

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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"THE LITTLE PREACHER"

Barry M. Grider

It is difficult for me to associate the word "little" with preaching. After all, preachers have big responsibilities. They often stand behind big pulpits. It is certain they have a big influence. They preach a big subject—God. Most preachers have big appetites. Yet often, shortly after a preacher moves to a new location, a dear old sister will call another dear old sister, and ask, "Have you met the new 'little' preacher?". Such a statement is made with much affection for the man who has come to their community to preach and teach the gospel.

Still, while I am not exactly sure why the word "little" is used to describe the preacher, there is an area where preachers, as indeed all Christians, should be little. Each one of us should have a little ego. The egotistical person is consumed with himself. He has an "I" problem. Jesus spoke about such a man when he related the parable of the foolish farmer.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying What shall *I* do, because *I* have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will *I* do: *I* will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will *I* bestow all my fruits and my goods. And *I* will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-21, emphasis BMG).

Of course, the context of this passage has to do with the sin of covetousness. Still, we see the man had an exaggerated opinion of himself. "Look what I have done," the egoist always says. The scriptures are filled with such individuals. Cain, Saul, Absalom, Nebuchadnezzar, and Diotrophes are just a few of the biblical characters who were beset with too much ego. God is displeased with those who think too highly of themselves. Paul wrote the following passages:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise (2 Cor. 10:12).

(Continued on page 4)

OH, THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP

Matthew Martin

It's not every day you wake up and have a seizure, but that seems to be what happened to me a couple of weeks ago. For seven hours I laid in a hospital bed as half a dozen doctors checked my reflexes, cat-scanned this, and poked and prodded that. Overall, I would say it was not my favorite day. But as the day waned on, and as people began finding out what happened, I started getting phone calls from people who just wanted to give a little moral support, and that made me feel better. At the end of the day, I started thinking about the calls I received and I realized how blessed I am just to have friends. The wise man wrote that a friend, "loveth at all times" (Pro. 17:17).

As he neared the end of his great life, the Apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy, saying, "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. 4:11). Is this a discouraging statement to read? Not at all. Let's not read this and think "poor Paul," rather this statement should be seen as a great example of the importance of having a good friend. How was Luke a good friend? He stuck with Paul when no one else was around. The Bible is filled with examples of good friends, and why they are so.

JOSHUA: WHO WENT WHEN HIS FRIEND COULD NOT

Moses was a great individual. But he was not perfect. Recall the events of Numbers 20. God told Moses to speak to the rock and water would come forth (Num. 20:8). Moses, out of frustration with the children of Israel, struck the rock twice (Num. 20:11). God still fed his children, but he had to punish Moses. Because of his disobedience, Moses was not allowed to lead the people into Canaan.

Thankfully, it does not end there. Oh, how sad it would have been for Israel to enter their promised land without a physical guide. Also Moses, no doubt many times, thought about how he was almost responsible for his people entering the promised land leaderless.

Israel **did** have a leader though. Someone **was** there to go, when his friend could not. Joshua, Moses' friend, stepped up and led his people into Canaan. They had no doubt developed a strong friendship over the years. There are many instances when Moses put his trust in Joshua to accomplish a task. One on occasion the Bible calls Joshua the minister of Moses (Ex. 24:13). Who better for God to choose to lead His people after Moses, than his good friend Joshua.

Joshua is proof of the value of friendship. May we be friends like he was, and go when our friends can not.

JONATHAN: WHO STOOD UP FOR HIS FRIEND

One of the most endearing statements found in the Bible concerning two friends, is that of 1 Sam. 18:1, where God describes the friendship of David and Jonathan as two souls knit together. Truly these were the closest of friends. Perhaps this friendship helped David be received by Jonathan's father, King Saul. After all, right after the Bible describes the friendship of David and Jonathan, one can read that David "went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war..." (1 Sam. 18:5).

Sadly though, as the Bible reader knows, because of David's great success in war, and the subsequent praise he received from the people, Saul became very jealous of David. He became so jealous in fact that he asked Jonathan his son to kill David (1 Sam. 19:1). Jonathan, however, would not do such an evil thing against David, his good friend. Jonathan warned his friend about the impending danger (1 Sam. 19:2), then he showed even more courage, and commitment to his friend, by standing up for him to his father. Jonathan said to Saul:

...Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause (1 Sam. 19:4-5)?

After that, Saul promised never to attack David. Though that promise was short lived (1 Sam 19:10), David still could rejoice that God had blessed him with such a friend as Jonathan. After all, at that point in Saul's life, his mental state was beginning to slip. Jonathan very well could have been putting his life on the line in protecting David. Still, it was something he was willing to do, by standing up for his friend.

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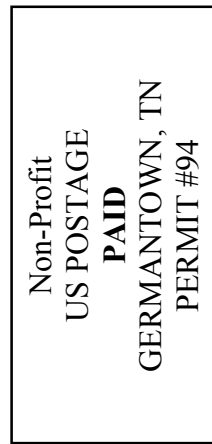
The egotistical person desires others to bow at his feet. One man, who became so filled with pride because of the adoration he was given, actually lost his life for receiving praise and worship that belonged only to God.

And upon a set day Herod arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, it is the vice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost (Acts 12:21-23).

Some individuals, and not a few preachers, spend their days promoting and applauding themselves, instead of seeking after that which will glorify and honor God. How do we overcome this sin? The answer is found in the person of Jesus Christ. No one could ever accomplish what Jesus accomplished while he walked on the earth. Yet there was nothing in Jesus' character that was egotistical. While He knew who He was (John 13:3; Phil 2:6), He was not consumed with self. Rather, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). Jesus came seeking and serving (Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10). He could only do this after He "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7 ASV). Someone has well stated, "Nothing is more empty than a self centered life, yet nothing is more centered than a self emptied life." The hymnographer wrote,

No friend like Him is so high and holy,
 No, not one! No, not one!
And yet no friend is so meek and lowly,
 No, not one! No, not one!

Let us have big dreams, big goals, big aspirations, and make big plans, but do so with little egos.



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