

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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"Let The Lower Lights Be Burning!"

God has made it clear not only that He wants us to pray, but also to trust that our prayers can have great impact. To this end, the apostle Paul admonished Christians to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and the writer James stated, "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (5:16b ESV). A life devoted to prayer with a faith that trusts these prayers are heard by the Lord should build confidence in His children!

As the apostle Peter was about to undergo a time of testing, the Lord Jesus made a powerful statement to him: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). In this, the Lord sets an important example of praying for the strength of another. Preceding his statement about the prayers of the righteous, James echoed this point when he wrote, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (5:16a). What a blessing we have in prayer!

This congregation is richly blessed to have so many lower lights who are devoted to prayer. In a church the size of ours, there is a constant need for these godly brothers and sisters. Rarely does a week pass when members or their family or friends are not touched by some manner of difficulty or challenge. Health ailments, travel assignments, and family struggles are only a few of the challenges that often call for prayers. What a comfort to know that these lower lights stand (or maybe kneel!) ready to take petitions to the throne room of Heaven.

Speaking personally, I can assure you there is great encouragement given when someone says, "I have prayed for you and your work for the Lord." It has also been of great encouragement when tragedy struck my family in this past year to know that so many brothers and sisters have taken requests for my family's well-being to God. Others in this congregation have also attested to the strength they gained when similar or worse events visited their homes. Pray often and let others know you are praying for them!

May all the faithful lower lights who devote themselves to prayer for the well-being of others keep up this good work. Powerful things happen when humble saints pray!

- Greg Chandler

Share a Quote ...

There are three false notions whereby the deceitfulness of sin deludes the souls of men:

1. That it is one sin alone wherein alone they would be indulged. Let them be spared in this one thing, and in all others they will be exact enough...

- One sin willingly lived in is as able to destroy a man's soul as a thousand.

2. They judge that although they cannot shake off their sin, yet they will continue still to love God and abound in the duties of His worship...

- Where God is not loved above all, He is not loved at all.

3. They determine that at such or such a season or time, after such satisfaction given unto their lusts or pleasures, they will utterly give over, so as that iniquity shall not be their ruin...

- He that will not now give over, say what he will and pretend what he will, never intends to give over, nor is it probable, in an ordinary way, that ever he will do so.

- John Owen (1616-1683)

Make Disciples! (#2)

Possessing all authority, Jesus Christ commanded His apostles to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," (Matthew 28:19a). They were to "make disciples" (ASV, NASB, NKJV) as they went among people of all the nations. Is there something deeper in the concept of making "disciples," deeper than the definition of "teaching them" (verse 20)?

Oscar Brooks has explained that "make disciples" in this passage is not translated from the same word for "teaching" (verse 20). He states that "make disciples" (verse 19) "carries with it a twofold connotation: 1) learners in fellowship with their master, 2) who continue the tradition he has established" [as quoted by Kyle Pope, Truth Commentaries: Matthew, Athens, AL: Guardian of Truth Foundation, 2013 (1078)]. So then, the apostles were to create learners who continued in what they learned. When the apostles obeyed the Lord and made disciples what significant statements should rightfully be made regarding their actions? (1.) They led people to Jesus Christ. (2.) Those people became devoted followers of the one to whom they were led. (3.) They learned His words; they carefully retained every word. They drank in His wisdom and imbibed His spirit. (4.) They diligently obeyed His commands. (5.) They imitated His example; they patterned themselves after Him in every way. Simply stated, they lived for Jesus Christ!

Being a disciple of anyone involves commitment to that one. A disciple is a pupil, a learner, yes! But discipleship implies much more. There is more to making a disciple than "teaching." One may be taught any subject such that he understands it. Understanding the teaching of Christ does not in itself make one a disciple of His. The true disciple is

one whose heart, mind and will has been won by the Master. His true devotion to his Master is indicated by this: there is no sacrifice that a disciple will refuse to make for his Master! One should carefully note the Lord's words recorded by Luke just now (Luke 14:26-33; cf. Matthew 10:35-39). For emphasis, let it be stated again: there is no sacrifice that a disciple will refuse to make for his Master! The disciple then continues, remains, or abides in His word, knowing the truth and being made free by it (John 8:31-32).

In this case, the disciples that were made were baptized "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (verse 19). In following their Master, their devotion as disciples was indicated when they were baptized. The old devotion to self was put to death; they were buried in a grave of water; they were resurrected to walk in a new life (Romans 6:2-11). Of what would the new life as a disciple consist?

Notice that the devotion of these disciples did not end when they were baptized. The apostles of Christ were given this command: "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;" (verse 20). The apostles had been personally instructed by Christ for about three years. They had heard and seen many significant truths. To insure that their memories would not fail them they were given the Holy Spirit to remind and guide them so that there would be no incomplete or erroneous teaching (John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15). The faithfulness of the apostles in obeying the Lord's commission to them and the producing of new disciples is recorded in the book of Acts. In this book the devotion of true disciples can be studied further, as "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42). How long should it take disciples to learn the doctrine of Christ today?

With these fundamentals in mind regarding "disciples," the grand question of summation is this: ARE YOU A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST?

How does your life now match the truths presented above? Where are you in devotion to the doctrine of Christ? He said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Are those hunger pangs in your heart? When one understands the significant importance of the word "disciple" he is disgusted by its application to unintended persons. Among the Lord's disciples there can be no nominal "Christians," there can be no indifferent attitudes. Check it again, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:27). This is devotion to Christ, whole-hearted dedication, total commitment, a life centered in Christ. The devil's religious catch-phrases that many have adopted fall useless in the face of true discipleship. Please take note: the apostles of Christ were not sent to all nations to "make members of the church," (people affiliated with a party, or club members, or independent sectarian advocates, or pew warmers, etc.) they were sent to make disciples. Is that discomfort we are feeling?

True disciples must conform their lives to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11) without adding to it, taking from it, or otherwise changing it in any way. Hence, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4).

The motto of every disciple is, "thus saith the Lord." Disciples love one another as their Lord commanded (John 13:34-35).

Becoming a disciple is embracing a serious obligation. How can we concentrate on making more disciples?

- Gary Smalley

* "Bible mathematics: We do not add to the Bible nor subtract from it, but rightly divide it!"

* "Some people, like tea, never know their real strength until they get into hot water!"

* "Pride is to character what the attic is to the house — the highest part and generally the most empty!"

* "A weak mind is like a microscope which magnifies trifling things, but cannot receive great things!"

* "Do not regret growing old; it is a privilege many do not have!"

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)