

Is Your Religion Generic?

There is a lot said nowadays about "generics". Once, you could expect the "brand" name to be better than an "off-brand", but "generics" changed that. We have come to expect "generic" drugs, groceries, clothes, etc., to be just as good as the higher priced "brand" items. Does this lead us to think of all "generics" as equal to the "brand" name?

The fact is, there are still some instances where there is no "generic" substitute for the brand name--this is the case in religion! **Mt 7:13** -- "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life.." Clearly, all roads do not lead to heaven! Only one does! Biblically, there is no question that, in some instances, there is only one of a thing to be had:

- Jesus is the only Savior **Jn 14:6**
- His is the only salvation **Acts 4:12**
- His plan is the only plan **Jn 12:48**
- His church is the only church **Eph 4:5; Acts**

By Aubrey C. Belue

20:28; Eph 5:23-33
 -- His way of worship is the only way **Jn 4:23, 24.**

Thus, there is no valid "generic" Christ, or plan, or worship, or church--there is only one that is of any value.

One reason we "buy generic" is that we pay less for it. Or, looked at another way, "brand names" cost more. This is indeed true in religion. "Brand name" religion is much more expensive--it costs more in study, in commitment, in popularity, time spent, etc. To really serve God is more expensive than lip-service. But, it is a case of true value vs. going through a "form of Godliness". In this case, you "get what you pay for"! Don't settle for a "generic" religion. It is not worth it.



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:00 PM Singing Class in College Classroom	Sunday 5:15 PM Kids Class in Auditorium	Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2310 in Student Center	Thursday 7:00 PM Ladies Class at the Rouse's
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	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)	Wanda Price (Ada Owen's sister)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Joy Powell (Tori Luther's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	William Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Ray Humphrey (Seth's dad)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Esther Biddle

January Birthdays

- 1-David Ogle
- 2-Savannah Spohn
- 2-Chuck Hunt
- 4-Phillip Box
- 6-Erica Seymore
- 7-Sarah Darby
- 9-Jordan Oldag
- 9-Liseth Aragon
- 9-Tyler Hudson
- 10-Mallory Randolph
- 11-Spencer Hall
- 11-Shepherd Hall
- 15-Michael Bassie
- 17-Anna English
- 18-Scott Vaughn
- 21-Jacob Jerkins
- 23-Connor Godwin
- 25-Caleb Daniels
- 25-Sara Lail
- 27-Blake Bagents
- 28-Holly McDaniel
- 30-Kayla Garlock
- 30-Kristi Garlock
- 31-Jennifer Daniels

News and Notes

- ☒ - Laura Weldon is improving from her appendectomy last week.
- ☒ - We are rejoicing that chuck Hahn's niece, Rebecca Davis, is doing better!
- ☒ - The college devotional/singing will be at Jeff Jerkins house Sunday night. Doy Moyer will be teaching!
- ☒ - Luke Carter's mom, Lisa, will be chemo soon at UAB. please continue to pray for her and the family.
- ☒ - Please remember Sara Lail's grandmother, Ermogene Laxson, in your prayers as she has begun chemo treatments.
- ☒ - please remember will Harris' great-grandmother, Bernice martin, as she is gravely ill.
- ☒ - Please remember Matt Cavender's grandmother, Eva Jean, who has been diagnosed with bladder cancer.
- ☒ - Thanks for all who work hard to make the Student Study and Meeting with Doy Moyer such a success!
- ☒ - Our monthly singing will be tonight!

The Auburn Beacon



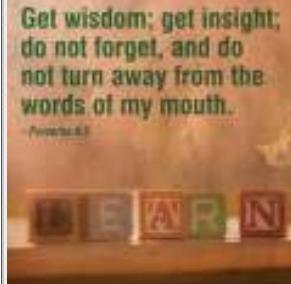
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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The Will to be Wise

By Dee Bowman



Thoughts to Ponder

A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel **(Proverbs 1:5)**

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

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 Evangelist and Editor

In the introduction to the Proverbs, Solomon uses several words that have a similar connotation, each having to do with wisdom. Listen to them: "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity. To give to the young man knowledge and discretion." **(Prov 1:2-4; KJV).**

Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge or experience to a given set of circumstances in order to bring about the best end for everyone concerned. It is the general theme of the Book of Proverbs, the underlying principle in all that is suggested in it.

"Perceive" is from a Latin word which originally meant "to seize." It is kin to wisdom in that one who has it is usually a wise person, either from education or experience.

"Understanding" is kin to both wisdom and perception in concept. It literally means to have insight into a matter. Perspicuity, formerly an optical term, is its

The sort of wisdom that is spent on wickedness is badly misspent. A life dedicated to mere enjoyment and pleasure is a ludicrous, unprofitable enterprise. On the other hand, a life spent in service to God is irrefutably wise.

equivalent, meaning to look into something and see.

The words translated with our English words "wise counsels" **(Prov. 1:5; KJV)** has an interesting history. It's the Hebrew word for "ropes." As a seaman "knows the ropes," even so a wise man knows which strings to pull. It obviously has to do with wise choices. The other words, justice, prudence, and judgment, each have something to do with wisdom in their own way.

