

Can God Have Our Attention?

I remember something that happened at a gospel meeting I attended almost twenty years ago. As I was sitting, listening to the sermon, I noticed that a man in the pew in front of me was reading a paperback book. He read throughout the preaching and even through the singing. At one point he put that book down and picked up another one and started reading it. I don't know why he was there, but he had not come prepared to worship God.

By Heath Rogers

God requires us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). What God wants most from us during our times of worship is our heart, our mind - our attention. Just because we are sitting among people who are worshipping in spirit and truth does not mean we are worshipping. No one is "guilty" of worship by association. While worship may be something we do collectively, it is still very much an individual activity. By that I mean it is a time in which

we need to "connect" with God in a spiritual manner as individuals.

There are times when Christians involve themselves in things at worship services that show a lack of interest and involvement in what is taking place. Worship is not a time to check out social media on our cell phones or tablets, send or reply to texts, make out our grocery list, give ourselves a manicure, balance our check book, catch a few z's, or even read a paperback novel. It is a time to pray, remember the Lord's death, give, sing and study God's word. It is a time for our spirit to be engaged in praise and admiration of God.

We have all week to get non-spiritual matters taken care of. We only meet a few hours a week to worship God and study His word. Can God have our attention during this time? Is that asking too much?



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:00 Song leading Class in College Classroom	Sunday 5:15 Kid's class in auditorium	Sunday Evening College Singing and Devo. At Bruce Daniels Home. Michael Bassie teaching!	Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2310 in Student Center
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Terri Sams (Erica's friend)
Terri Moore (Joey's aunt)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	Brian Myers (Kimberlee's cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ben Raine (baby of Rachel Hobgood's friend)

April Birthdays

- 1-Rachel Hobgood
- 2-Kelli Loggins
- 3-Jessica Shaver
- 3-Cameron Abernathy
- 4-Julie Henriquez
- 5-Tate Pender
- 5-Caleb Hodges
- 8-Laura Humphrey
- 8-Hannah Morris
- 9-Brooke Perkins
- 12-Becky Daniels
- 12-Austin Adams
- 14-Jesse Roberts
- 16-Carla Luther
- 16-Carson Fowler
- 17-Cal Sandlin
- 18-Spencer Sullivan
- 18-Taylor Godwin
- 18-Joel Black
- 20-April Jerkins
- 20-RJ Martin
- 23-Anna Miller
- 24-Bob Simpson
- 27-Bree Robinson
- 28-Johnathan Hand

News and Notes

- ☒ - Luke Carter's mother, Lisa, had her scan on Friday.
- ☒ - Our VBS will be June 6-9, on the "journeys of Paul."
- ☒ - Please remember Betty Bradford in your prayers as she has an infection in her foot.
- ☒ - Denise Davis' surgery went well this week!
- ☒ - Prayers requested for Chad Hymel's son, Jamin, who had surgery last week for to remove a brain tumor.
- ☒ - Tyler Tucker's cousin, Ricky, is recovering well from his colon surgery.
- ☒ - Prayers requested for Artina Hunt, the sister of a friend of Esther Biddle, who is battling lymphoma.
- ☒ - Our new quarter begins today!
- ☒ - The flower fund is depleted, please see Mary Ann Roberts to contribute.
- ☒ - We will have a work day on Saturday, April 23rd, 8-12.
- ☒ - All interested in helping with VBS, please fill out form in foyer and turn in to Jared Johnson by wed night!
- ☒ - Larry is away in a meeting in Kirkwood, Missouri.

The Auburn Beacon

A weekly publication of the University church of Christ in Auburn, Alabama



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 7, Issue 29

April 3, 2016

Teaching Children About Fornication

By Mark Roberts



Thoughts to Ponder

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).

Perhaps no precept of scripture is as widely ignored as this one. Our society is absolutely obsessed with sex. Advertising, movies and television, printed material, popular music -- it all is filled to the brim with sex, lust, fornication, and adultery. Unfortunately, our young people are deeply affected by their environment. A Center for Disease Control study found that among ninth graders 40% had committed fornication, with the numbers rising to 72% by the time children had reached the twelfth grade. The consequences of this behavior are staggering. Every year 3 million teens acquire a sexually transmitted disease. Every year more than one million teens become pregnant (that is 1 out of every 9 women aged 15-19).

As we help our children understand the painful consequences of fornication in the here and now, we help them stand strong for abstinence until they are old enough to trust God and submit to His will simply because "God said so."

ual activity at quite the rate worldly children do, "our" children only lag about 20 points behind national averages. Satan is preaching a sermon about sex that kids want to hear, and they are willingly falling into his trap of lies and deception. What can be done?

With children it is very important that we help them focus on the consequences of their behavior. Kids simply are not mature enough to always be obedient simply because they know they should do right, or out of love for mom and dad. Punishment works as a means to help children discipline themselves be-

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Elders
Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
larryrouse@aubeacon.com

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Evangelist and Editor

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cause it is a clearly spelled out consequence that they can understand and think about before they act (see **Proverbs 23:13-14; 29:15**). Unfortunately, some parents seem to think the only punishment applicable to premarital sex is hellfire. While fornicators will be so punished (**Heb. 13:4**), it is not the only consequence of this sin. Solomon tells us the way of transgressors is hard (**Prov. 13:15**) and never has this been more true than with sexual sin. As we help our children understand the painful consequences of fornication in the here and now, we help them stand strong for abstinence until they are old enough to trust God and submit to His will simply because "God said so."

