

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“Expect More Out Your Kids”

by Matthew Allen

Earlier this week, I participated in a discussion concerning alcohol and advertising. The debate was over whether alcohol companies target youth in their advertising. There is very strong evidence to suggest that the alcohol companies do in fact target adolescent audiences even though such persons are under the legal age to consume alcohol. The prevailing thought that came out of this group discussion was that large numbers of teens in our country drink and there are a number of factors that contribute to this problem. Perhaps part of the blame can be shared by the alcohol companies and a permissive society.

Some said the blame falls squarely on the shoulders of parents. I believe this to be true, which leads me to ask, “What about parents today who have the idea that teens are going to engage in this behavior no matter what?” I know of parents who have built areas in their own backyards in order for their children to have “parties.” One parent who did this told me, “at least I know where my son is, and I do not have to worry about him driving home drunk.” At the time, his child was well under the legal drinking age.

The idea of *its going to happen anyway* is everywhere in our society. Not only do we hear this in reference to teen consumption of alcohol, but we hear it in other areas as well:

- Sex: We are told *since it is going to happen* we better supply our youth with so-called “safe-sex” alternatives. Some parents now allow their children to have their boyfriend/girlfriend over to sleep together at home, because *it’s going to happen anyway*.
- Drugs: In Oregon , state legislators have passed a needle exchange law for heroine addicts. This is so they can turn in their dirty needles and exchange them for sterile ones in an effort to suppress the spread of HIV. *It’s going to happen*, we’re told and because of this some now even lobby to legalize drug use in America .

The *it’s going to happen anyway* line of thinking is scary because it places our culture on an extremely slippery slope. Could we not apply it to cheating? Lying? Smoking? Homosexuality? Reckless driving? Anything and everything? There is no end to it! Christians beware! The world can and does influence our thinking. Are we prepared to stand up for godly values and moral principles? Are we ready to do the *hard work* of instilling these values into our children?

What the *it’s going to happen anyway* approach suggests and why you need to be aware of it:

It suggests a ***defeatist mentality***. In effect, big business, some parents, and society in general attempt to lower the bar for our youth on a daily basis. How dare we throw up our hands and say we are helpless to correct a problem! Parents...**expect more out of your kids**. Hold them to high standards of

morality and conduct. Peter wrote, *"do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior"* (I Peter 1:14-15). We need to believe in our kids – they are capable of doing incredible things for God. They can be tremendous sources of light – if we will lovingly encourage them to do it.

It suggests a certain degree of **parental laziness**. In most cases, parents who give themselves over to this approach are not holding themselves to high moral standards. It takes time and effort to *train* our children in the ways of righteousness. It is the job of the parents to *bring* their children *"up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). Too many parents have let their careers and hobbies steer them away from raising their children. How many children in America are forced to raise themselves – even with both parents living inside the home?

It suggests a lack of belief in **moral absolutes**. There are matters of right and wrong that are unshakable. We must beware lest we give into the dominant thinking that there are different standards of morality. There is only one and it is from God. We need to humble ourselves before Him and submit to His ways. Christians have been told to *"walk as children of Light ... trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:8,10).

It suggests that some parents are fearful of being called **hypocrites**. There is a well-played public service announcement on many radio stations that encourages parents to get over the fear of being called a hypocrite by their children when they tell them not to do drugs. Some parents operate under the mentality that if they once engaged in bad behavior that somehow they are forever disqualified from holding their children accountable for reckless behavior.

The idea is that they are a hypocrite. If the parents have ceased the behavior and have learned from their mistakes, they **are not** being hypocritical when they forbid their children from unacceptable behavior. Going along with this, must our children know every detail of the "bad" things we did? We must be careful lest by revealing our past we give our children a "green light" to do things we would rather them not. It is easy for a child to rationalize that since his parents did it, he can too.

Parenting in today's world is hard. But it has always been hard. Our generation is no different from those who have come before us. Imagine trying to rear children with godly values in the corrupt, first-century Roman society. For those of us who have children at home, let's raise the level of expectation. Let's live by example in holding them to God's standard and teaching them to trust in God's ways.

