

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

VOLUME 22, NO. 10

JULY, 1991

HELPS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

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WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

1. A Christian is a person who is not as good as he wants to be. One who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness--practical righteousness. Philippians 3:12, "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*"

2. A Christian is a person--any person, black or white, rich or poor, young or old, learned or ignorant, who has lost all hope in himself and has found the good hope in Christ. He rejoices in Christ Jesus and has no confidence in the flesh. He is disgusted with self and delighted with Christ. He is sick of self and fond of Him.

3. A Christian is one who is not as good as he will be. Matthew 5:6, "*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*" I John 3:2, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

4. A Christian is one who is legally perfect--perfect before the law of God--justified from all things. Acts 13:39, "*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*" Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not*

after the flesh, but after the spirit."

5. A Christian is one who has a heavenly Father. He has been born of God, therefore a child of God. The Christian has a wise and good Father. The Christian's Father is more concerned for his character than he is for his comfort. Hebrews 12:6, "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*"

HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE:

1. Humbly. Matthew 5:3, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

2. Hopefully. Romans 8:24, "*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*" The believer is delivered from the guilt of sin and hopes to be delivered from the presence of sin. His struggle against sin will end in ultimate victory. Philippians 1:6, "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

3. Happily. Philippians 3:1, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*" Luke 10:20, "*Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in*

heaven."

4. Prayerfully. Philippians 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*" We are to meet all problems and difficulties with prayer, and in fellowship with the brethren.

One of the big problems is what to do with resentments and hurt feelings. We are living in a jarring world of discord and strife and frustrations. Sin creates friction among men. Man has lost his brother because he has lost God.

The Lord's people do not find it easy to live with one another. We still have the rags of a fallen nature wrapped around us and the fleshly lust of a fallen nature within us. We will both give offence and receive offence. James tells us: "*In many things we all offend.*" We will have to be patient and forbearing with one another; otherwise we will break up into factions and fail to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Our context gives us God's prescription for keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We are to have all lowliness of mind and unselfishness, longsuffering and forbearance.

One of our biggest problems is what to do with resentments or hurt feelings, that come from insults and ill-treatment.

The basis of most resentments and hurt feelings and ill-will is a touchy unsundered self. Many of our insults are only imaginary. An oversensitive person is allergic to himself. He is an egocentric, which is plain selfishness. When we are surrendered to the will of

God for our lives, we will throw off resentments or hurt feelings just as a healthy skin throws off disease germs. Unless there is an inner disease or an abrasion of the skin, disease germs cannot get a foothold in the body. So when malice and ill-will get a foothold in the heart it shows there is a raw, sensitive self underneath, that has become soil for rooting and growth of resentments.

Our hurt feelings are in reality only wounded pride. An over-sensitive person is a problem to others and a threat to himself. When you go around with a chip on your shoulder, that chip is very apt to be from the block above--a head that holds an over-sensitive mind. George Washington Carver gave this example: "A preacher had his heart set on becoming pastor of a particular church, and because he did not get it, his wife became embittered and ill and died in a short time, and he himself became so upset that he quit the ministry." Resentment killed the body of one and the soul of the other. Authorities tell us that probably 60 percent of all diseases root in the mind.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH RESENTMENTS AND HURT FEELINGS?

1. We must not suppress them. This will only drive them down into the sub-conscious mind and there they will work under ground and make pouters and gloomy people of us.

2. We must not express them so as to explode them. When our feelings are hurt it will give temporary relief by giving the other person a piece of our mind. One woman felt better after telling another woman what she thought of her over the phone. Another woman said when she gets mad, she goes to the piano and banks out her resentments through Mozart's Sonatas with apologies to Mozart.

3. We must not nurse our hurt feelings. There is nothing that responds to nursing and petting like our hurt feelings. You can brood over ill treatment until that will be all you can do.

4. Do not parade your resentments before others--not even your best

friends. Take them to the Lord and he will take them away. "If some could just sit on the fence and see themselves go by, they would die laughing at themselves."

5. We must love our enemies and forgive them. This is not easy, but grace will help. If we only love those who love us and do good to those who do good to us, we are no different from the world. We must love and forgive and never hold malice all for Christ's sake. If you do not have a forgiving spirit and really want it, ask Christ for it.

