering's plan. Office workers reaching dangerously out of windows trying to catch the candy. Children ran into the streets to catch or retrieve their prizes. And when some of the parachutes failed to open people were struck on the head and car windshields were broken by falling bars. Drivers, taking their eyes off the road, looked up instead as they crashed into other cars (The Memory Palace; Mental Floss).

There are other seemingly good ideas that failed to come off exactly as planned (remember the Ford Pinto?). Unlike mere mortals, when God comes up with a plan, He is always successful in making it work. Isaiah said it best when he said that God's word "shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper ..." (Isaiah 55:11).

God has a plan that includes you. We should feel confident in conforming to the New Testament plan and design of Christ's church. It is a kingdom of servants, joyfully serving their Lord and Master while sharing their hope with the lost. That is God's plan. Any plan of human origin is bound to have problems, but God's plan actually works.

- David Bragg

The Best of Friends

The book of Proverbs is filled with wise sayings covering a gamut of topics. One topic that it covers quite well is that of friendship. Let's note four qualities of friendship from the book of Proverbs that will help us discover the best of friends.

First, the best of friends is one who is always in your corner. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17). That doesn't mean they will

always agree with your actions and decisions, but they will never give up on you. They love you and desire the best outcome for you.

Second, the best of friends offers you strength and wisdom. Solomon instructs us, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). If we are without good friends, we will soon discover how dull we truly are, and that we are in need of sharpening.

Third, the best of friends is one who tells the truth. He will be open, honest, and sincere. Solomon said, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy" (Prov. 27:6). We feel good when everyone agrees with us, but we need a true friend to be candid at all times.

Fourth, the best of friends is one who is thoughtful and considerate. We are told, "Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart." This friend knows when and how to say or do things to help their friends.

Let's do our best to become a friend like this, and seek out friends that fit these qualities.

- Travis Robertson

WORSHIP

In the early ministry of Jesus, the decision was made to go into Galilee by way of Samaria (John 4:1-4). Upon reaching Jacob's well, the Lord sat to rest while the disciples went into the city to buy food (vss. 5-8). A woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus began a conversation with her (vss. 7-ff). Seeing His knowledge of her she perceived Him to be a prophet (vs. 19). Certain that He would contend for Jerusalem as the place where men ought to worship she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;" (vs. 20). She was speaking of Mount Gerizim, upon which the Samaritans had built a temple as well as a lot of traditions. Gerizim was to the Samaritans what Jerusalem was to the Jews. It was not unusual that a Jewish prophet would contend for Jerusalem as the place of worship, nor was it unusual for a Samaritan to disagree. But notice the appeal that she makes for the rightness of her position: "OUR FATHERS worshipped in this mountain" (emphasis mine - GFS). Two thousand years later people are trying to justify religious practices exactly as she did: "My parents believed and/or practiced such and such. If it's good enough for them it's good enough for me." Sadly, a "Thus saith the Lord ..." has no influence with them. This

is far from the Christian's sentiment: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And so it is today as it was then: the commandments of God are transgressed, the word of God is made void, because men love their traditions. (Study Matthew 15:1-9.)

Jesus said to the Samaritan, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." (vs. 21), not at all meaning that no one *could* worship in those places, but that it would not be *necessary* to go to Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim to worship God. As far as acceptable worship unto God, Jesus indicated what it was and by whom it was rendered.

The concept of TRUE WORSHIPPERS (John 4:23) indicates that there can be false worshippers, as well as true and false worship. The Athenians worshipped in ignorance, which was not true worship (Acts 17:23). If a man's religion was vain or empty (James 1:26), then his worship would be vain (Matt. 15:9). Self-directed worship, "will-worship" (Colossians 2:23), is also worthless. Jesus said that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." (John 4:23).

What does it mean to worship IN SPIRIT and IN TRUTH? Simply stated, true worship comes from the heart and is according to truth. Joshua long ago exhorted Israel to have the same kind of worship: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; ..." (Joshua 24:14). Paul spoke of his service in similar terms: "For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son ..." (Romans 1:9). We must recognize the ever present danger of reducing our worship to a mere formality, only going through the motions. In our worship unto God we must not flatter or lie; our hearts must be right and we must be faithful to Him, obedient to His will. (See Psalm 78:36-37; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:7-8.) Care must be taken that we not introduce man's inventions into our worship and service unto God. Men have done this with the addition of mechanical instruments of music into the worship, and then made an appeal to tradition and personal taste in order to sustain and justify it. This disrespectfully violates His will and profanes Him. It brings Him down to man's level and puts man's inventions on equal footing with His commands. Far too many religious groups are guilty of introducing man-made items into worship, and much of the time these items appeal to the flesh rather than the spirit. Worship unto God must be spiritual; only then will it cultivate a taste for spiritual things. No single church on earth can satisfy fleshly desires of men. Why should it even try to compete with the world in its attempt to gratify fleshly lusts? True worship appeals to the spiritual and strengthens the inner man that he may be victorious over the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17, 24).

Friend, take personal inventory of your worship in light of what the Bible teaches. Does your worship please the One who is being worshipped? Think on these things.

- Gary Smalley, via *The Edifier*, Rogersville, AL, 01/15/1984

* “When we love God, we will serve people!”

* “Many people want the benefits of the church, but they refuse to be a benefit to the church!”

* “When alone, guard your thoughts; in the family, guard your temper; in company, guard your words!”

* “A smile can add a great deal to one’s face value!”

* “Courtesy is contagious – let’s start an epidemic!”

THIS WEEK’S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *Open Our Eyes, Lord!* (Text: 2 Kings 6:8-23).

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)