

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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March 03, 2024

Volume 44, # 10

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### Things Are Bad, But--

The J.W.s, radio prophets, and other cultists, rely heavily upon our tendency to agree with pessimistic appraisals of current events, and dire predictions for the future. Shock the next prophet of doom who comes knocking at your door. When he begins to talk about crime rates remind him that much of this is the side effect of our emphasis upon individual freedom. Ask him if he wants to go back to the serf and feudal lord system. He will say, "But our morals are so low" — and you can say that national morals have a way of swinging up and down — that saints are in, but not of, the world. Anyhow, things are nothing like as bad as in the Middle Ages. If he thinks our government is corrupt cite a few cases from the deterioration of the Roman Empire.

While he is staggering, tell him how the early Teutons would open a man's belly, tie one end of his intestine to a post, and make him circle it until he unwound himself. (All in fun of course — real good joke.) If he hasn't fainted, tell him about the tortures of the Inquisition, when governments used trial by thumb screws, rack, and fire. A man was guilty as charged unless he could drink hot oil without harm, or walk through fire. Our courts are better than that. Things are always bad enough to challenge our efforts to improve. An honest look at ourselves may show us where particular attention is needed. But do not lend your wail to doom criers who use this wedge to open your heart for their brand of medicine. Ask the man who thinks times are so bad, how he is getting along. It is amazing how bad the whole can be even while the parts are prospering. Maybe the past is better because it is past. And as your dark cloud gathers his tracts to leave, sing him this song: *Granddad, viewing earth's worn cogs, Said things were going to the dogs. His granddad, in his house of logs, Said things were going to the dogs. His granddad, in old Ireland's bogs, Said things were going to the dogs. His granddad, in his old skin togs, Said things were going to the dogs. So there's one thing I have to state, The dogs have had a good long wait.*

- Robert F. Turner, via Plain Talk, April, 1975

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## God's Will -- Our Sanctification

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." (1 Thessalonians 4:3) The sanctification of God's children is a vitally important thing. Webster defines the word, sanctify, "1. To set apart to a sacred office or to a religious use; to hallow: 2. To make free from sin or purify, As the affections of men." The Greek word here is *agiasmos* and is defined by Thayer as "1. consecration, purification 2. the effect of consecration; sanctification of heart and life . . . It is opposed to lust in 1 Thessalonians 4:3."

Today the church is God's agency to proclaim His truth and salvation to a lost world. (Ephesians 3:10) but to do this effectively it must be composed of a consecrated people, a "peculiar people" ("a people for his own possession", ASV, Titus 2:14) whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit in which God is to be glorified (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) by letting their lights shine through their good works (Matthew 5:14-16). This means that Christians must be pure, as free from sin as is humanly possible. Specifically, in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, sanctification is contrasted to fornication, which is moral impurity. Fornication and its companion sin, adultery, are sins committed when sexual lust is turned loose. (See James' description, James 1:13-15).

### Danger Involved

The seriousness of this sin is seen in Paul's statement, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18). Since the Christian's body is God's temple, by committing this sin he defiles God's temple (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17). These sins have plagued God's people for ages. The weakness of man in this respect has led to his downfall many times. Paul speaks of the fall of twenty-three thousand in one day because of this (1 Corinthians 10:8), as it was through this sin that Balaam of old was able, in a measure, to accomplish what he had failed to do with his attempts to curse, even though forbidden by God (cf. Revelation 2:14, 2 Peter 2:15). The examples could be multiplied, but let this suffice. Today the sins of moral impurity demolish homes and form others out of their ruins. This often-repeated process poses a threat to American security far greater than all the powers of antagonistic countries. Sodom of old fell victim to God's wrath because of its impurity. Can we hope to escape if we too fall victim to our own lusts?

### Contributing Factors

In spite of the dangers involved, people, and too often Christians, are inclined to lightly consider factors contributing to destruction of pure morals. Movies, television, many

books and magazines with their lewd pictures and lascivious stories set the minds of youth and adults in the direction of evil. It has been true (how many times no one knows) that teachers, psychologists, and even religious leaders, in books and in counsel have advised young people to experiment sexually in preparation for marriage. This is simply telling them that the Bible means nothing, that fornication is not wrong. A more abominable lie has never been palmed off on humanity. The increasing trend toward nudity, the breaking down of modesty, is another factor contributing to the destruction of moral integrity. The alarming rate of divorce in our nation and even in the church is cause for shock and shame, and its end is destruction. The mixed dancing, now almost nationally taught in public schools, will contribute immeasurably to the destruction of morals and through this to the destruction of America.

### The Remedy

The remedy must be in proper teaching and training. Upon parents and the church lies the responsibility to point the way by teaching God's Word, but the pitiful thing is that we many times practice and condone these evils and cannot teach against what we ourselves practice, with any lasting effect. (See Romans 2:17-24.) Preachers of the gospel need the moral courage to, in the face of any consequences, preach God's truth. God wills our sanctification. How can we lead others to God's way of salvation while walking in sin? (See Romans 6:1, 2.) Let us, brethren, agree with God and seek to be truly consecrated, sanctified people.

- Ollie Duffield, via Truth Magazine, December, 1956 [slightly edited, GFS]

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## Interest

"I can't get interested in the church", remarked a young lady.

"NO," was the reply given her. "You can hardly expect to. It is somewhat like getting interest at the bank. You have to put in something first, and the more you put in - time or money or prayer - the more the interest grows."

- Unknown

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## Maintain Purity

When one speaks the doctrine of Christ without addition or subtraction, he speaks by the authority of heaven. When younger men do this in the setting of older and more mature men, such as elders in the local church, the adverse devil may use the occasion to tempt

the younger to refrain from speaking parts of the doctrine or the older to disparage one because of his age. Thus the apostle Paul instructed: "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." (1 Timothy 4:12). The more mature were not to belittle his youth, but he could aid them in that effort and eliminate criticism by being an example for all believers "in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity". Purity is moral excellence, and every Christian's example of purity is Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 3:3). Who can successfully argue with a righteous example of purity?

Purity is again mentioned by Paul in this letter: "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity." (1 Timothy 5:1-2). The moral excellence demonstrated by Christ and commanded by the inspired apostle was to be demonstrated in word and deed by Timothy, the young servant of Jesus Christ. Perseverance in this course would "ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." (1 Timothy 4:16).

Notice that the Christian's purity becomes apparent by how he interacts with others. His words in teaching and interaction with others are not trivial; they relate to salvation! Insults, harsh and condescending words do not encourage others to walk as Christ walked. The Christian's behavior should demonstrate "love, faith and purity," as well as other "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23) and gracious virtues (2 Peter 1:5-8).

Mistreatment of others is a tell-tale sign of neglect of devotion to the Lord God. Sadly, I have been an eye and ear witness to a younger "Christian" raising his voice to an older man and verbally brutalizing an older woman. There is no purity in that kind of behavior, only shame!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The devil is willing for you to profess pure religion as long as you do not practice it!"

\* "When opportunity knocks, too many people complain about the noise!"

\* "Another good thing about telling the truth is you don't have to remember what you say!"

\* "God answers prayer, not advice!"

\* "The human race seems to have improved everything except people!"

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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)