

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The Church's Purpose**

What is the purpose of the Lord's church? Is it to eradicate poverty, disease, social injustice, illiteracy from among men? Is it to bring about a cessation of war and conflict? Is it to campaign for a temptation-free society for Christians to live in?

If the church had as one of its great goals the eradication of disease, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish that goal. Could not the same power that enabled one blind man to see have enabled all blind men to see; that enabled one lame man to walk have enabled all lame people to walk; that cured many people of varied diseases have cured all people of all diseases? And could not this same power have been given to the church in all generations?

If the church has as one of its great goals the eradication of poverty, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish this purpose. After all, He fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. He similarly fed four thousand on another occasion. Could not He who did these marvelous works have enabled His church in all generations to feed, clothe, and shelter the impoverished masses of the world through miraculous powers?

If the Lord had wanted His church to become a lobbyist group to apply political pressure toward a temptation and persecution free society in which to live, He would have given instructions in that direction. He did not even lead His church into a direct effort to destroy slavery, but taught the Christian slave to be a better slave and the Christian master to treat his slaves as he would have his heavenly Master treat him (Colossians 3:22-4:1).

The church's purpose is to save souls and prepare people for eternity- It holds out to the impoverished the hope of some day walking a street of gold; to the suffering a time when there will be no pain; to the sorrowing a moment when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It tells the tempted and persecuted that there is value in these afflictions, that the testing of their faith is "more precious than of gold," and to rejoice - It tells all to live godly lives in whatever environment they find themselves. It seeks to change people through the power of the gospel, not society through the coercion of legislators - Its

weapons "are not carnal, but are mighty through God." Its motivating theme: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

When churches become involved in hospital and health clinic work, or when they build schools for the education of their children, or when they see as one of their great missions to provide for the world's poverty, or when they feel obligated to create social upheaval and campaign for human rights, or when they feel called upon to express their views on the government's use of nuclear armaments or whatever, they have a distorted view of the purpose of the church.

- Bill Hall

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## Be Careful, You're Bending That Twig!

We are all aware of the old proverb that says, "As a twig is bent, so will it grow." And when we seriously consider this, we know it is true. But it is so easy to forget this lesson. For parents, Solomon expressed the same principle when he said, "Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

Parents, remember, you are bending that twig. One way or the other, to the right or to the left, for better or for worse, you are determining the course of life which that child will take. Be careful, lest you bend it in the wrong way!

Paul commanded parents to "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4). This includes:

1. Train your children in morality - in clean thoughts, words and deeds. "Wild oats" (corruption) that is practiced in childhood and adolescence cannot be productive of purity later. If you complacently watch their immodesty in childhood, you can expect to see impurity in adulthood.
2. Train them in honesty. It is still the best policy! Help them to regard truth and fidelity as precious qualities. Show them, by word and by example, that half-truth is only a lie and that a man's word should be as good as his bond.
3. Train them to respect authority, always - the policeman, the teacher, the parent and the Lord. If they do not learn to respect the first three, they will hardly respect the Lord either.

Your children deserve the best you can give them. They did not ask to be born, and their destiny is not really in their own little hands, but in your strong or weak will. And the best you can give them is not just measured in education, culture, financial security, etc., but in character which you produce in them.

Children are like Jello. Parents are the mold. What will your children become when they have been formed after your pattern and by your direction? Yes, you are bending that twig. Be sure you bend it right.

- Leslie Diestelkamp

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## *Clippings . . .*

### **When I Lose My Temper!**

When I have lost my temper, I have lost my reason, too;  
I'm never proud of anything which angrily I do.  
When I have talked in anger, and my cheeks are flaming red,  
I've always uttered something which I wish I hadn't said.  
In anger I have never done a kindly deed, or wise,  
But many things for which I felt I should apologize.  
In looking back across my life and all I've lost or made,  
I can't recall a single time when fury ever paid.

- Unknown

### **Be Thankful!**

Matthew Henry, author of a widely respected 19th century commentary on the whole Bible, was once robbed. In his diary that evening he wrote the following words: "Let me be thankful: First, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because even though they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

Doesn't that remind you of the beautiful song, Count Your Many Blessings? Think of the words: "Count your many blessings, name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." God has been so good to each one of us. We have received blessings we certainly have not deserved. Let us be ever thankful, and express our thanksgiving to God constantly in prayer.

- Unknown

### **A Public Confession**

Suppose that you leave your family someday by just walking away for three or four weeks or months! You don't help your wife care for the children; you leave no way for them to get by except what they may do for themselves. You are not concerned about whether or not the rent is paid, there is food to eat, or the other needs are met.

But suddenly one morning, you walk in about breakfast time and you inquire where your breakfast is, without a word of apology to your wife and children. You feel no shame for your behavior and do not state that you have repented. How many wives would put up with such a scoundrel for a husband? Or, how many husbands would put up with a wife who did something like this?

Yet, there are members of the church who think nothing about leaving the services for weeks at a time. They are not concerned about the Lord's work, do nothing to support it during these weeks, and they show no sign of shame when they return. They just sit down at the Lord's table and start eating again with no word of apology or explanation. ARE YOU GUILTY OF THIS?

- Unknown

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## **The Kingship and Majesty of Faith!**

In Luke 17:5 it is interesting that the group of apostles join together in a request of the Lord: "Increase our faith!" They had been rebuked by the Lord several times for having "little faith" (Luke 12:28; Matthew 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). It could be that these disciples who were the closest to Jesus still felt themselves lacking in view of the measure of quality that the Lord established for all followers, namely, to avoid any word or action that would cause others to stumble (verses 1-2), and to forgive as God forgives (verses 3-4). These are blessed virtues that are cultivated seriously by all children of God. The faith required to motivate the refinement of these virtues is often lacking in most people.

Is it not true that our needs regarding our faith are not much different than theirs? Do we not need to be asking our heavenly Father for help in building and strengthening our faith? The apostles wanted to improve their service to the King, and they were open to receive His help in so doing. Am I like them in this regard?

Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:8, 17). It is the very word that God has spoken and that the apostles preached. Our faith is made stronger as we trust Him to greater extent. Constant effort is required as learning, knowing, and living the Holy

Scriptures necessitates diligent effort. The careful disciple would agree that learning and spiritual growth is a life-long endeavor.

When you ask for an increase in your faith are you walking the path of cooperation that leads to success? Do you trust in the word of God that you have already learned? Are you faithfully committed to the Lord and His way? Are you striving to overcome temptations that Satan throws in your path? Do you remain open to receive instruction from the Lord? Do you love and encourage other disciples, building them up in the faith? Do you share the truth with others?

May the Lord help us to increase our faith! When the Lord requires it, may it be done. As the Lord calls, may my answer please Him: "Speak Lord, for your servant hears!" Oh, the kingship and majesty of precious faith!

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "Lascivious dancing has never improved the Christian character, but precisely the opposite!"
  - \* "An opinion is something we pick up and carry around. A conviction is something that picks us up and carries us around!"
  - \* "Every minute of life that is lost is gone forever. Use your time wisely!"
  - \* "What your conscience says is more important than what your neighbors say!"
  - \* "No man is prosperous whose immortality is forfeited. No man is rich to whom the grave brings eternal bankruptcy. No man is happy upon whose path there rests but a momentary glimmer of light, shining out between clouds that are closing over him in darkness forever!"
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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)