

The Reluctant Disciple

The nature of "church" combined with the religious freedoms and sense of entitlement bestowed in our culture has led to a rise in what we might call "the reluctant disciple." Where Jesus calls us to eagerly, passionately and zealously follow Him, this world naturally discourages such radical discipleship. Where discipleship demands a whole-hearted, absolute and determined commitment, this world encourages a much softer and looser approach to one's faith. Thus, the rise of the reluctant disciple.

By Jonathan Perz

A reluctant disciple is only willing to go so far in his service to God. There are things the Lord asks that are just too much. Modern ideas of what makes one a "Christian" allow the title to be worn despite an unwillingness to serve the Lord as He commands, expects and deserves. "Suffer for His name's sake"—not a chance. "Give all that I have"—no way. "Lay down my life"—absolutely not. "Love my enemies"—who does this?

It's not just the exceptional things, but the more daily things Jesus asks that overwhelm the reluctant disciple. Assembling more than once each

week is just too tasking. Opening my home for hospitality, study and fellowship is not my cup of tea. Talking to others about my faith, the gospel and about Jesus Christ is a little too open for my taste. Confessing sins makes me feel way too vulnerable. Laying by in store is just too demanding. There always seems to be a line that the reluctant disciple is unwilling and hesitant to cross.

Christianity is not for the weak, hesitant and unwilling. It requires total commitment. It came at an incredible price and there is a cost that must be counted and paid **(Luke 14:25-33)**. If we are only willing to follow Jesus when it is easy and convenient, then we have no idea what it means to be a His disciple. The Suffering Savior bore so much to bear our sins on that great cross of shame. How is it that we believe we can follow Jesus at a distance and still please a Heavenly Father who exacted so much from a Beloved Son to save our souls?



Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	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)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Audrey Burnett (Joanetta's sis-in-law)	Artina Hunt (Esther's friend's sister)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	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)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother)

July Birthdays

2-Josh Gooch
8-David DeFoor
11-Chase Winslett
11-Madi White
11-Clay Morris
11-Kelsey Gallahar
12-Tyler Tucker
14-Laurel Jerkins
14-Megan Ryan
15-Bradley Seymore
15-Winston Atnip
16-Katie Martin
19-Ben Holcomb
19-Jay Borden
21-Tori Luther
22-Kate Fortenberry
24-Haley Gay
25-Betty Bradford
25-Yvette Rouse
26-Brandon Hester
27-Tiffany Green
28-Jacob Bradshaw
29-Hayden Phillips

News and Notes

☒ - The ladies' class this week is Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at Abbie Harrison's house. We will be studying Joseph.

☒ - Please pray for Buddy Scalf, Ada Owens uncle who lives in West Virginia.

☒ - Please pray for Jennifer Daniels' family in the loss of her grandfather, Lloyd Bridges.

☒ - Please remember James Luther, a relative of Toni Herd.

☒ - Remember Ryan Hasty and Ben Holcomb in you prayers as they are in South Korea to preach the gospel!

☒ - Jessica and Kevin Anderson request the prayers of the congregation as they will be adopting a child in November. Please pray for the birth mother, Sonia and the baby.

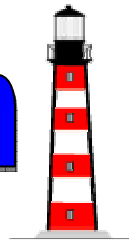
☒ - Let us be preparing for our upcoming meeting with Steve Klein, August 21-25!

The Auburn Beacon

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 44

July 24, 2016



Membership Has Its Responsibilities

By Bubba Garner

"Membership has its rewards." That's how many companies advertise their special offer of the month. And truthfully, I like those kind of programs, because they make you feel like you're getting something for nothing. You receive benefits – either frequent flyer miles or hotel points– when nothing extra is required of you. You don't have to pay a monthly fee, you don't have to recruit other people to join the group.

Not everyone loves what they do for a living. Sadly, sometimes our labor for the Lord leaves that same impression. Do you love what you do for Him?

Membership itself just has its rewards. What about membership in the local church? Certainly it has its rewards. From a family of fellow believers to those who will help us bear our burdens, we are benefitted greatly by this relationship. But membership also has its responsibilities. We cannot expect to obtain something for nothing. There is a requirement that accompanies our commitment. When Paul

wrote to the church in Thessalonica, he mentioned three words that he had elsewhere famously linked together: "constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father" **(2 Thess. 1:3)**. Faith, hope, and love. We recognize this trio from **1 Cor. 13:13** as well as **Col. 1:4-5**. But notice the words which precede them in this context: work, labor, and

(Continued on page 2)



Thoughts to Ponder

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil **(Hebrews 6:19)**

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

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Find us on the Internet: www.auchurch.com and www.aubeacon.com

(Continued from page 1)

steadfastness. Together, they testify to the responsibilities that come with membership.

In consideration of all that God has done to make us members of the body of Christ, what response is required on the part of every member?

