

Friendship With the Lord is Conditional

In **John 15:14**, the Lord Jesus says, "You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you." Amazingly enough, one word within this phrase causes much difficulty. It is the word "IF." Though only two letters long, it is one of the most powerful words in scripture. Why? Because it implies a condition that must be met for the statement to be true. In order to maintain a friendship with the Lord, one must do whatever He commands. Jesus states this in plain language in **John 15:14**.

Many people try to claim an intimate friendship with God while at the same time maintaining an intimate friendship with the world. While proclaiming to be Christians, they partake of the very things the Lord commands Christians to abstain from. This is not being a friend to Christ.

Regarding friendship with the world, James writes in **James 4:4**, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with

By Jonathan Perz God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." When we befriend the world, we make an enemy of God.

Many claim to be friends of Jesus Christ yet do not obey His words. In **Mark 16:15-16**, Jesus commands men to be baptized, yet many claim it is not necessary. Not only do they disobey the Lord, they contradict Him. Is this an example of friendship with the Lord? Remember what the Lord said in **John 15:14**, "You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you."

Let us become friends with God on His terms. Let us be like faithful Abraham. As it is written, "and Abraham believed God... He was called a friend of God" (**James 2:23**). Don't incur the punishment of one who is not a friend of the Lord (**2 Thess. 1:8-9**). Obey the Gospel today!



Phil 3:12-14 - Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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

December Birthdays

- 1 - Preston Guthrie
- 4 - Justin Padgett
- 5 - Rusty Weldon
- 5 - Charlie Johnson
- 8 - Macy Johnson
- 10 - Kyle Gibson
- 11 - Will Holcomb
- 12 - Hannah Marsh
- 13 - John Henderson
- 16 - Clint Armstrong
- 18 - Tin-Tau Tam
- 18 - Hannah Liu
- 21 - Holly Johnson
- 21 - Alison McFerrin
- 22 - William Herd
- 24 - Jessica Yates
- 24 - Ryan Yates
- 24 - Andrew Thigpen
- 30 - Holly Law
- 30 - Ben Price

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Joy Liu, and Amanda Stephens .
- We will have our monthly song service tonight.
- Let's continue to remember Barbara Kicker in our prayers as she is recovering from a fall at home.
- Tonight after services there will be an "open house" in the children's classrooms (6th grade and below) for parents and others that are interested in seeing the work done there!
- Tam is away for several weeks visiting in China.
- Let us remember all of our travelers for the holidays in our prayers!
- Audio CD's will be available in the foyer after each service.

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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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Thought to Ponder

Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true.

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

I am Bill's Ears

By Mark Roberts

Some people say we're shaped kind of funny. Women poke holes in us and hang all kinds of ornaments off our lobes. If someone is mad they may threaten to "box" us. A famous orator once asked Romans to lend theirs to him. What am I? I am the ear. Specifically, since there are two of me, I am Bill's ears.

To start with, you should know that we are a marvel of design and engineering. The outer part of the ear - what you see and what women pierce for earrings - gathers sound waves in. Inside the inner ear the three tiniest bones in the human body and some extremely small hairs on specialized organs catch the sound vibrations and create nerve signals that the brain can understand as sound. It is all very complex but it is wonderfully efficient and works amazingly well. I can hear a range of sounds and volumes that is simply incredible - everything from the high pitched hum of a mosquito to the low roar of a waterfall. Sometimes I hear someone talking about how humans evolved from slime and it makes me want to laugh. How could anything as complicated as ears just happen by accident?

Yet a look at the role I play in Bill's life does point out how much I can do for Bill. Hearing and listening are vitally important, especially in following and serving the Lord. Maybe that's why Jesus said "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:23).

Bill doesn't really think much about us but without us his world would be awfully quiet. Sound adds so much to our lives. Bill loves to hear his kids say "You're the best, dad!" Great music, like the wonderful hymns Mouth sings at church, move Bill's Heart to worship God. Even non-sacred music is enjoyable to listen to and can help Bill feel better when he is down. But it isn't all just fun and games. Many times a sound is the first clue that danger is coming, like when Bill didn't see that car that he was about to run into. When they honked we got Bill's attention in a hurry and avoided a bad accident! Perhaps the best report we Ears can make is when we report no sound

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)

at all. Quiet, stillness, and no noise all help Bill be still so he can meditate effectively on God and His Word.

