

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

January 21, 2024

Volume 44, # 04

A Great Evangelistic Tool

I think it works better than radio, better than auto-dialers, better than showings of Jule Miller filmstrips, better than mailing out a bulletin, better than Dial-a-Bible-Reading, better than debates, better than cable TV.

What is it? It's brethren not being conformed to the world.

If a church is made up of people who understand 184 current and past issues correctly, but their lives do not show superior conduct, servitude, and holiness, don't expect an auto dialer, computer, printer, broadcast antenna, or cable outlet to compensate for the failure.

When church members think like the world, dress like the world, talk like the world, and chase money and status symbols like the world, it is the world that is winning them, not the other way around.

When church members are selfish, egotistical, arrogant, and shallow, then they are not in a position to help the world to a higher plane.

If our families are splitting up, our children are dropping out, and our homes are little different from our neighbors then our "light" gets rather difficult to notice.

But if people learn self-denial (Luke 9:23), learn submission to God and care for our neighbor (Matthew 22), learn to be servants (John 13), learn to be content (1 Timothy 6:8), learn to invest in family (Titus 2:5; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6), and learn to clean out the inside of the cup, not just the outside (Matthew 23), then bright lights will shine.

"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light ... having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that ... they may glorify God" (1 Peter 2:9-12).

"Present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God ... and be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:1, 2).

We are not called simply to know some things different from the world — we are called to rise above the world, and to "be holy" (1 Peter 1:15). And when people become that kind of light in the world, they become great evangelistic tools in God's service.

And it will far exceed the effect of debates, radio, TV, and mail outs.

- Scott Smelser

Pouting

Anyone who has raised children or ever met one has seen him or her pout. Mommy doesn't fork over a quarter for the gum ball machine or Daddy tells him to stop hitting his sister with the dog and the pout is on. Lower lip protrudes, chin droops, tears well, spirit disappears.

Children pout when they don't get their way and often when they are chastened for doing the wrong thing. Sometimes you tell them not to play with their food, and they exclaim, "Fine, I won't eat at all." They pout because they think they are punishing their parents, and if parents cave into the pout, they will never see an end to the behavior.

Pouting, however, is not a behavior that automatically ceases on the day of one's baptism or eighteenth birthday, whichever comes first. Husbands and wives pout when unwillingly put on the compromising side of some matter. Church members have even been known to pout.

Should an elder or parent make a critical comment to a Bible class teacher, some will exclaim, "Fine, I just won't teach class anymore." If their pout is in low gear, they may choose the silent approach instead and just refuse ever to sign up again.

Maybe someone makes a suggestion about the communion preparation, building cleaning or something else. The person responsible for things feels reprov'd and rejected and throws on the pout face. "Fine, I just won't do anything anymore!"

Some pouters go so far as to threaten to take their membership elsewhere when they receive the slightest criticism or the sincerest rebuke. Friend, this is not what Jesus had in mind when he admonished people to come to him "as little children." Childlike trust, yes; childish immaturity, no.

Can you imagine Apollos pouting because of the correction wrought by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18)? Can you see Peter's lower lip sticking out after Paul rebuked him for hypocrisy (Galatians 2)?

Spiritual maturity includes the ability to accept suggestions and even corrections without going to pieces and putting on a martyr face. God chastens us because he loves us and our parents have done the same (Hebrews 12:1-11). Usually, when a brother in Christ conjures up the courage to suggest or correct, he has the same selfless motive -- to help. Either he is trying to save a soul from death (James 5:19-20) or he is just trying to help me be a more effective steward of God's gifts and opportunities. Not all suggestions are good, just as not all rebukes hit their mark, but it takes honest meditation to determine what is actually helpful. Rather than resorting to defensiveness and pouting, accept another's assistance in the spirit it is given and do all to the glory of God, even if that means sacrificing a little of your own.

- J.S. Smith via *The Woodmont Beacon*, March 13, 2005

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR

Several years ago, I received the following message:

"You have just received the 'West Virginia Virus.' As we ain't got no programming experience, this virus works on the honor system. Please delete all the files from your hard drive and manually forward this virus to everyone on your mailing list. Thanks for your cooperation, West Virginia University Computer Engineering Dept."

I thought this was humorous and passed it along to several of my friends (incidentally, feel free to substitute the state of your choice when you pass this on to your friends).

Shortly thereafter, I received the following brief message from one of them: "Done. Is that all?"

The thought that someone might take the above joke seriously and follow its instructions caused me a moment of concern. Fortunately, she didn't erase any files and was just having fun with me in return.

But that caused me to think about the many people who make the same mistake spiritually. Solomon speaks often in the book of Proverbs about the need to listen to the advice of others. He says that a fool is someone who refuses to listen to others. But, Solomon also calls a man a fool if he believes everything others say without evaluating the truthfulness of what is said (Proverbs 14:15). The Bible refers to this process of evaluating as "discernment."

John warned, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1).

As we move along our life's path, we find ourselves constantly faced with issues of discernment. The construction of "new lanes" is never-ending on the "information highway." Our daily challenge, as Christians, is to know which exit to take.

My prayer for each of you is the same one that Paul offered on behalf of the Philippians: "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment ..." (Philippians 1:9) Have a great day!

- Alan Smith and Kelly Breece, via Thought For The Day

A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY

We first find this phrase in Exodus 3:8, where the Lord God spoke to Moses from the burning bush: "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey ..." It is the divinely chosen phrase that sums up the abundant fertility of the Promised Land. The phrase is found three more times in Exodus (3:17; 13:5; 33:3), once in Leviticus (20:24), four times in Numbers (13:27; 14:8; 16:13, 14), five times in Deuteronomy (6:3; 11:9; 26:9; 27:3; 31:20), one time in Joshua (5:6), two times in Jeremiah (11:5; 32:22), and twice in Ezekiel (20:6, 15). That makes for a total of nineteen times.

"Milk and honey" were two important agricultural products that served as a summary report about the lavish conditions of the land. The abundant goodness of the agricultural production in the land that God would give to His people is described in a few other passages, which refer to plentiful brooks of water, fountains, springs, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey (Deuteronomy 8:7-9). The description in verse 9 reads, "a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper." Deuteronomy 11:10-12 gives this description: "For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year." The twelve spies who searched out the land reported: "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey!" (Numbers 13:27).

Certainly, aside from bread, milk was the most important staple in the diet of the Israelites. A picture of fruitful farming comes to mind by contemplating an abundance of milk. The land had to be rich in pasturage. It could be that honey, known for its sweetness, but not regarded as necessary for survival, was in many places so scarce that it was regarded as a luxury. If these concepts of abundance are accurate, it makes for a greatly desired life of total satisfaction through a variety of products. The concept of “flowing” would certainly appeal to any people who had experienced scarcity in life. What a wonderful blessing for the people of God!

- Gary Smalley

* "Prayer will drive sin out of your life; or sin will drive prayer out!"

* "Obedience to God removes pretense from our prayers!"

* "No one is poor who can by prayer open the storehouse of God!"

* "No one can live wrong and pray right; no one can pray right and live wrong!"

* "Prayerfulness begets carefulness!"

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)