

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **How Do Children Learn the Bible?**

One of the most marvelous passages of Scripture on childrearing is given in Deuteronomy 6:3-9. From this great passage we are made to understand that children can learn God's word in a number of ways.

There is what we might call unconscious teaching. Children observe our lives, our moods, our reactions, our dispositions. They absorb and assimilate these into their own lives and personalities. Someone has said that children read our hearts, not our lips.

There is, in the second place, what we might call informal teaching. This is done by talking about holy things as we sit, walk, lie down, and rise up. The Jews wrote the Scriptures on signs and plaques and put them on their walls and at other conspicuous places. Some even had them embroidered on their clothing. These were all subtle and informal reminders of their need to be God-conscious.

Then, last of all, there were those formal teaching situations where prophets or priests or others, instructed by means of the various services, performed in the tabernacle, temple, and later the synagogues. Certain days had a special meaning. All males were to attend the three annual feasts. All of these activities and situations working together impressed upon the observing mind the need to be controlled and regulated by Jehovah.

Today, many of the same kinds of situations are presented to us. Let us learn to talk about the Bible with our children with the same ease with which we discuss sports activities and other such things. Let us keep the Word of God before them all the time. Let us resolve to never miss a preaching service or Bible class. Let us show them practical ways to put eyes, arms, and legs on God's commandments as we get caught up in helping others. Let us let God truly rule in our hearts and lives. The children are smart — they will catch on.

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# HE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF

"And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them, 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Luke 14:7-11).

The parable spoken by our Lord Jesus concerns right relationships in the kingdom of God. He presents a contrast between the person who pushes himself to be honored and exalted (this one will be abased), and the person who lowers himself such that others will be honored and exalted (this one will be victorious). What about a self-righteous person: would you expect that person to push for self-honor or seek to be lower in humility? Self-righteousness is the path to failure in regard of humility. Success in the kingdom comes by following the Lord's instructions and example ("He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death," Philippians 2:8).

The Scriptures seriously admonish every Christian to become proficient in self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:28). Recall: Jesus said, "he who humbles himself will be exalted." No other can accomplish this task for me, I must take the initiative myself. This is first priority over examining anyone else (Luke 6:41-42; cf. 1 Corinthians 9:3). When any fail to properly examine self by the eternal word of the Lord, no spiritual assurance of victory can be rightly possessed. These WILL be humbled! The Lord emphasized this point often (Matthew 23:12; Luke 18:14). Paul, James and Peter also taught this point: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4). "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (James 4:10). "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time," (1 Peter 5:5-6). The truth is this: the only way for any kingdom citizen to be exalted is for him to lower himself. If any exalting is done, it is the Lord's place to do it, and He will!

The Christian who would retain humility oftentimes is successful in doing so by considering his own physical frailty and bodily weakness. We are but dust (Psalm 103:14). There are mountains we cannot scale. There are territories we cannot subdue. We cannot ward off pain, suffering, tears, disease, old age, or death. The insecurities of life in this tabernacle of clay should destroy our selfish pride.

The Christian who would retain humility oftentimes is successful in doing so by considering his own ignorance in various areas of life. Will Rogers was credited with this statement: "Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects." Some people I have been around would "put up their dukes" at the mere suggestion that they might be ignorant about anything! One would do well to consider the man that was "blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil." (Job 1:1). The Lord God allowed Job and his friends to speak many words before He "answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,'" (Job 38:1-4). The truly wise man considers his own limitations. Consider further regarding Job: "Then the LORD said to Job, 'Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.' Then Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth.'" (Job 40:1-4). The Lord spoke to Job again, following which Job said, "I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ... Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:3, 6).

Knowledge, technology and scientific discoveries have amazed man by the incredible advances made in these fields, but realistically there is so much more that man does not know. However much one knows, he still knows very little in comparison to the vast totality of all knowledge. There are things that I know and you do not. That does not make me any better or more righteous or more favored by the Almighty than you. Only the little person, the "faultfinder" feels importance in this area.

The Christian who would retain humility oftentimes is successful in doing so by considering his own moral weaknesses and failures. Thomas Carlyle is credited with this quote: "It is in general more profitable to reckon up our defects than to boast of our attainments." Paul described characteristics of those without humility in Romans 2:1-5. The one who is not humble passes judgment on another that is self-condemning. He has a stubborn and unrepentant heart lacking in kindness, tolerance and patience. Hear Paul:

"Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment

on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," (Romans 2:1-5).

The greatest of kingdom citizens is ever conscious of personal sins. One of the greatest servants in the kingdom was undoubtedly the apostle Paul. Recall how he referred to himself: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." (1 Timothy 1:15). The one who looks at self and sees only righteousness that cannot be condemned has failed in honest self-evaluation. Is it not arrogance that displays the attitude of being ready to meet God in judgment right this minute based upon what I have done and who I am at this moment in time? That attitude is not taught by Jesus Christ. "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'" (Luke 17:10). Whom should we be in our own estimation? "Unworthy slaves!" Paul commanded, "learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." (1 Corinthians 4:6). Disciples who are not humble are arrogant against others. Comparison with the perfect example of Christ will show us how poor our own performance is in spiritual matters. Let us set our lives beside the Lord and we will see how unworthy we are. Only then will pride, arrogance and self-satisfaction shrivel up and die.

The Christian who would retain humility oftentimes is successful in doing so by remembering that even when the Lord's closest disciples were fighting about which ones of them were the greatest, the Lord rebuked them: "the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. ... I am among you as the one who serves." (Luke 22:26-27). They must have been utterly flabbergasted and shamed when the Son of God stooped to wash their feet.

It is not surprising that people do not believe Luke 14:11. Those who heard Jesus say these words did not believe them. But Jesus, the example, demonstrated this truth. When He came into the world He was placed in a manger. When He died He was nailed to a cross. What lowlier place could have been found for either?

Now look at yourself, and don't conduct life by being confident in your own righteousness. Be the disciple the Lord requires you to be, not the one who shows the rest of the sub-standard disciples the way to reaching the pinnacle of Christ in you. If you regard yourself as so much more righteous than other disciples, then you should be absolutely ashamed! You have fashioned yourself into a false disciple. You are not justified and you should

stop treating your brethren with contempt (cf. Luke 18:9-14). Self-righteousness is a nasty sin!

For those disciples who love and practice humility, the Lord God has blessed you in the enlightenment of self-examination. Keep growing this righteous virtue! The past "Pharisee" who has since crucified the flesh now washes the feet of the "tax collector." (Luke 18:9-14). May God bless you!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Aren't you glad your mother didn't believe in abortion?"

\* "Be strong in the faith you have and more will be added!"

\* "Christ is the only third party in marriage who can make it work!"

\* "Do you check your foundation before or after the storm?"

\* "Even little faults can ruin a person, like little holes in a tire!"

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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)