

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Cutting A Little Slack

There are phrases which we use that are at times very interesting as pertaining to their origin and history. As you might recognize, we are thinking about individuals viewing others with the attitude of "cutting them a little slack." Recently I read in western novels where the phrase was used and it appears that the words were referring to a cowboy with his lariat or rope around the neck of a horse or cow. He could put too much force on the rope and possibly do harm to the animal and himself. Hence, it was suggested that he slack up some and prevent injury from occurring. The task would be completed or accomplished with the slack being given.

From this original use, the words in a figurative sense have been adopted to apply to individuals or circumstances in life today. This involves an attitude toward others with whom we have contact. To practice this principle is certainly in keeping with what Jesus spoke in Matthew 7:12. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them for this is the law and the prophets." It is quite certain that none of us would have our brethren judge us with such severity that they never cut us any slack. Paul perhaps had this principle in mind when he wrote, "Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5).

There Are Certain Things Involved When One Follows the Principle of "Cutting A Little Slack."

Mercy. We serve a merciful heavenly Father who expects His children to show mercy. One of the beatitudes speaks of this. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). James stressed the importance of mercy by writing: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). If we aren't careful, we get so involved in stressing some of the requirements of God that we lose sight of being merciful to those who need it. We have known individuals who actually expected more of some brethren in obedience than God

has ever commanded. I have felt that mercy involves helping a person obey the commandments and requirements of God just as easily as possible. Are we saying that mercy grants a person the privilege of ignoring God's commandments? No indeed! But it does help the guilty party to comply with God's requirements in cutting one as much slack as possible. We should be merciful because God commands it and also in the consideration that we may be needing it in the event of weaknesses in our lives that could often develop. Those who have shown mercy can normally expect it from others if and when they need it.

Righteous Judgment. This is another factor involved in cutting one some slack. Oftentimes individuals make judgments before the facts are known. Some do not even care to know the facts. They make no effort at giving a person the benefit of the doubt. Jesus said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). There is judgment that is condemned (according to the appearance) and then there is judgment that is commanded (but judge righteous judgment). Jesus spoke of hypocritical judgment in Matthew 7:3-5. "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye?" Such judgment is not helping a brother in cutting him any slack. We need to practice righteous judgment by not expecting of others what we would not do ourselves. We need to think of a possible beam in our own eye when we are beholding a mote in our brother's eye.

Consistency. This is a word that should be a very vital part of our lives. It is highly possible for one to cut a great deal of slack for the friend and withhold such from the one that is not considered a friend. We do not deny that it takes more effort and heart to cut the slack for one that is less friendly than it does for the one who shows friendship. This is where our influence can greatly be lacking in quality. Be ready to cut the slack to all those who would desire it. There have been incidents where individuals have strongly voiced criticism of other people's children. They have been known to be very vocal in condemning their behavior. They didn't take any effort to cut these parents any slack! Guess what? Now they have children and what do they desire? You guessed it! "Cut us a little slack in the problems we have of discipline and teaching them the proper manners, etc." This comes back again to the previous statements of mercy and righteous judgment that we should be careful to exert. I am reminded of the preacher who had three sermons on how to rear children. Sometime later, he had three children and no sermons. Don't you suppose he would desire someone to cut him a little slack as he faces the problems he once failed to see that others were having?

Finally brethren, the word of God is the word of God. We have no right to change any of it. Help people to obey it, but never think we can be slack in obeying the truth.

- Bobby K. Thompson

Great Expectations

"And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel . . ." (Luke 2:25, NASB95)

We spend a good part of our lives waiting. We wait for the time when we can ride a bike without help. We wait for when we can go to school. We wait for our first job. We wait for marriage, and kids, and grandkids. We wait for retirement. We wait for death. Luke introduces two people who had long awaited the arrival of Jesus: Simeon and Anna. They are present in the temple at Mary's purification and Jesus' dedication, forty days after his birth (Luke 2:22-24; see Leviticus 12:6-8; Exodus 13:2, 12).

Two things impress us about Simeon and Anna: their ages and their devotion. Simeon was near the end of his life (Luke 2:26, 29) and was looking for the arrival of the Messiah, "the consolation of Israel" (v. 25). Anna was eighty-four years old, and had been a widow for years (vv. 36-37).

Both were godly people. Simeon is described as righteous, devout, and full of the Spirit (v. 25). Anna resided and served in the temple, and devoted herself to regular prayer and fasting (v. 37).

Why were they so eager and excited about the arrival of this seemingly normal but obscure baby? Someone has said that atheists look for God the way thieves look for the police. In other words, what a person seeks reflects his or her character. Anna and Simeon sought a Savior. They sought the One who would bring salvation, light and glory into the world (vv. 29-32). In looking for this Savior, they found the child.

Simeon and Anna were awaiting the Messiah's first coming. Jesus' disciples today are awaiting His second coming.

What are you waiting for?

- Cloyce Sutton II

Clippings . . .

Proverbs 26:13 - The slothful man is utterly reluctant to his work. When therefore his indolence is disturbed, he is ingenious in inventing excuses, and fancying dangers, which have no real existence. For "he, who has no mind to labour, never wants pretences for idleness." [-Patrick] His insincerity lulls his conscience to sleep in his false excuses. Were it as easy to be spiritual as to wish to be so, who would not be a Christian? If it were only one great effort, soon to be accomplished, it would be worth the struggle. But to see no end of the toil, duty upon duty, trouble following trouble, no breathing-time of rest -- is an appalling hindrance. And therefore a fierce lion in the way -- a lion in the streets excuses him from a decided profession.

- Charles Bridges (1794-1869)

OUR WORDS!

Words that come from our mouths have great power! They can be beneficial or destructive. Words reveal our character.

The words of Jesus Christ are the most powerful words ever spoken; they have eternal consequences: (1) His words will call all of mankind forth from the grave. "... an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29). (2) His powerful words will be the basis of judgment upon all of mankind. "... the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." (John 12:48).

Many people use empty or false words in their dealings with other people. Maybe they have not realized this: "...every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:36-37). People who use the tongue to deceive others do not fear God (Romans 3:13, 18).

All of our relationships with others are improved when we say what we mean and mean what we say. Good character is strengthened and reputation is improved when others trust and rely on our words.

- Gary Smalley

- * "There are many ways to practice idolatry without bowing down to carved pieces of wood or stone!"
 - * "Never look down on anyone unless you are helping them up!"
 - * "Most friction in life is caused by the tone of the voice!"
 - * "You cannot help someone change through the power of the gospel if they will not first admit that they are wrong!"
 - * "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you." (1 Samuel 12:20-21, 24).
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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)