

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **Those Who Love Him**

Some times are hard, and we may not feel so blessed to go through those hardships. However, wisdom teaches us to rejoice when we meet those trials, revealing to us the happy outcome of standing firm in the trial: perfection (James 1:2-4). James puts it another way in v. 12: the man who remains steadfast under trial is blessed, because God promises to give the crown of life to those who love Him.

The one who truly lives, who enjoys life completely, is the one who meets different trials and stands until his love for God has been proven faithful. Until he has been perfected in love.

It is love that keeps a man steady when tested. When a seductress would ensnare a married man, love for his wife will hold him true (Proverbs 5:15-20). When temptation would turn us, love for God will keep us faithful (2 Corinthians 5:14). The man is truly blessed who has found his firm footing—a God to love who keeps His promises. He is happy when tested because he has found that trials are opportunities to prove and declare his love for this faithful God.

God has promised life—the crown of life—to the tried and true. What God wants in His people is a reliable love that endures, an honest devotion that sticks (Proverbs 19:22). That is what God intended man to be, and so those will be the kind of people to whom He grants eternal life: the people whose love for Him is proven. How happy are we to have times of proving.

- Justin Dobbs

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## It's Good for You

Forgiving others can be good for your health.

This conclusion was reached in a recent study completed by Harvard University: 4,598 subjects from five countries – Colombia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Africa, and Ukraine – who said they'd been hurt or offended by another person, were studied by international researchers of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts. In the study, subjects were asked to work through a "forgiveness workbook" that directed them in ways to forgive their offenders. The results found that those who completed the exercises in the self-directed workbook experienced reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression compared to those who were not given the workbooks.\*

Refusing to forgive leads to bitterness and resentment. Holding a grudge has been likened to a person drinking poison expecting the offender to die.

Get rid of bitterness by forgiving others is what the Bible teaches us.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32 NIV).

Forgiving others is not only good for our health; each of us also desperately needs forgiveness.

Through our sins, we are the offenders of our holy God. Our sins separate us from Him (Isaiah 59:1-2) and put us on the path of destruction (Romans 6:23).

But God loves us so much that He offers forgiveness to us. His offer came at a great price: the death of His Son, Jesus. God gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins so that we can receive His forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7 NKJV).

God will forgive and give eternal life to those who place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), turn from their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). He will continue to cleanse from sin those who continue to walk in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7-9).

Those who accept God's offer of forgiveness must be willing to extend forgiveness to others. Jesus said, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV).

Some ask, "But how can I forgive my offender? He has hurt me!"

Our ability to forgive begins by realizing how badly each of us needs forgiveness from God. When we realize the immense debt that Jesus paid for our forgiveness, we are able to forgive others.

Accept God's forgiveness on His terms. Then extend forgiveness to others. It's good for your mental and physical health now, and it is necessary to have eternal life.

[\* Information gleaned from "Forgiveness could lead to better mental health, Harvard study reveals" by Angelica Stabile of Fox News, [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com).]

- David A. Sargent

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## **SIN IS NOT SIN - JUST SICKNESS!**

In our day we hear apologies made for sins that are explicitly condemned in the Bible. Some men apparently do not believe in sin, guilt, and condemnation. In man's wisdom he pronounces drunkenness a disease, sexual perversion a glandular imbalance and crime as being emotionally ill. At the 1960 annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association one topic on the agenda was whether a criminal is mentally sick. Dr. Benjamin Karpman of Washington predicts that in the next half century the United States will not have prisons but rather psychiatric treatment centers for lawbreakers. We recognize that mental illness is a reality but we do not believe that all law violators are sick. Satan has conquered their hearts and they have transgressed the law of God—and this is sin. (1 John 3:4). Adultery, fornication, wrath, murders, drunkenness, revelling and "such like" cause a person to be lost. Paul said, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21). **Sin is sin, not just sickness.**

- E. Claude Gardner, via *The Instructor*, February, 1970

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## **THE MIRROR**

No doubt we live in a time of great technological advances in multiple areas of our lives. We can communicate with someone on the other side of the globe in a manner of

seconds. But practical advances in science and technology have been made in less obvious ways, for example, the mirror.

Ancient mirrors were flat pieces of bronze highly polished in order to be as reflective as possible (cf. Job 37:18; Exodus 38:8). The pristine detail of a clear image noticed in today's silvered glass mirrors was not there.

In 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul contrasts partial spiritual knowledge with complete spiritual knowledge by using the image of a "poor reflection" (NIV) in the polished bronze mirror of his day contrasted with seeing "face to face." Notice: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." The "now" refers to the age of spiritual gifts wherein Christians could not clearly distinguish all of God's truth; the "then" refers to the time afterward when spiritual gifts were no longer needed to reveal God's truth because His full revelation was completed and Christians would be able to see it clearly.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul uses the mirror metaphor once again: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." This figurative verse is based upon Moses' veiling of his face after receiving the Law (Exodus 34:33) because his shining face created fear among the children of Israel. This incident was used as a contrast to Christians who do not veil their faces (approaching openly) as they look into the mirror (without distortion they see the "perfect law of liberty," James 1:25, "the law of Christ," 1 Corinthians 9:21) in which they see themselves being transformed (changed) into the image of Christ (the glory of the Lord in all its radiant splendor). The more Christians look into this divine mirror, admiring what they behold therein, the more our characters will be changed to conform to His. When others look at us, they must see Jesus Christ in us. Those having the least amount of the characteristics of Christ evidence that they seldom gaze into the teaching of Christ, the divine mirror.

The other New Testament passage where the mirror is metaphorically used is James 1:23-25, "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." The man who merely reads or hears God's word without making personal application is like a man who examines his face in a mirror, notices that something needs to be improved, and walks away neglecting to make the improvement. This man is not blessed in what he does. Certainly he has benefited by looking into the mirror as it reveals what improvements need to be made.

The Hebrews writer stated that the word of God is "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12). As we all look into it with honest and good hearts we will see many things we need to improve. God's word shows us our true selves. The goal, of course, is to be more like Christ, by not forgetting what we see, but actually making the improvements. These effectual doers are blessed in what they do.

- Gary Smalley

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\* "If we know our 'rights,' do we know our 'wrongs'?"

\* "Give your burden to Weightlifter from Calvary!"

\* "The greatest enemy to answered prayer is unbelief!"

\* "Even a groan can be a prayer, provided it is directed toward God in faith, and not in rebellion!"

\* "If you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said!"

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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)