

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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It's My Life and I'll Do What I Want With It!

Rather a bold, confrontational, in your face kind of statement isn't it? Generally, it is made by individuals who try to defend their life style when it is called into question.

However, the concept of the statement is a Biblical one. Consider with me the statement found in Psalms 119:109 — "My life is continually in my hand, yet, I do not forget Your law!" The inspired writer points out a truism of life. An individual, unless intellectually impaired by disease, accident, or birth defect, has total control over the course of life he chooses to take.

Notice the writer says that it is continually in our hands or control. The word "continually" is defined by W. E. Vine as "Always, continually, regularly". There are no exceptions. Consequently, it takes away all excuses for bad behavior. It is not our parent's fault, our sibling's fault, our friend's fault, our teacher's fault, or the local church's fault. It means we are not a victim when we exhibit bad behavior.

In Job 14:1, we are told "Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil." Everyone has problems — even Jesus did. In Ecclesiastes 9:11, we are told that "time and chance" happen to all men. The best qualified does not always win, the righteous are not always treated fairly, and the unrighteous sometimes get what they don't deserve. Life is not fair, Satan will see to that.

In the 73rd Psalm, Asaph said that as he pondered the unfairness of life it troubled his mind to the point of discouragement. He said he almost turned his back upon God until he came to the realization that both the righteous and the unrighteous are going to die. He realized it was at death that God would resolve the matter. It was at death the righteous would enter into eternity with God and the unrighteous would enter eternity without God.

God has never promised His children a life free from problems. He has, however, promised us how to deal with any problem we face in life. Peter reveals to us in 2 Peter 1:3 that in the word of God, we have "everything pertaining to life and godliness." God

gives us direction to deal with life. The difficulties that come into our lives provide an opportunity to demonstrate how genuine our faith and love for God really is — "So then, you will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:20). But with every difficulty that we face in life, God will provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We will all face God on the Day of Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10). It is at that time our eternal destiny will be determined by whether or not we remembered and applied God's law to our lives while in the flesh.

- Dick Milwee [slightly edited – GFS]

Look Unto Realms Above

A principle that is important to the teaching process is stated clearly by John Milton Gregory in his book, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. Gregory says: "Since attention follows interest, it is folly to attempt to gain attention without first stimulating interest."

Remembering my high school days in study hall, I must agree with Gregory. I can recall reading page after page in a book and being unable to remember a single idea from the book because my mind was on a basketball game to be played that night. The book didn't occupy my attention because I, at the time, wasn't interested in it.

This gets to the heart of the problem of brethren who don't study the word of God publicly or privately. They simply aren't interested. They are more interested in reading "Good Housekeeping," "Newsweek," "Reader's Digest," or "True Story" than in reading the Bible. They are more interested in seeing what's on TV than seeing what God has said. They are more interested in spending time with a hobby than in spending time with God.

The apostle Paul commended the Bereans for their nobility in studying the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). He told the Ephesians that they could understand the scriptures if they would read them. He then exhorted them to be not foolish but understand God's will (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17).

It's not likely, though, that we'll stimulate brethren to study God's word until we interest them in going to heaven. It may be that brethren in this country have it so good on earth that they don't think any more about going to heaven than I did about the book I was supposedly reading in study hall. That being true, it's no wonder the Bible doesn't occupy their attention. Brethren, we've simply got to wake to the fact that — 70 years and it's all over here. Then what? Until we set our hope on Christ and our affection on things above

(1 John 3:3; Colossians 3:1-4), the BOOK describing those things cannot possibly hold our attention.

- L.A. Stauffer [slightly edited – GFS]

God Expects People to Understand!

In Matthew's account of the Great Commission, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." Why would Jesus, the Son of God, tell His apostles to go and teach people if what they were going to teach could not be understood? Did not Jesus, in the command, necessarily imply that the material to be taught was simple enough to be understood and that those to be taught were capable of understanding?

One of the answers to our present-day situation was given by Jesus a long time ago in Matthew 13:15:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Jesus placed the blame for not understanding squarely at the feet of those who heard the teaching. They closed their own eyes, stopped their own ears, and hardened their own hearts so that they did not understand!

Incidentally, had you thought about the fact that if a thing is understood by two individuals, they necessarily will understand it alike? If two people disagree on something, one or the other (or both) did not understand!

If one person "understands" baptism to be sprinkling, and another "understands" it to be pouring, then neither of the two really understands what the New Testament teaches. Even the Greek word for baptism means "immersion."

In other words, it is impossible to "understand" baptism incorrectly. So if you and I disagree over something the Bible teaches, we both need to keep studying. When we both really understand we will agree.

- Aude McKee

This May Shock You

This may shock you, but there are a number of things that the Bible does not teach that a multitude of people are not aware of.

(1) *The Bible does not teach that one church is as good as another.* Rather, the Bible says, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). Christ only built one church. Are the ones He didn't build just as good as the one He did build? That would make man's works as good as God's. Jesus said, "Every plant, which My heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13). You see, Jesus didn't seem to think that one church is as good as another.

(2) *The Bible does not teach that Christ will return to earth to reign on a literal throne for 1,000 years.* That would be a shocking fact for more than 80% of religious people. However, the verse that so teaches is yet to be found. I read, that when Christ comes again, that will be the end (1 Corinthians 15:23-24).

(3) *The Bible doesn't teach that Christ was born on December 25th.* Neither does the Bible teach that there were three wise men.

(4) *The Bible doesn't teach that terms such as "Reverend," "Pastor," and "Father" should be applied to a preacher.* The term "Reverend" is only used one time in the Bible, and that time it applies to God (Psalm 111:9, KJV). "Pastor" simply means one that is a shepherd over a flock. It is descriptive of an elder in the church that meets certain qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Jesus condemned the use of such terms as "Father" in Matthew 23:1-12.

(5) *The Bible teaches that only those who are the members of the body of Christ will be saved.* I read that Christ is "the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Thus, He only promises to save those in the body. His body and church are one and the same (Colossians 1:18). Thus, only those in His church, the church of Christ, will be saved (Romans 16:16).

(6) If number five is a shocker, this will shock you more. *The Bible teaches that not all of those in the body of Christ will be eternally saved.* I read how the faithful will receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Some of those that were once sanctified by the blood of Christ will turn aside and be lost (Hebrews 10:26-29).

(7) *The Bible teaches us that "rejoice" and "forgive one another," are commands of God (Philippians 4:4; Ephesians 4:32).* These are not just suggestions that will make us better

people. Neither is there an option to choose or not to choose. These are commands! Violating them is sin (1 John 3:4). To sin is to separate oneself from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

(8) *The Bible teaches that "faith" is a work (John 6:29).* If we are saved by faith only, we are saved by a work. If works do not save us at all, then we are not saved by faith.

- Donnie V. Rader

* "Jesus can calm the storm and He can calm you in the storm!"

* "In spite of inflation, the wages of sin are still the same!"

* "If you don't learn from your mistakes, there is no use in making them!"

* "If a man can be found faithful in hard places, he can usually be trusted in high places!"

* "Happiness does not depend on rank or station. The mind is the seat of happiness. Kings commit suicide, millionaires are miserable, peasants live long and love much. Cultivate an undergrowth of small pleasures!" [*Gospel Advocate*, 01/21/1926, p. 71.]

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)