The Reluctant Disciple

By Jonathan Perz

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.

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)
Buddy Scalf (Ada's uncle)	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 Sullivanne'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)
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother)

August Birthdays

2-Emma Miller
6-Allyson Houlton
8-Alli Luther
9-Elliot Weldon
9-Troy Swenson
10-David Hartsell
11-Walker Davis
12-Jon Coleman
13-Brendon Kirby
13-Ariel Ramsey
13-Amanda Bertoldi
15-Kalee Reid
16-Cade Smith
18-Makayla Chittam
19-Brettlyn Currier
19-Taylor Lawrence
21-Matt Cavender
23-Jordan Flatt
23-Colton Miller
24-Sophie Hall
27-Chip Freeman
28-Larry Rouse
28-Cole Johnson
28-Alex Dobbins

News and Notes

☒ - The ladies' class this week is Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at The Rouse's home. We will be studying Josiah.
☒ - Please pray for Debbi Coleman's family in the tragic death of her uncle, Frank Johnson. Funeral is Monday in Leeds, AL
☒ - We are tankful for good report from Audrey Burnett's scans as she is cancer free!
☒ - We rejoice for Laurel Jerkins' decision to be baptized into Christ Thursday!
☒ - Please pray for Jacob Smith as he has MALT lymphoma and awaits more information.
☒ - Congratulations to those graduating this weekend!: Orie Cecil - Masters, Elizabeth Barham, Kelsey Gallahar.
☒ - Please remember James Luther, a relative of Toni Herd.
☒ - Please pray for Ryan and Ben as they work in S Korea and plan to return on Friday.
☒ - Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson, Craig and Paula Davis
☒ - Let us be preparing for our upcoming meeting with Steve Klein, August 21-25!
☒ - Group meetings are tonight!

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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)**

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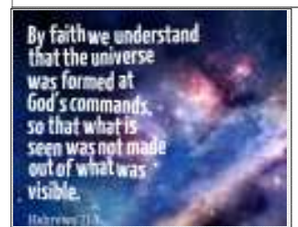

Thoughts to Ponder

"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. **(Acts 17:24)**

Elders
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Class ……9:30 AM
Worship ……10:20 AM
Evening Worship …… 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes……7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Divine Authority and the Creation

By Connie W. Adams

One in authority has the right to command, direct, and enforce obedience. He also has the right to administer punishment to the disobedient. When the one having ultimate authority empowers others to act upon his will, then in that manner he authorizes action. One who assumes authority not granted by the one who has the right to empower acts with presumption and flaunts all authority.

In divine matters, as they relate to man, authority springs from the creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" **(Gen. 1:1)**. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" **(Gen. 1:27)**. If there is no divine creator, then there is no creation, the universe is the product of chance, man himself is an accident of nature and there is no basis for moral or spiritual authority. This is the very premise from which the secular humanist works. He boldly proclaims "There is no God" and "Man is the measure of himself."

Order in the Universe

But if God created the universe, then order flows from his power to make whatever exists. In God's speech to Job he asked, Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father or who

> With notable exceptions, the morals of this nation are a shambles. How did we come to such a sad state of affairs? The creature has scorned his Creator. We have fallen into the same pit into which the Gentile nations plunged as described by Paul in Romans 1:18-32.

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hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? **(Job 38:4, 22-31).**

Start with the premise that "God is" and the existence and order in the universe makes sense. If God made it all and it functions according to his power, then we are spared all the hand wringing about global cooling, global warming, depleting the ozone, running out of water, running out of wood, running out of food, and all the anxieties concocted in the humanist mind. That is not to say that man should not be a good steward of the world God made for us. But he did make it for us! The God who made it is still in charge. The unbeliever with all his vaunted wisdom and arrogant self-assurance cannot form one drop of dew on the ground, cannot make it rain, nor stay the terrifying rumble of an earthquake, nor stop the force of a hurricane. The authority of the Almighty rules in the universe.

Order in the Moral Realm

Because God made man, man is subject to divine law. If there is no God, then there is no basis for moral order. Much of the chaos which is evidenced by all forms of crime and immorality grows out of a disrespect for divine authority. If man has evolved by chance then he has no standard for moral behavior except whatever he imposes upon him-self. This is the spring from which situation ethics flows. But if God made us, he has the right to determine what is moral conduct and to call us to account for disregarding his authority over us.

