

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

## IF I EVER SEE YOU

*Having looked into the tearful eyes of parents whose children have abandoned the Faith, I have learned there are a million miles between our children “going through the motions” in reference to their spiritual lives versus our children possessing hearts that dictate their actions. In this column, I plan to share with you what I hope to instill in the hearts of my own children and those whom I love.*

A normal Sunday morning routine often includes dressing appropriately, gobbling down a quick breakfast, and the driving to a church building. In all my years of attending worship, I have never approached that building in fear—but many people have. For many, a worship assembly is a hazardous obstacle course in which young course in which young children (and even older ones) one through the halls, oftentimes bumping into the elderly. For those who are constantly concerned with breaking a hip or taking a fall, this setting can be unnerving. And then, to add insult to injury (sometimes literal injury), many young people do not even acknowledge the elderly.

These are the same children who rush to the front of the line at a fellowship meal, pushing their way in front of the very individuals who spent all day Saturday or all morning on Sunday cooking. I’ve watched countless times as young people pile their plates high with chicken, pizza, and ham, and then, after only consuming two or three bites, they run off to play. Disrespect for the elderly is an epidemic in our society today—and sadly I don’t see many parents addressing the problem.

**Here’s what I intend on teaching my children about showing respect for the elderly.** Respect is not optional in my house—period. In Leviticus 19:32, we read *“you shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear you God: I am the Lord.”* Everything you see around you exists thanks to Almighty God and the ingenuity and hard work of generations who came before you. Do not forget that. When you look upon someone with hair that has turned white, let it be a reminder of his wisdom, experience, and the incredible marks he has made on this earth. *“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness”* (Proverbs 16:31). These are individuals who fought overseas for our freedom. They nursed and took care of you and your parents when we were little. Many have decorated church buildings with their handiwork and taught you Bible accounts before you could walk. They have earned our respect.

One of the very first memory verses you mother taught you was Ephesians 6:1-3: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother...”* The reason we focused on these verses was not so that you would view your parents as “masters,” but rather, so that you would grow up respecting and honoring us as the authority in the house. God puts a strong emphasis on honoring and respecting parents and the elderly. Our prayer is that one day you will naturally progress and transfer the honor and respect you have developed for your parents into your relationship with Almighty God. Proverbs 23:22 reminds us, *“Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”*

There is a reason God set up this hierarchy in the home. If you don’t honor and respect your parents whom you can see (and who are fallible), then how will you ever develop a proper honor and respect for God, whom you can’t see? During your lifetime, you will come across peers who “run the house” instead of their parents. While that may seem fun and enticing, it goes against God’s will. (And it isn’t ever going to happen at your house!). I feel sorry for those children because I know the spiritual foundation they are laying is built in sand. Consider how much harder it will be for these young people to build a proper relationship with God when they don’t honor, fear, or respect their parents.

Your mother and I have tried to work with each one of you on looking older people

*“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...”* (Amos 7:8)

**CHILDREN, AN HERITAGE OF THE LORD**

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I. They Represent a \_\_\_\_\_ Tomorrow

Notes:

II. They Represent a \_\_\_\_\_ Tomorrow

Notes:

III. They Represent a \_\_\_\_\_ Tomorrow

Notes:

**THE DEVIL’S BIBLE**

- **Foolishness 19:7:** “I’ll try anything once.”
- **Popular 6:9:** “Go ahead, everyone else is doing it.”
- **Cowardly 1:10:** “The best thing to do when Christ and His church are criticized is to keep silent. Critics might get angry if you speak up.”
- **Indifference 3:4:** “I’m tired after working all day and cannot attend church services.”
- **Deceit 8:15:** “It makes no difference what one believes as long as he is sincere.”
- **Pride 31:3:** “If I become a Christian, my friends will think I’ve become a religious fanatic. I don’t like to be laughed at.”
- **Foolishness 6:6:** “One drink will do no harm.”
- **Excuses 1:1:** “I’m afraid to discuss the Bible with others. Anyway, they won’t listen.”
- **Apostasy 2:5:** “What difference does it make whether we follow the New Testament or not?”
- **Heartache 7:2:** “I’ve never cheated on my spouse before, but everybody does. No one will ever find out about this one time.”
- **Hypocrisy 6:5:** “When we go home from college on weekends, we go to church so the home folk will think we are faithful at school.”
- **II Opinions 2:4:** “One church is as good as another; therefore, attend the church of your choice.”

in the eye when they speak to you. Speak clearly and listen carefully to what they are saying. We have encouraged you to build relationships with the widows of our congregation. We know that both you and those elderly will benefit greatly from that type of relationship. Do not think that just because they are older, they don’t have something wonderful to add to your lives. In Psalm 71:9, we are reminded, “*Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails*” (see also Proverbs 20:29).

I encourage you to listen to their stories of youth and what life was like many years ago; you’ll learn a lot, and you just may find you enjoy hearing about “the good old days.” There is a reason God wants older women to train younger ones. Paul in writing to Titus said, “*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children*” (Titus 2:4). We can learn so much from this special group of people.

