

The Old Hickory Bulletin
Old Hickory Church of Christ
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Mind Your Own Business

One of the commands of God that we sometimes act as if we haven't read is the one that tells us to mind our own business. The text says, "that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (1 Thessalonians 4:11, NKJV).

Yes, the Bible actually tells us to mind our own business! Thus, we need to consider some ways we sometimes violate this instruction and just how serious that is.

It Is a Sin

Remember that sin is a violation of the law of God (1 John 3:4). Since the law of God tells us to mind our own business and not another's (1 Thessalonians 4:11), then it would be a sin to behave contrary.

In the second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul stated that there were some in the church who were "busybodies" (2 Thessalonians 3:11). Busybodies are "some who are not busied in their own business, but are overbusied in that of others" (Vine's Dictionary, I, 161). If he did not cease his practice, the saints were to withdraw themselves and have no company with them (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 [keep away from and do not associate with, NASB]). That tells how serious being a busybody (minding the business of other people) can be. God said such a one is "disorderly" ["unruly" and "undisciplined", NASB].

In 1 Timothy 5:13 Paul rebukes those who are idle, wandering from house to house telling things that they should not. He calls them "gossips and busybodies."

Peter wrote that we should not suffer as a "busybody in other people's matters" (1 Peter 4:15).

How We Are Sometimes Guilty

(1.) *In our conversation.* Quite often we find ourselves talking about other people, their money, the things they do, what they buy and what we think about all of that. It may be that the things we talk about are personal which should not be of any concern to us.

Some take it on themselves to meddle by thinking they must tell others exactly what they think about their clothes, their hair, their weight or how they handle their money or children.

We sometimes ask questions about things that are none of our business. We sometimes ask how much someone makes, how much they spend or about conversations that do not concern us.

(2.) *In family relationships.* It is very easy for parents to mind the business of their children who are married and have families of their own. Some parents treat their grown children as if they were still kids, telling them what to do. When parents feel that they have to make critical comments on their grown children's money, looks, clothes and children they are minding business that is not theirs. Why is it that some parents feel that they need hold the reigns on their adult children and meddle in their affairs?

Some are failing to recognize that a new family has been established and God has established the husband as the head of that family (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31).

This sometimes is reversed. Children sometimes try to mind the business of their parents. Because of the close family ties we may feel free to meddle in the affairs of brothers, sisters, grandchildren, aunts and uncles.

(3.) *Church-preacher relationships.* Sometimes preachers feel that their role grants them the right to mind the business of some of the members of the church where they preach. He may try to tell them his opinion (not bound by the Bible) on how they ought to handle their affairs.

Sometimes members of the church try to mind the business of the preacher. A few will act as if they or the church owns the preacher. Preachers sometimes have some of their fellow-Christians to tell them how they should spend their spare time, who they should choose as friends and what his wife should do with her time. I once heard of a church that asked their preacher to bring a financial report of his personal expenses before the men in a business meeting. With tongue in cheek, he prepared one and commended them for the wonderful idea. He said he thought that every man ought to do the same so the men

could watch for covetousness among the members. The men quickly decided that their first idea wasn't necessary.

Be Careful of Extremes

As is true of any Bible principle, it is possible to go to one extreme or another. One extreme has been discussed above: minding another's business. The other extreme is to think that no one should have a right to correct you or say anything critical. When a Christian becomes weak and lets sin hinder his service to God, other Christians are to try to restore him (Galatians 6:1). Efforts must be made to convert him from the error of his way (James 5:19-20). However, that is not a violation of "mind your own business."

Elders are to watch and rule over the souls of those who are members where they are serving (Hebrews 13:7, 17). They have the oversight of the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2). That will involve talking to some of the Christians about how they live, train their children, treat their mates, etc. That again, is not a violation of "mind your own business." However, a few may cry that it is none of their business.

Some Questions to Ask Yourself

Before we get too carried away asking questions, telling what we know or passing on our advice let us ask ourselves the following questions: (1) Is this really any of my business? (2) Have I been invited into this matter? (3) Will my action of asking or telling possibly do more harm than good? (4) Will others think that I am minding other people's business?

Though our text (1 Thessalonians 4:11) is easy to violate, it is a text that we can obey. Let's try!

- Donnie V. Rader, via *Guardian of Truth*, 02/17/1994
[slightly edited – GFS]

Clippings . . .

DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE!

Wise parents advise their children not to play with fire, lest in doing so they would be burned. Yet many of us play around with those things that can destroy our souls forever.

The boy who starts running with the crowd that seeks to break the law and see just how far they can go is opening the door to dangers that will engulf him.

The girl who dates boys who think it is smart to drink, smoke, pet and tell sexy jokes is passing herself over the flames that can in a moment reach out and destroy her reputation, happiness, and eternal soul.

Any woman who displays her body before men in shorts or a bathing suit is playing with fire. The woman who will "go out" with a man who is *married* or *divorced* is putting temptation to adultery in his or her path.

Are you playing with fire? Think seriously before it is too late. Sin works slowly but surely.
- Unknown

The Sin of Reviling

To revile someone is to verbally abuse them. Peter wrote, "and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;" (1 Peter 2:23).

Our Lord was harshly abused and wickedly treated by His own Jewish brethren. The leaders of the nation vilified Him in this way: "Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Luke 7:34); "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (John 8:48); "This fellow blasphemes." (Matthew 9:3); "Now we know that You have a demon." (John 8:52); "He is possessed by Beelzebul," (Mark 3:22); "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes" (Luke 23:2); "that deceiver" (Matthew 27:63); and, "He leads the people astray." (John 7:12).

The nation's judges treated Him shamefully (Matthew 26:67-68; Mark 14:65). Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him (Luke 23:11). The soldiers of the governor did likewise (Matthew 27:30; Mark 15:19-20). Even while hanging on the cross of crucifixion, the chief priests and scribes continued to mock Him (Mark 15:31).

But, recall Peter's words: "and while being reviled, He did not revile in return;!" The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man." (Luke 6:22). It is no surprise when Christians are vilified by worldly-minded people. Our Lord taught us to expect such treatment and demonstrated the perfect example by His touching prayer to His Father: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34).

Paul was the correct example of Jesus Christ in this regard. To the Corinthian Christians he wrote of all the apostles' behavior in this way: "when we are reviled, we bless; when

we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate;" (1 Corinthians 4:12b-13a). What did Paul return for reviling and slander? Not evil and revenge, but blessing and conciliation. When someone insulted Paul, he blessed them. When the apostles were slandered, they tried to cool the outrage and anger by being calm, friendly, gentle, humble and peaceful to that person (cf. Romans 12:17-21).

By these kinds of actions the apostles proved their allegiance to the Lord Jesus. Just exactly as Peter had encouraged: "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:8-9). They followed in the footsteps of Christ. Are we?

- Gary Smalley

- * "One should never be ashamed to own he has been wrong, which is but saying in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday!"
 - * "A hypocrite is a person who is not himself on Sundays!"
 - * "If a man's conscience is as comfortable as his mattress, he should have no trouble getting a good night's sleep!"
 - * "Clean living takes a lot more than soap and detergents!"
 - * "The man who dares to waste one hour of life has not discovered the value of it!"
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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)