"He who is steadfast in righteousness will attain to life, and he who pursues evil will bring about his own death. The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, but the blameless in their walk are His delight" (Proverbs 11:19-20).

"Permitted Does Not Equate To Desired"

by Doy Moyer

There is a difference between what God permitted to happen subsequent to sin entering the world and what God desired from the beginning and ultimately makes right in Christ. Jesus illustrates this point: "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way" (Matthew 19:8).

There is a difference between the ideal that God made "from the beginning" and what He allowed and regulated after sin entered the picture. From the beginning, God's desire for marriage was for there to be one man and one woman joined by Him. Sin came into the picture and corrupted this arrangement. Because of the hardness of men's hearts, God permitted and regulated divorce and polygamy. This is reversed in Christ. "Have you not read?"

I would argue that the same is true of slavery. God's intention from the beginning was not that people would own other people. Because of the curse of sin, slavery came into the picture and God regulated it (the first mention of slavery is in the context of a curse due to sin, Genesis 9:25).

The fact that God allowed and regulated these matters does not equate to God desiring them or intending for them to remain indefinitely. In fact, what we see in Christ is a reversal and renewal process. Jesus' argument in Matthew 19 gets back to the beginning for marriage (one man, one woman, no

divorce), and the entire gist of the New Covenant is built around the idea that freedom (primarily from sin, but includes being owned by others) is what God ultimately wants (John 8:32; cf. I Corinthians 7:21; Philemon). To see this clearly, though, one needs to study through the contexts and the bigger picture of Scripture from the beginning to the end.

When people point to matters like slavery or polygamy as proof that the Bible teaches error, they are missing the point of why these things existed and what God's intentions were through Christ. Sin brought many consequences and God permitted certain situations to exist due to corruption, but His plan all along was to bring back His desire "from the beginning" through Christ.

To see what God wanted all along, go back to the beginning. When sin came along, see how the curse of sin changed everything. Then see how God brings reversal and renewal through Christ. What God desires is what is found "from the beginning" and made anew in Christ. What God permitted and regulated for the hardness of hearts, while now commanding all to repent (Acts 17:30-31), is not a fair representation of what God desires and sets straight through Jesus Christ.

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles Melissa Felks, Star, and Roy Robinson.

Those Who Serve:

Announcements:	Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Lee Busby <i>1 Peter 1:1-2</i>
Song Leader:	Adam Harris
Lord's Supper:	Doug George
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon:	<i>"Learning Obedience Part 2"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Tim Harris Sr.

“Learning Obedience” Part 2

Lesson Text: **Hebrews 5:8-9– 1 Peter 1:1-2.**

IV. Obedience Is Following God’s Instructions.

- A. Accurately And Fully- Deuteronomy 4:2; Joshua 23:6.**
- B. Today’s Service Is Still Accurate.... 2 Timothy 2:15.**
- C. Noah Builds The Ark- Genesis 6:14-16.**
- D. He Followed God’s Instructions Fully- Genesis 6:22.**
- E. Moses Builds The Tabernacle- Exodus 25:31-40 (vs. 40).**
- F. He Followed God’s Instructions Accurately- Exodus 39:32.**
- G. Jesus Fully Carried Out His Mission- John 17:4.**
- H. Partial Obedience Is Not Obedience At All- 1 Samuel 15:20-23; Verse 26.**

II. Obedience Requires Personal Sacrifice.

- A. Hebrews 11:8.**
- B. Jesus Sacrificed His Life In Obedience- Mark 10:45.**
- C. We Must Sacrifice Our’s- Matthew 16:24-25.**
- D. Romans 12:1-2.**
- E. Time, Service, Commitment....**

III. Obedience Must Come From The Heart.

- A. Joel 2:12-13.**
- B. Matthew 15:8.**
- C. Luke 22:44.**
- D. We Win Hearts Over To Jesus- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.**
- E. Obedience Comes From The Heart In:**
 - (1) Worship- John 4:23-24; Ephesians 5:19.**
 - (2) Service To Others- I Corinthians 13:1-3.**
 - (3) Obeying The Gospel- Romans 6:17-18.**



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