This point was forcefully driven home by Paul on Mars Hill in his speech to the Athenian philosophers. Read **Acts 17:24-31**. Go on, and read it. Notice **verse 24**: "God that made the world and all things therein." Then look at **verse 26**: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Look at **verse 28**: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." **Verse 30** informs us that "God commands all men everywhere to repent." Why is that? Now look at **verse 31**: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Do you see the progression? God made the world and all things therein. In him we live and move and have our being. Therefore, God calls upon us to repent. Why is that?

He has appointed a day of judgment. God made us, expects something of us, and will call us to account for that responsibility. The Creator has authority over the creature. Paul's question to the Romans is pertinent. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonor" **(Rom. 9:20-21)**?

With notable exceptions, the morals of this nation are a shambles. How did we come to such a sad state of affairs? The creature has scorned his Creator. We have fallen into the same pit into which the Gentile nations plunged as described by Paul in **Romans 1:18-32**. When they knew God, they did not glorify him as God **(v. 21)**. Did they have abundant evidence of his power and majesty? Oh yes! They had the whole universe as testimony to the existence and power of the Almighty **(v. 20)**. But they became ungrateful, filled with vanity and arrogance. While they boasted of their great wisdom they in reality became fools. As their hearts became darker and darker they made idols to satisfy man's innate desire to worship something. The end result of all that was moral chaos. Everything from homosexuality to murder followed. How and why did this happen? The creature lost respect for the Creator. As in the world at large, even so among those who claim to follow Christ, moral looseness grows out of waning respect for the authority of God to rule in our hearts and direct the affairs of life. Happy is the one who seeks the Lord, gropes after him and finds him, though he is not far from every one of us **(Acts 17:27).**

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Learning God's Will

By Sewell Hall

"Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" **(Eph. 5:17)**.

Previously we have shown the necessity of limiting our religious teaching and practice to those things authorized by Scripture. But how do the Scriptures authorize? This question naturally arises from the fact that the New Testament is not in the form of a code of law, but is a collection of biographies, history, and letters.

> But how do the Scriptures authorize? This question naturally arises from the fact that the New Testament is not in the form of a code of law, but is a collection of biographies, history, and letters.

Whether or not we learn God's will from the Scriptures depends largely upon the strength of our desire to learn it. The Scriptures may well be written as they are to confuse and deceive those who have "received not the love of the truth that they may be saved. And for this cause, God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness" **(2 Thess. 2:10-12)**. Surely, this is the foolish attitude which the Ephesian passage warns against.

Jesus prayed: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and the understanding and didst reveal them unto babes" (Matt. 12:25). Babes are those who are poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst after righteousness. They shall be filled (Matt. 5:6).

Illustration

Suppose an ambitious young person begins work in a large office and is eager to please his employer. How can he know what will please him? There are at least three ways.

First, his employer will tell him some things directly. He may say, "I expect you to be here at 9 AM each working day. Your duties will be to type the letters which I record and to file papers." This is a direct statement.

Second, some things are implied in what is actually said. For example, he knows that he is to use a typewriter and recording equipment, as well as the filing facilities. These are not mentioned but are necessarily inferred from what was said.

Finally, he may learn from observing other employees in the office. He can observe the dress, the language, and the conduct of those who please his employer and of those who displease him. By following the example of the ones who please his employer, he will be able to please him also.

Application

The Scriptures authorize by direct statement of command. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you" **(John 15:14)**. The things which Paul and the other apostles wrote are also "the commandments of the Lord" **(1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 3:2)**.

Other things are necessarily implied. In Matthew 22:42-45, Jesus inferred that the Messiah was to be the Son of God from the fact that David called Him "Lord."

Still other things may be known to please God because He has approved them in others. Paul wrote, "Be ye imitators of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy...who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church" **(1 Cor. 4:16-17)**. It was important for them to know Paul's practice, for when they practiced what he practiced, they were practicing what he taught by inspiration. It is the same for us.

And so, by direct statement, by inference, and by approved example, we can know God's will for us.