Unfortunately, many people in our society view elderly people in a negative way—almost as a nuisance. Aging is almost looked upon as a disease in our culture. But remember, these are individuals who have been running the Christian race for decades, and now, in the winter of their lives, they are anxiously expecting their reward. Aging is not a disease—but rather a reminder from God that this earth was never meant to be our final resting place. Always treat those older than you with respect and dignity.

I should not have to tell you that running in the church building is not acceptable, but let me remind you once again. Church buildings are not playgrounds. I hope that you will have the courage to influence your friends if you see them running and horsing around inside the church building. If your mom and I see you doing it, you can expect a swat as a reminder. Rather than knocking over the elderly, it would please my heart to see you offer an arm in assistance, or hold the door. I encourage you to develop a habit of standing when ladies and the elderly enter the room as a gesture of honor and respect.

While eating last at a fellowship meal may seem like a little matter, it reveals a much bigger heart issue. By allowing the elderly to go first, you are acknowledging their importance. In a small way, you are reminding them that you are thankful for all they have done during their lifetimes. Even if your friends jump to the front of the line, we want you to set an example—and allow the elderly to go before you.

We have taught you since you were small that you are valuable to God and the church. Don’t forget that the older people are valuable too. Use the beautiful brains God gave you and think of ways to show them their value. I promise that you’ll be glad you did. *Love, Dad.*

*-Brad Harrub*

**DO I REALLY LOVE MY BROTHER?**

“Hatred” is a strong word and carries with it very significant implications. The word itself means “to detest” or “a strong feeling of dislike or ill will.” With it is carried the implication that there is no care felt about a person’s well being either now or eternally. And while such an emotion should never be felt for anybody, it is especially disturbing when such discord is felt among brethren. Some, though, would loudly proclaim that never in a million years, even amidst the harshness with which some brethren treat each other, would a brother hate another brother in Christ. But if that were really true, and brotherly hatred was something with which the church never had to deal, why would John have been inspired to write about that very topic?

*“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (I John 2:8-11).*

So along with the implications it carries, hatred is found to have equally strong consequences; consequences that we should be seeking to avoid at all costs. With all of this in mind, it perhaps is prudent to ask, “Do I really love my brother?” Such a question might seem over the top, but the way we answer that question will determine our eternal salvation. Are the ill feelings that I may feel toward a brother in Christ those over which I am willing to lose my soul? Is holding a grudge worth losing the eternal salvation that I could otherwise enjoy? These are the realities surrounding the topic of brotherly love. How, though, can I know if I truly love my brother?

In I Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul was inspired to write an exceptional essay on that very topic. What is brotherly love, and how is that love put into practice? These are questions that Paul would go on to answer in that great chapter. Therefore, to answer the question “Do I really love my brother?”, it would perhaps be relevant to ask some questions relating to that very chapter.

First, among the many we could find from this chapter, one question might be “am I short-tempered toward my brethren?” Notice how that in vs. 4, Paul stated that “*charity suffereth long, and is kind.*” This long-suffering was defined by Lipscomb as “the protracted endurance of wrong, such as is fitted to provoke resentment.” Should we tolerate sin and iniquity? No. But that does not mean that proper respect cannot still be shown even in the midst of disagreement. Surely it is better to respectfully disagree than to disrespectfully disagree. The former would make it more likely that the person in the wrong can be reached. However, if I have no concern for whether they are reached with what is true and right, then my disposition will be matched by my attitude. Therefore, if love is longsuffering and kind, but I am not, then I must ask, “Do I really love my brother?”

Second, a question that would be good to ask might be, “do I make quick assumptions about my brethren?” In vs. 5, Paul would say about charity that it “*thinketh no evil.*” True brotherly love demands that we think the best of each other. That does not mean we overlook clear evidence if evil is committed, but it means that when a question might arise we assume the best. What kind of marriage would a couple have if every time a husband is a few minutes late coming home the wife assumes he is having an affair? That relationship could very easily fall apart, even though nothing wrong was ever done. Often instead of seeing the facts or seeking the facts, brethren are often quick to assume the worst of each other. Why? Are we in a competition as Christians? Do I believe that the destruction of my brother will lead to my exaltation? Such attitudes are not the attitudes of Christians! Therefore, if love thinks no evil, but I jump to conclusions without warrant, then I must ask, “Do I really love my brother?”

And third, a question that could be asked would be, “do I rejoice in the faults of my brethren?” Paul would go on to say in vs. 6 that love “*rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth.*” How can brethren in Christ possibly have joy in the failures of each other, especially those failures of the soul? Earlier in Romans 1, Paul had addressed the topic of those who had been given up to vile affections, and among them were those “*who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*” (Romans 1:32). That possibly is the best description that could be given to those who are glad when their brethren fail—they are vile. True love does not rejoice in iniquity, but in truth; therefore if I find joy in the faults of my brethren, then I must ask, “Do I really love my brother?”

New Testament Christianity is a family affair. It is something at which we must work together in order to fulfill God’s plan for the body of His Son (I Corinthians 12:12-27). But the body will never function together as expected if its members do not have love for each other. Am I really seeking to do the will of the Father? Do I really want to be part of the great reunion that will take place in heaven? Do I really love my brother?

-Andy Brewer