

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Hate Your Father and Mother!

Why do you attend the church of which you are a member? Is it because your father and mother before you were members of that church? Is it because your husband or wife belongs to that particular religious body? What if Christ, through His Word, the New Testament, demanded one thing, and the church of your family said to do something else? Whom would you follow?

Jesus declared: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). Does this mean I must literally despise the father who provided my needs when I was helpless and gave me the teaching and guidance to become a Christian? Must I turn against my mother who endangered her own life to bring me into this world and selflessly nursed and cared for me in childhood? Must I forsake my own wife who left a secure home to be my companion and bear my children? Must I loathe my little ones, any one of whom I would readily lay down my own life to protect? Must I hate my very own brother in the flesh who was my constant companion as a child? Of course the Bible demands the exact opposite attitude toward my own family. In fact, no son ever demonstrated greater love for his mother than did the Son of Mary, Who, while in the agony of impending death, made provision for the care of His mother after He was gone (John 19:26, 27).

What, then, is the meaning of this condition of discipleship? In Genesis 29:30 the inspired writer Moses observed of Jacob, "he loved also Rachel more than Leah." Moses then declared, "the Lord saw that Leah was hated" (verse 31). Leah was "hated" in that she was loved less than was Rachel. This is precisely the sense in which we are to hate our families. As Jesus warned: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37).

When John F. Kennedy was running for President, he stated that his religion was a part of his family heritage and that he could no more give up Roman Catholicism than he could his Irish ancestry. But Jesus Christ warned that if you do not love Him more than you love father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, you cannot be His disciple. One proves

his love for Christ by obeying Him (John 14:15). If you follow the religion of your family in disregard to the Word of Christ, you are not a disciple of Christ.

- Keith Sharp, via Truth Magazine, March 21, 1974

Some Things I Owe My Mother

Today is observed as "Mother's Day" by many people in the world. While the setting aside of an entire day is a great tribute for such a special person in our lives, the Bible has also seen fit to honor mothers by putting forth specific obligations to be met by children. It is from these Scriptures that I learn of some things I owe my mother.

First, I must honor my mother. Paul instructs children to obey their parents in the Lord, and then follows up with a quotation from the Old Law, "'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 6:2). The word honor is translated from a Greek word that means "to fix a valuation upon." Think about that for a moment. How much is your mother worth? How can you or I determine the worth of our mother?! What amount could we possibly choose?! Think of everything your mother has done for you. Where would we be without our mothers?! The idea behind this command is that we arrive at the proper estimation of her worth and then treat her accordingly.

I am to honor my mother by giving her the appropriate praise. Of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, it was said, "Her children rise up and call her blessed" (Proverbs 31:28). Kind words spoken in a kind and respectful tone are the very least I can do for my mother.

I also honor my mother in the way I live as her son. "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother... A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother" (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20). As I look back upon my life, I find that the moments I am most ashamed of are the times I have disappointed my mother; the times that I failed to bring her honor in the way I spoke and lived as her son. This obligation continues throughout life. As I write this piece, I realize not everyone reading it still has their mother. That doesn't mean you no longer have an obligation to honor her in the way you live.

Another obligation I have is to heed the wise counsel of my mother. "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother... My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother" (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20). My mother loves me and wants what is best for me. Throughout my life I have sought her counsel and advice regarding a great number of things. While I may have rejected her warnings and instructions in the foolishness of my youth, her words are not easily discarded today. I don't call my mother as often as I probably should, but when we do talk, she has my attention. I still need her advice.

Finally, the Scriptures indicate that, if the day ever comes, I will need to care for my mother in her old age. "But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4; cf. vs. 3-16). Small children are dependent upon their parents for their needs. As I asked above, where would we be today if it wasn't for our mothers? It is God's will that this care be returned when our parents need it in their old age. Many of our parents have made financial preparations for their golden years. They have paid into pensions and Social Security. However, despite these preparations and programs, there will still be times when my mother will need help. I can't expect someone else to take care of her. She is my mother (well, my sister also has an obligation, which she is willing to fulfill as well).

Mother's Day is a very special day for many of us. It is nice to send cards, make phone calls, give gifts, and make sure Mom has the special day that she deserves. However, the Christian must remember that God has long ago recognized the importance of mothers, and His word calls for us to honor, praise, heed, and care for them.

- Heath Rogers

How Does Faith Come?

Some Theological Seminaries are teaching their aspiring students to teach that man is not able to believe in Christ until God operates upon his heart to create faith within him. Is this truly what the Scriptures teach? Please consider: it is not! That concept contradicts what is written.

The Lord has described in His revelation how faith comes to exist in the heart of a person. John specifically and distinctly stated that the purpose of his Gospel was to create faith. Notice: "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31). What John had written was sufficient to produce faith resulting in life. Any person could read John's gospel account and believe it. Having been convinced, convicted and converted by it, he could set out on the road of discipleship.

For one to possess the discerning insight of the apostle Paul would be a wonderful thing. Yet, notice that he wrote even briefly the "revelation" that was "made known" to him, and declared, "By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ," (Ephesians 3:1-5). Not only can we read the Scriptures, we also can understand the Scriptures. Before concluding this epistle, Paul even commands his readers to "not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17). In view of this truth, Paul emphasized exactly how faith comes: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17).

After the Lord Jesus had revealed the very foundations of His gospel, His first charge to His specially selected apostles was, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15). Jesus Himself in prayer to His Father solemnly prayed not only for His apostles, but "for those also who believe in Me through their word;" (John 17:20). Listeners were expected to believe in Christ by hearing the gospel preached by His chosen ambassadors. Romans 10:14 clearly shows the divine order to arrive at faith: preaching the gospel, hearing the gospel, then believing the gospel.

Those who heard the apostles of Christ preaching on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ came to faith by hearing the gospel: "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, ..." (Acts 2:37). As we continue to observe the Scriptures we continue to see how faith comes:

(1) How did faith come to the Gentiles? Peter said, as documented by Luke, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe." (Acts 15:7).

(2) People came to believe in Christ in the city of Corinth: "many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized." (Acts 18:8).

(3) In a synagogue of the Jews, Paul and Barnabas "spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks." (Acts 14:1).

(4) Gospel preaching had its result among the Samaritans: "when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." (Acts 8:12).

Faith comes by hearing the gospel of Christ. There is not a single example of faith coming to a person in any other way! The miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man is not required (cf. Luke 8:11-15; Acts 11:13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:21)!

- Gary Smalley

* "Character shows by the criticisms we forgive!"

* "In the account of Jesus' feeding the 5,000, those people had been following Him for three days to hear his teaching and had put themselves into a desperate situation (food-wise) because of it. Jesus did not set out a banquet to recruit an audience and then throw in a sermon while he had their attention!"

* "The doors are open for you to come into the assembly of Christians; trespassers will be forgiven!"

* "Faith is often strengthened right at the place of disappointment!"

* "According to the book of Proverbs, a child may be foolish and if not corrected will grow up to become a full-fledged fool (Proverbs 15:5)!"

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)