What kind of consequences are there to premarital sex? Plenty! For example, children need to be told how sex before marriage can cause them to have false feelings of "love." One expert remarked "Sexual encounters outside of marriage . . . give an illusion of intimacy that can be mistaken for the lasting commitment that makes marriage work." How many teens have gotten involved sexually, thought they had something great and so they married. Then they awaken in a nightmare -- trying to make a marriage work that has no foundation at all. See how God's law protects us?

Children also need to be told how sexual involvement before marriage will wreck their future relationships. Sex is such a powerful experience it cannot be forgotten. Then, once a person is married, it is inevitable that there will be comparison to past relationships. Making matters worse, past memories have a tendency to become idealized. This results in young people who have frustration in their marriage because the physical relationship cannot possibly be as "good" as their romanticized past experiences. Now, one partner feels inadequate or haunted by the ghosts of the past -- does that sound like a solid, strong marriage? **Hebrews 13:4** warns us not to defile the marriage bed, and that would include not defiling it with past relationships.

Another consequence of fornication is that it destroys our ability to be an influence for good. When we commit fornication we have compromised all that Christianity stands for. How is it possible for us to influence our boyfriend or girlfriend for Christ when we have shown that we are nothing but a hypocrite? What shame, humiliation, guilt and problems fornication always brings. Your child may think he or she is a long way from hell's fires but these problems are here and now and can be understood. Use them to help your child understand why he or she should say "No!" to sex before marriage.

Clearly a focus on consequence is the keystone of our defense against fornication. However, let me point out several other areas that need our attention as well. You need to love your child in a way that your child understands and can relate to. 93% of teen girls said having loving parents reduced the risks they'd have sex. Kids need love, acceptance and understanding. If you don't give it to them they will find it elsewhere, even if it means trading sex for "love." You need to expect purity. The world is constantly preaching that children cannot possibly restrain themselves and that sex is inevitable. Stand out from that crowd. Be frank, be honest and be real -- but be clear that you expect that your child can do this and will do this.

My stomach still turns when I recall a conversation with a Christian who admitted he had given his boys contraceptives because he "just knew boys would be boys." What kind of attitude is this? How can we expect to win this battle when we have already thrown in the towel? You need to keep talking, keep trying, and keep loving your kids. Study after study reveals that parents have a powerful impact on their children, even when parents think they aren't "getting through." But just as you didn't teach table manners in one sitting, so you can't train in sexual purity in one talk either. Don't give up. Keep praying, keep talking and keep working. You can do it -- because God will bless you when you teach your children to stand for righteousness and holiness.



Is the Restoration Plea Valid?

By Lowell Blasingame

For years a basic difference between the preaching of the gospel preachers and denominational preachers has been our plea for a restoration of the church of the New Testament while they have taught that every man has the right to the church of his choice. We have insisted that by speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where it is silent and by contending that scriptural authority is necessary for all that is taught and practiced in religion, we can restore the church of the New Testament.

Now a group of brethren are telling us that we have gone about our preaching in a wrong way and have antagonized and alienated our religious neighbors by this approach to the Scriptures. They tell us that we need a new set of rules or hermeneutics for applying and interpreting the Scriptures. ACU Press has released a book, *The Cruciform Church*, written by C. Leonard Allen, in which the restoration plea is ridiculed as one of the conceits of our time and we are told that we cannot return to the beginning and start all over again (Introduction, p. x).

Advocates of the new hermeneutics ridicule the plea for restoration by asking which church of the first century we want to restore, Laodecia with its indifference, or Corinth with its immorality, etc. Their conclusion seems to be that since these failed to be ideal that there is no pattern worthy of restoration. I agree that these churches were lacking in some things but suppose they heed the instructions given for correcting these faults, will they then become examples worthy of our emulation? Besides, there are some who received no censure. How about choosing the church at Smyrna or Philadelphia (**Rev. 2-3**) or the church at Philippi?

The assumption that corruption in a church in the first century eliminates an ideal for restoration is ridiculous. Shall we also assume that since false gospels were taught in the first century by Judaizers and Gnostics (**Gal. 1:6-8**) that we cannot sweep away the past and restore the true gospel of the first century? Is this another of the great conceits of our time to suppose that we can do this?

Second, the New Testament is a "form" of doctrine or of sound words (**Rom. 6:17; 2 Tim. 1:13**). The word *hupotuposis*, used in **2 Timothy 1:13** also occurs in **1 Timothy 1:16** and is there translated "pattern." The New Testament is a form, a pattern or blueprint of what God wants his people individually and collectively to be.

Is our plea for a restoration of the church of the first century a valid plea? I affirm that it is and do so for the following reasons.

First, the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. Matthew called it "the word of the kingdom" (**Matt. 13:19**) while Luke identifies it as "the seed" (**Lk. 8:11**). An irrevocable law of God says that a seed produces after its kind (**Gen. 1:11**). As long as a seed has life, it will produce the same kind of plant as that from which it came. And, if all of these plants are lost, the possibility of their being re-

stored remains as long as their seed exists. Exactly the same is true regarding the kingdom or church of our Lord. Preaching the word produced the Lord's church during the first century and as long as we have the word (seed), we have the potential for the restoration of the church. If not, why not? Why will it not make the same thing of those who believe and obey it today as it did 1990 or more years ago?

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I do not know what kind of dress Martha Washington wore when her husband became the first president of our country. But I know that, if a seamstress has the material and pattern from which it was made, she can today make one exactly like it. As long as these exist, the dress can be restored. Equally as well, using the same material and following the same pattern today will restore the church of the first century.