6. We must think of others and not always insist on our own way. A man and wife were constantly quarreling. The quarrel usually began over the radio--he wanted the news and she wanted music. Then one day God came into his life and he was a changed man. When he returned home he walked to the radio and turned on the music. His wife looked at him in surprise, and said, "But this is the hour for news." "I knew it," he said, "but I thought you would like the music." She could hardly trust her ears, but responded by getting up and turning on the news. They learned to think of the other person first.

7. Practice the Golden Rule. Do unto others like you would want others to do unto you. Too many do others like others do them--they reciprocate. And too many do others before others can do them--they beat them to the draw--the Golden Rule preached by everybody and practiced by nobody.

WHY THE WORLD HATES A REAL CHRISTIAN

BY: C. D. COLE

John 15:18, *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."*

Introduction: A Christian is a believer in Jesus as the Christ and Lord. Saving faith is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a trust in Christ that accepts His Lordship. Saving faith does not say, "I will trust Jesus Christ to save from the flames, but I do not love Him and will to obey Him." Saving faith is accompanied by love and love causes us to keep His commandments. Saving faith is faith that fruits in works. If you tell me you have faith, I will know whether you have saving faith by what I see you do. You do nothing to show that you love Christ and His church and His people and His word, and I will place a question mark after your salvation. What you say, where you go, and what you do are mighty testimonies of what you are. You are not saved by what you say, nor by where you go, nor by what you do; you are saved by whom you trust. But the Holy Spirit who produces the faith in your soul also produces love, so that your faith worketh by love. When it comes to the way of salvation you are saved trusting the Lord Jesus Christ, but when it comes to the evidences of salvation, you are in the realm of works. Here is simple illustration: Take a tree: is it a good tree? How can we know whether it is a good tree? What is the final test? Is it not the fruit it bears? But did the fruit it bears have anything to do with making the tree good? The tree was good before it ever bore any good fruit. If the fruit had been bad, that would be proof that it was not a good tree.

Who makes us Christians? Do we make ourselves Christians? Then we are our own Saviour. Does the preacher make Christians by sprinkling some water on our heads, or by immersing our whole body in water? No, it is the

Holy Spirit who makes us Christians by His regenerating power. The church covenant says: "Having been led, as we believe by the Holy Spirit, to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, and being baptized on profession of our faith in Him, we covenant do thus and so." The Holy Spirit is the author of repentance and faith in us. It is He that caused us to hate sin and trust the Saviour. We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works--so that we can do good works.

Our text was spoken by Christ to His disciples. He told them they would not have an easy time in this world. Their bed would not be soft and their path would not be rosy. They would find themselves hated--hated for His name's sake.

Nobody likes to be hated, at least, I don't think they do. I don't. I would rather be loved than hated; and if I cannot be loved, I should prefer to be liked a little--but I don't want to be hated.

Now we must not be hateful; for there is no remuneration when we are hated because we are hateful. It is when we are hated for His sake that we may find great comfort.

WHY WAS JESUS HATED?

What did He do to be hated? Did He do anybody any harm? Did He go around stealing this and that? Did He lie on anybody? We find Him going around doing good. He fed the hungry; He opened the ears of the deaf, and the eyes of the blind. He healed the crippled; He called the dead from their graves. He took little children up in His arms and blessed them. And what was His reward? They hated Him. The religious world professed to believe in God, but when Jesus Christ came saying, "I am God; He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," they hated Him. They said, "We don't want a God like

you." They wanted a Christless religion. And that is what the religious world wants today--a religion without Christ, without His sovereign demands upon them. The religious world conspired to destroy Him and one of His own disciples treacherously betrayed Him.

Why was Jesus Christ hated? It was because the carnal mind is enmity against God, and He was God manifest in the flesh. When was men's hatred of Christ especially manifested? It was at His teaching. John 6:60-66, *"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?..."*

WHY IS THE REAL CHRISTIAN HATED?

It is for His name's sake--because he is identified with Christ. Loyalty to the truth will bring the world's hatred. Stand for the truth by lip and by life and you will be hated.

You may think that if you are kind and gentle like Christ, that you will be loved by the world. Not so. It is for being like Christ that the world hates the Christian. The more like Christ, the more severe will be your witness against the world.

Jesus said, "The world will love its own." Love exists among kindred spirits. "The world will love its own," but, Jesus said, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Stand for the truth and you will be hated.