

No Fleshly Incentives

By Bill Hall

The use of fleshly incentives to draw people to worship services is becoming more and more common. One church offers free cokes, doughnuts, and balloons to its bus riders. Another offers a prize to the child who brings the most visitors. Still another uses some sports figure or entertainer to attract a crowd. Dinners and socials; elaborate church buildings; "Friendliest church in town" or "Fastest-growing church in town" advertising; the list of gimmicks is almost endless.

A study of 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 and 2, suggests that the people of our generation are not the first to demand fleshly incentives. The Jews and Greeks of Paul's day demanded them. "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom" (1 Cor 1:22). Paul could have produced both, but he refused to do so: "But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:23-24).

Paul recognized the fact that some people are just not "convertible": "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not

many noble, are called" (1:26). Why are such infrequently called? Because the majority place their trust in the flesh rather than in God. They are fleshly-minded. And Paul was not about to coax fleshly-minded, "unconvertible" people "into the church" by the use of signs, wisdom, excellency of speech, enticing words, or any other fleshly incentive. To do so would result in getting their names on a "church roll," but not in bringing them to Christ to the saving of their souls.

If Paul refused to use signs and wisdom as fleshly incentives, what would have been his reaction to the use of cokes and doughnuts? If he came "not with excellence of speech or of wisdom" (1 Cor 2:1), what would he have said concerning attempts to attract crowds through the use of sports figures and entertainers? If Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, followed a "no fleshly incentive" policy, should that not be our policy? And should we not always be able to say with Paul, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (2:2)?



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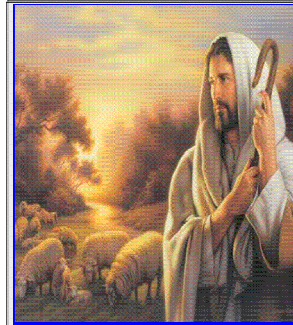
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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The Power of a Relationship

By Larry Rouse



Thought to Ponder

We ought to see the face of God every morning before we see the face of man.

God created man to be a social creature. Because of this everyone has a God-given need to form relationships with others. "And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him. (Gen 2:18)" God let Adam first see his need for companionship and then responded by creating Eve (Gen 2:19-23). Today there are many, because of their immaturity or because of their past hurts, that have tried to deny this need and live apart from others. All who take this path will live a lonely and painful life.

Our need for a relationship is also central in God's drawing us to Him. God's care, His understanding, His wanting to listen and communicate with us and His willingness to know and meet our real needs are revealed in the scriptures. "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings" (Psa 36:7).

The real focus of our faith is found in coming to "know God." "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). When we do this, we will slowly be changed to be like Him. Those who "walk with God" will find their lives transformed and filled.

Our adversary, Satan, will not sit idly by without trying to destroy this relationship by offering substitutes. I believe this is Satan's most powerful weapon. As

Build your faith upon God. Come to know His will and turn away from those who would use social pressure to bring you into bondage to men. While you may lose relationships, you will never be alone.

Christians, we need to look carefully at which relationship is the most important to us, that of God or that of other men. From doctrinal issues, to the use of our time and our lives, our priorities in relationships will be seen. May we always stand with Paul as he wrote: "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Gal 1:10).

The Example of Korah

Over the years I have seen men do things that made no sense whatsoever, until I examined their relationships. One of the more stunning examples in the Bible of how a relationship could influence others is found in the rebellion of Korah. Korah led a very "effective" rebellion against Moses. He used his relationship with "men

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Classes this Week:

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the Building	Mon and Thursday 12 Noon Campus Class	Mon 7 PM Ladies Class at the Rouse's	Thur 7 PM Jn Study at Jillian Petty's
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon
Ross Folmar	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Kenn and Ellen Smith (Ken Sullivan's Parents)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)
Christi Gibson (Fallon Hartsell's Mother)	Mike Reed (Friend of the Long's)	Daphene Whatley (Lisa Lanier's Mom)

November Birthdays

- 1- Jason Williams
- 2- Debbi Coleman
- 6 - Troy Godwin
- 6 - Lauren Ledford
- 7- Emily Key
- 7 - Amy Godwin
- 7 - Leah Donahue
- 8 - Danielle Hamilton
- 8 - Ashley Miller
- 11 - Davis Fultz
- 13 - Toni Herd
- 13 - Emerson Daniels
- 15 - Carson Nichols
- 15 - Rafia Qadeer
- 16 - Nichole Pender
- 17 - Art Daves
- 20- Andrew Smith

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: BJ Winslett, Joy Liu, and Amanda Stephens.
- Ken Sullivane's parents are now in rehab in Enterprise, AL.
- Please be sure to greet our visitors and encourage them to fill out a visitors card.
- After every service Audio CDs will be available in the foyer.

November Birthdays (Cont.)

- 23 - Katie Daves
- 24 - John Burns
- 25- Silas Weldon
- 27- Scott Fowler
- 29 - Richard North
- 30 - Jennifer McDaniel

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

(Continued from page 1)

of renown” to sway a majority of people to claim Moses and Aaron had cheated them by binding upon them their “traditional” view of the unique work of the priesthood. “They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “*You take* too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” (Num 16:3).

