

## The Real James Bond

David Flatt

I knew the real James Bond. That's right! He was born in Brownsville, Tennessee in 1936. Early in life, he and his family moved north to Mansfield, Ohio. He was a beloved Gospel preacher. He passed away on March 15, 2024, at age eighty-eight.

Brother Bond is a fixture in my memory. Mansfield is about sixty miles south of Akron, Ohio where we lived. We saw him regularly at Gospel meetings and often heard him preach. Brother Bond had a bigger-than-life personality. He could light up a room. I was always happy to see him.

Of course, it is impossible to remember brother Bond without remembering his wonderful wife, sister Hazel. She passed away in 2014. She had as big a personality as brother Bond. She was spunky and always smiling. I only ever heard brother Bond refer to his wife as "sister Hazel." He once said, "Behind every good man is a good woman with a stick!" Their relationship was a beautiful example of what we should all aspire to in our marriages.

Brother Bond loved the Lord. He loved people. He loved preaching the Gospel. He was plain-spoken and quick-witted in the pulpit. He could connect with his audience. There were never any misunderstandings when he shelled down the corn.

Brother Bond had a sharp mind. He could turn a phrase and get audiences thinking. His preaching style was indicative of his generation. Below are some of the sermon titles and sayings brother Bond was known for in his preaching.

### Brother Bond Taught Us...

**1). Get it in black and white.** Brother Bond was faithful to the Scriptures. He only cared to know what the Bible said. He tried to instill reverence for the Bible in the people he taught. To do this, he used the analogy of a contract. Unless the terms of a contract are written in black and white, we do not agree to enter an arrangement.

Unless we can read the terms of salvation in black and white, we cannot trust the terms. Are our beliefs and practices in black and white? Peter commanded one to teach only the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:10-11). If teaching cannot be verified in black and white, we must reject it.

**2). Too good for hell, but not good enough for Heaven.** Brother Bond often warned audiences against the deception of good works. Many people think they can get to Heaven by their good works. He would teach about Cornelius (Acts 10). Cornelius was a good man.

He was devout. He was a praying man. But he was not saved. Peter preached to Cornelius to obey the Gospel.

**3). Lessons from the rich man and Lazarus.** Brother Bond often punctuated his sermons with Luke's account of the rich man and Lazarus. Sometimes preachers get very tedious in their explanations of the places of "paradise" and "torments." Not brother Bond. He would simply say, "Now, the rich man was not in hell. But he was so close, he could smell the smoke!"

The first time I heard him say that it was enough for me. I knew that I did not want to be where the rich man was!

**4). Get what you need before you need it.** Brother Bond passionately appealed to people not to wait to obey the Gospel. We make plans and preparations for many things in our lives. Brother Bond was convinced that a day was coming when every knee would bow and every tongue would confess that Jesus was Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). However, if we wait until judgment to earnestly seek our salvation, we will be too late! We need to obey the Gospel today!

**5). Stay on the side of safety.** Solomon wrote, "The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it" (Prov. 22:3). Brother Bond urged brethren to stay on the side of safety. In his lifetime, churches began to engage in practices for which there was no Biblical authority. He warned churches not to fund colleges or become social rec centers.

Brother Bond suffered for his teaching; however, he was committed to safety. Following the Scriptures is safe. Holding to the pattern of the New Testament is safe. Staying on the narrow path is safe. Obeying Jesus is safe. Salvation is on the side of safety!

**6). You can't live wrong and die right.** Brother Bond encouraged people to live righteously. We cannot expect to live in sin and be saved. That is foolishness. John wrote, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Rev. 14:13). To put it another way, Brother Bond would warn, "If you die wrong, you can't do nothing right."

### **Conclusion**

In addition to preaching, Brother Bond owned and operated a grocery store with his brother. He worked at a wire and cable company for thirty-two years. He was a hard worker. He was generous. Another mentor of mine who preached near Mansfield in the 1980s, remembered brother Bond's summer pig roasts. He would invite Christians from the area to his farm.

Brother Bond was a hero to his family. In his obituary, his family wrote, “*Here lies the “real James Bond.” This 007 never made a movie, never won an Academy Award, and was never celebrated on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. But he was a box-office hit to his family and friends and above all to God. His Bond movie began in rural Tennessee to the family farm in Ohio and now to Heaven’s pearly gates. At the top of his long list of credits is his dedication to family, faith, and his loving wife Hazel.*”

I knew the real James Bond. I loved him and sister Hazel. I miss them. I will treasure their memory as long as I live. They have gone to their reward. Their hope is my consolation.

*Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.*

**Philippians 3:17**