

THE FINAL PAGE



The little boy's name is Calvin. Of course, he's only a comic strip character, and his best friend, Hobbs, is actually only a stuffed tiger who becomes very life-like in Calvin's imagination. Its the only comic I read with regularity. I, for one, do not think that Bart Simpson holds a candle to Calvin, in entertainment value; in wit; or in educational value (yes, Calvin actually gives me some worthwhile things to think about).

Last week there was another Calvin strip that got me thinking. Calvin is hunched over an ant hill, talking to the ants. He says, "Hey ant, you're working like a maniac and what have you got to show for it?" In the next scene, Calvin continues: "What's the colony done for you lately? What about your needs?" Then Calvin throws up his arms and exclaims, "You don't owe anybody anything! Let the others fend for themselves! Move out! Discover yourself! Express your individuality!" In the final scene, Calvin confidently places his hands on his hips, smiles in a self-satisfied way, and explains, "If they listen, this will solve our ant problem."

Many today exemplify the attitudes Calvin was trying to instill in the ants. Rugged independence, lack of consideration for others, and a "what's in it for me?" attitude. Many of the heroes in films, TV and books are those who break the rules and flaunt their "independence." "I gotta be me!" It is not a good thing that interest in the common good is trashed in favor of an obsessive interest in the individual. Frivolous lawsuits abound and people are rewarded huge sums for suffering the consequences of their own foolishness or crimes. Greed drives up costs for everybody, but that's O.K. as long as I get mine!

And, of course, respect for God and His word do not fit in very well with prevalent ideas of "doin' everything my way." No sir! Forget it!

Things are not better this way. Such selfishness and greed are contemptible. They deserve no place in the hearts of God's people! Such attitudes are in complete opposition to what Jesus taught concerning our relationships with God and man (Matthew 22:37-39). The church is a body with individual members working together for a common purpose. No one who lives by faith seeks independence from God, His Will or our responsibilities to one another as human beings.

There was a time, during the early days of our nation, when a family of settlers would move into a locale that others would all join together and have a "house-raising." The house would go up quickly and everyone would enjoy themselves in a spirit of interdependence. Much of that has been lost on us, and we are not stronger for it, nor are we better off. Perhaps we need to re-evaluate our heroes. Maybe "Natural Born Killers" are not as deserving of hero status as so many evidently think they are.

Calvin was right... if the ants listen to him, the ant problem will soon be over.

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