“**Work of faith.**”

Paul commended the Thessalonians because “in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything” **(1 Thess. 1:8)**. They had a faith, but not a faith that stood still. In fact, their faith had a reputation in other parts of the world. But how would the world have known about their belief unless it was something that they had put into practice and worked out?

As someone has famously said, “Christianity begins in the head, travels to the heart, and exits in the hands and feet.” Our faith must have action with it or it is no faith at all. **James 2** was not written just to give us something to hand to our denominational friends who believe in salvation by faith alone. This epistle was first handed to the twelve tribes dispersed to remind the Lord’s own people that believe by itself is dead. What “work” has your faith produced? Remember, membership has its responsibilities.

“**Labor of love.**”

The word “labor” means “toil” or “work” and can be used in the context of laboring through some difficulty or trouble. The church in Thessalonica had “received the word in much tribulation

with the joy of the Holy Spirit” **(1 Thess. 1:6)**. But even though the gospel had produced hardships and trials in coming to them, it was still received joyfully because it was considered their “labor of love.”

Love and labor aren’t words that we usually put together. Not everyone loves what they do for a living. Sadly, sometimes our labor for the Lord leaves that same impression. Do you love what you do for Him? Just because it is a responsibility doesn’t mean that it has to look like one. And even when hardship is involved in carrying this work out, consider it all joy and a privilege to labor for a Master who loves you.

“**Steadfastness of hope.**”

The apostles encouraged the Thessalonian brethren to “wait for His Son from heaven... who rescues us from the wrath to come” **(1 Thess. 1:10)**. “Hope” is looking forward in confident expectation. This hope produces a steadfastness or, as some translations have it, “perseverance” or “patience.” Such was needed as the early saints waited on the Lord for final vindication.

Hope is what gives us something to hold on to in our ever-changing world. That’s why it’s described as an “anchor for the soul” **(Heb. 6:19)**. It comes with the realization that we’ve not reached our final destination. We’ve started our journey, we’ve weathered some storms, but we’re not there yet. We must wait, patiently and with expectation, that the Lord will bring into reality all that we have hoped for.

On that day, membership will certainly have its rewards. Until then, let us be about our responsibilities in His service.



What Does Submission Look Like?

By Doy Moyer

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” **(James 4:7)**.

Imagine a person whose normal mode is to run red lights (maybe we don’t have to imagine so much). He runs this light and the next one, but then comes upon a red light and sees a police officer sitting there at the corner. He stops because he doesn’t want the ticket. Is this person a true law-abiding citizen? Is he really submitting himself to the law? Or is he just picking and choosing when to stop for the sake of his own convenience? After all, getting stopped and being issued a ticket would be highly inconvenient and costly, but if the police officer were not sitting there, he would have run the light. His goal is not to be obedient, but to act out of selfishness and personal convenience.

Peter wrote, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” **(1 Peter 2:13-15)**.

Likewise, Paul wrote, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves” **(Rom. 13:1-2)**.

These instructions are not based on our agreement with the governing authorities, but upon God’s will. When we just happen to agree with a law and therefore do it because it aligns with our own will or is simply convenient to do so, that is not real submission. When we do what the law says just because it is convenient at that moment, we are not really being law-abiding citizens. We are acting selfishly. Our intent isn’t to obey the law, but to do whatever is most advantageous to us in that moment. We abide by the rules we like, but when the rules run counter to what we like, we feel free to do our own thing. Much of modern culture seems to thrive on this mentality. It is wrong.

Might we be treating God in the same way? We may do what God says when we like it, but find ways to circumvent the Lord’s teachings when don’t like them. Are we being true disciples if we act this way?

True submission is seen, not just when a law or expressed will aligns with our desires or when we can conveniently do it, but even when we don’t agree and we find it inconvenient. This is true of a wife’s submission to her husband, who is to love her as Christ loved the church **(Eph. 5:22-33)**. Even more, this is true of our service to God, who loves us in spite of ourselves. Submitting to God isn’t about finding the commands that we like and agree with; it’s about doing what God says because He loves us, we love Him, and we recognize His absolute authority over us. We don’t need God to rationalize Himself in order to satisfy our curiosities. We just need to be doers of the word, not merely hearers filled with self-delusions **(James 1:22)**.

Submission, though, is more than just obeying someone’s will whether we agree or disagree; it can involve acting in another’s best interests, especially when serving others. Jesus, in accordance with the Father’s will, gave Himself over to His own creation to be put to death, not because He was under human authority, but because He loves us and wanted to save us. This was a voluntary action on His part as He emptied and humbled Himself “by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” **(Phil. 2:8)**. This attitude, or mind, of Christ is well stated by Paul:

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...” **(Phil. 2:3-4)**.

The issue here is not so much about being forced to submit, but rather freely giving ourselves over to the service of others. Being “subject to one another in the fear of Christ” **(Eph. 5:21)** is to be done voluntarily and out of love. It is to benefit others, intentionally putting the interests of others over our own. Such cannot be done out of selfish desire or convenience. The Hebrews writer made the point:

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you” **(Heb. 13:17)**.