Once the discussion turned from the revealed will of God to man’s sense of “fairness” then Satan was able to use all of the tools in his arsenal. No doubt that these leaders of the various families had time to spread their anger in private meetings about the “legalism” of Moses and Aaron in their insistence that only priests could be used in the offering of incense in worship to God. Anger is an effective tool in shutting down the mind and inciting men to “mob action.” “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions *are* like the bars of a castle” (Prov 18:19).

Most of those in the wilderness did not know God, and, as a result, they failed to reasonably look to see how God had displayed His authority so that they could clearly know His will. From the signs given to Pharaoh in the freeing of the people, to the parting of the Red Sea and ultimately in the delivering of the 10 commandments, God had shown to Israel over and over again that Moses was His spokesman. Many of the people, however, because of their relationships, were not going to accept this truth.

The Destruction of Korah and his Associates

The end of Korah and his fellow troublemakers was predicable. After several appeals to reason, God made a powerful display of His wrath upon Korah’s new approach to worship. Imagine watching this scene as “the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly” (Num 16:31-33).

The Stunning Response of the People

After seeing this incredible display of the direct wrath of God, any rational man would assume that the people would now understand God’s way and the role that Moses played as God’s servant. Here is where we see the diabolical power of relationships in the hands of Satan. The poison had already been effectively deliv-

ered by Korah in destroying the respect the people should have had for Moses. Even though the ungodly leaders are now dead, their seeds of bitterness continued to work in the people. The people had come to trust and love Korah and would continue to fight Moses, God and anything else that got in their way of their anger. “On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the LORD” (Num 16:41). Did Moses open up the earth and cause these men to be swallowed up? No, but these people clearly wanted a relationship with the ungodly men that God had destroyed rather than have a relationship with God. All of these men died in the wilderness and never entered the Promised Land.

The Battle Before Us Today

I have seen the rebellion of Korah replayed many times in my life. As churches are swept away by apostasy, most “arguments” consist of social pressure and ridicule rather than an open study before the God that we should fully trust. Great preachers, influential men and past “great” relationships are held before us as “proof” that we are “traditionalists” or “legalists” and therefore should line up with the majority. Others will follow their children in rebellion by “restudying” the subject of divorce and remarriage after their offspring needed to justify a new marriage that was contrary to God’s teachings. Others will blindly follow editors of gospel papers, or elders of local churches out of a loyalty to a relationship and in opposition to the plain teachings of God’s word.

The Path Less Traveled

Build your faith upon God. Come to know His will and turn away from those who would use social pressure to bring you into bondage to men. While you may lose relationships, you will never be alone. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me” (Jn 16:1-3) Later in the same chapter Jesus pointed to His future example: “Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (Jn 16:32-33)” Let us draw near to our God that will never leave us alone!



Jesus: The Way Out of Confusion

By David Hartsell

The religious world is filled with ideas and faiths. Different “holy books” offer differing standards by which people should live. Some worship one god; others worship many deities. Some emphasize the deity “inside of each of us.” Multiplicities of religious beliefs are extremely confusing. Even in the “Christian faith” there are conflicting denominational ideas that often leave our heads spinning. How do we find our way out of this malaise and back on the path toward God?

The answer is found in Jesus’ life and teachings. In the first century, great religious divisions existed among God’s people. Greek and Roman influences lay behind many of these differences. Alexander The Great had spread Hellenistic customs, practices, and religions over the world. Later, reaction to Rome’s rule and its religions caused the Jews to splinter further in their unity of faith. Many Jewish sects developed. Sadducees were willing to compromise some of God’s teachings to save the temple and keep their position. They claimed to believe the scriptures but denied that a spiritual realm existed and, therefore, discounted the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees were opposed to spiritual compromise. Originally, they were determined to carefully keep God’s Word. This effort eventually turned into the exaltation of human ideas and traditions – exalting them even above God’s revealed Will. Jesus was hounded by Pharisees His entire life. Other groups such as the Zealots, the

How did Jesus deal with all these differences? First, there are several things that He did not do. He did not throw up His hands and say, “I give up! There are so many contradictory concepts. Why should I try?”

Publicans, and the Herodians had political agendas as well as religious disagreements. The Essenes avoided it all by withdrawing from society and formed smaller religious communities. Confusion reigned!

How did Jesus deal with all these differences? First, there are several things that He did not do. He did not throw up His hands and say, “I give up! There are so

many contradictory concepts. Why should I try?” Secondly, He never implied that truth was not essential. He did not suggest that one idea is as good as another. Finally, though Jesus believed truths found in each of the groups we have mentioned, He refused to join any of them.

Jesus continuously meditated on God’s Word. A twelve year old Jesus discussed scripture with Jewish religious scholars. (Lk.2:45-47) Years later, He astounded formally trained Jews with His knowledge of God’s Law and His ability to properly use it. Jesus told them plainly, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” (Jn.7:15-16) While denouncing the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees, our Lord emphasized the necessity of listening to and obeying the Word of God that they taught. (Matt.23:2-3) Like Jesus, we can make our way through the numerous false and confusing ideas by holding to God’s Word, the Bible. We can help our family and friends by teaching them to do the same.