I have chosen a passage from some of these timely admonitions *(Continued on page 2)*

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for your consideration. Stop now and read **Proverbs 10:12-17**. Once you've read it, rehearse briefly the words we've just discussed, and notice how wisdom is in every admonition.

Verse 12 - "Hatred stirs up strife. But love covers all sins." Anger and hatred agitate, love seeks peace. The wise man will not long tolerate anger of any sort, much less outright hatred or disdain. His intention is never in the direction of condemnation, but of justification. The direction he takes on any matter will be predicated on love, the kind that makes choices tending toward reconciliation, not separation.

Verse 13 - "Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding. But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. A wise man will always try to understand before he makes any kind of choice. Understanding is actually what stands under a matter; it is that which forms a basis for good decisions. It is the ability to grasp the meaning of a situation. It blots out bother, dispels trouble ahead of time, makes solutions to problems possible. Ignorance, on the other hand, is a harsh taskmaster. It's like a "rod to the back," invariably causing not only discomfort, but sometimes intense pain. It befuddles situations. It causes stupid choices, brings brainless decisions, and causes its holder continual amounts of trouble.

Verse 14 - "Wise people store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction." The admonition here is simple, but potent. It simply advises that one store up the good stuff. To store up knowledge is to make a foundation for making wise choices, no matter the situation. This kind of storage will not spoil. It is ready for use at any time, and is ready for any situation. Please note its connection to the

mouth. Wisdom is never more obvious than in the mouth of a good man. Few things are more beautiful or wiser than a few well-chosen words. Conversely, few things condemn a man as soon as a few poorly said sentences.

Verse 15 - "The rich man's wealth is his strong city. The destruction of the poor is their poverty." How wise it is to use what you have with care and consideration. Nobody ever said that money was not important, only that it is necessary that it be well used. It can strengthen a man's opportunities, fortify his efforts, bring glory to God, when it is used wisely. Like a strong city, it makes for peace and stability. On the other hand, poverty is hard. A Yiddish Proverb says, "Poverty is no disgrace, but it has no honor either." Society actually rejects the poor, which is an indictment of how we live in this age. It has ever been the case. Solomon knew it early on. It should be remembered, too, that in many instances poverty is the result of laziness.

Verse 16 - "The labor of the righteous leads to life, the wages of the wicked to sin." It's foolish to work for foolish things-things that have no lasting value, no true permanency-but how very sad that most people do. A wise man will work for right things. He will give his attention to the things that matter-both here and in the hereafter. A wise man recognizes the value of a righteous life, a value that cannot come when one foolishly chooses the way of the world. I read somewhere that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."

The sort of wisdom that is spent on wickedness is badly misspent. A life dedicated to mere enjoyment and pleasure is a ludicrous, unprofitable enterprise. On the other hand, a life spent in service to God is irrefutably wise. It not only provides quiescence and a settled mind here, but a joyful expectation of an eternal life so beautiful as to be indescribable.



Ground Work

By Scott Smelser

When you see a field of rich, dark, tilled topsoil, you are not looking at something that happened through carelessness. Though years past it may have been hard, briar filled, or full of rock, someone showed enough care and determination to bring it to the point where it's receptive and fertile.

In the parable of the sower, the sower sows the seed (**Mt. 13; Mk 4; Lk 8**). The seed is the same but the results differ according to the ground. Seed that lands on the hard wayside never penetrates the surface. Seed sprouting in rocky ground does not last through heated challenges. Seed sprouting in thorny ground gets choked out by the competition. Only the good ground (the good and honest heart, **Lk 8:15**) is appropriate fruit produced.

This raises a question then, what type of ground are we? What we need to be - and what we need to be now - is good ground. Yet perhaps many of us can also recall times when we ourselves were hardened, or shallow, or double-minded. Which brings up another question: Can we improve our soil, and what can we do to that end?

The parable of the sower is not directed particularly to those questions. It is focused on how the different types of heart respond to the broad spread word. But turning to some other passages, and employing a further illustration, let's consider the following.

When you see a field of rich, dark, tilled topsoil, you are not looking at something that happened through carelessness. Though years past it may have been hard, briar filled, or full of rock, someone showed

enough care and determination to bring it to the point where it's receptive and fertile.

Biblical Principles: David's heart had become hard by **2 Samuel 11**, but it became softer in **2 Samuel 12** and **Psalms 51**. Facing our sin is an important part of penetrating the heart. Hard ground is not

tilled with soft feathers, but with a blade (**Acts 2:37; Heb. 4:12**). The Psalmist and the Hebrew writer warn us, "Harden not your hearts" (**Ps.95 & Heb.3**), and James instructs us to "receive with meekness, the implanted word," (**James 1:21**). Having received the word, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (**Col. 3:16**). And since no man can serve two masters (**Matt.6.19-24**), we must resolve where our interests are laid up, and not allow thorns and thistles to be our yield (**Heb. 6:7:12**).

If we remain in his word (**John 8:31**), and if we remain in him (**John 15**), we can bear fruit, be pruned, and bear more fruit. We are to "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness" (**Eph. 5:11**) "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. (**Titus 3:14**).

What type of soil are you? What type of soil would you like to be? May we receive with meekness the implanted word.