Of course, our job isn't just gathering sounds. The reason God gave Bill ears is so that he can hear and then act upon the truth. Jesus said "But everyone who *hears* these sayings of Mine, and *does not do them*, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand" (**Matthew 7:26**).

Proverbs 5:1 says "My son, pay attention to my wisdom; *Lend your ear to my understanding.*" The Hebrew writer adds "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things *we have heard*, lest we drift away" (**Hebrews 2:1**). James warns "be doers of the word, *and not hearers only*, deceiving yourselves" (**James 1:22**). These passages discuss the obligation of Bill to act on what we hear and send over to Mind. If Bill doesn't do anything with the information we give him then we might as well have never heard it at all.

That is also why it is so important that Bill be careful what he uses us to listen to. "And Jesus was saying to them, 'Take care what you listen to'" (**Mark 4:24**). False teachers can make error sound like truth (**see Jer. 12:6**). Honestly, I can't tell the difference at all. I just send it over to Mind and he has to sort it all out. It would make life a lot easier for Mind if Bill just didn't get me around that kind of teaching in the first place, wouldn't it? However, it's not just false doctrine that I can get involved with. All kinds of evil and sin begins in the ear. I can hear gossip and rumors about someone that will change how Bill acts toward that person permanently. Too often today I hear profanity, vulgarity and curse words that hurt me badly. Sometimes what I hear seems to go right over to Tongue because the next thing you know he is saying those words too! Sadly, many a proposition to sin begins with a whisper in the ear. "*An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue*" (**Proverbs 17:4**). Solomon says his word are designed to "deliver you from the immoral woman, *from the seductress who flatters with her words*" (**Prov 2:16**). A lot of adultery and immorality can be

traced over to Eyes, but though I don't like to admit it, us Ears have a lot to do with it too.

If Conscience gets turned off, and Bill keeps me listening to sinful ideas and ways, then it becomes harder to hear God's word. As a result our walk with God is ruined. "One who turns away his *ear from hearing the law*, even his prayer is an abomination" (**Proverbs 28:9**). There is just an incredibly strong connection between me and Heart and so what I hear can determine Bill's way, for good or evil. "Each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that *no one listens to Me*" (**Jeremiah 16:12**).

The best thing for me to be hearing is God's word. Beyond that, however, there are many other good things for me to listen to. Solomon also notes "The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise" (**Proverbs 15:31**). It hurts a little when someone rebukes Bill, but in the long run he's glad I heard it so he could correct his life. It is also very good to hear words of encouragement and acceptance. Barnabas was always doing that and I am sure the ears of everyone else around him perked up and listened to what he had to say because it feels so good to be exhorted and encouraged in the service of the Lord (**Acts 11:23**). Ultimately I hope Bill someday hears Jesus say "Well done good and faithful servant." This old body will be changed then (**see 1 Cor 15:51-ff**) and I guess that means I will be changed too. But I know Bill wants to hear Jesus say those wonderful words, and he wants to hear the angelic choruses ringing out hymns of victory and praise, and he wants to hear his voice added to theirs. That will be something to hear won't it?

I don't mean to sound stuck on myself. After all, ears are just a part of the body that the Lord has made (**Prov 20:12; 1 Cor. 12:16**). Yet a look at the role I play in Bill's life does point out how much I can do for Bill. Hearing and listening are vitally important, especially in following and serving the Lord. Maybe that's why Jesus said "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:23). Bill has me and we are trying hard to listen to the Savior. How about your ears? What are they hearing?



Disconnected Dads

By Rusty Miller

God never intended for us to live disconnected from our children, because He has entrusted us with their souls.

Many years ago, there was a blues song called "Motherless Children." But there is cause to wonder, if a similar song were written today, if it might not be called "Fatherless Children."

First, there is the growing trend among successful (as the world counts success) women in their late 30's and early 40's to raise children without fathers. Then there are those who are fathers only biologically, refusing to take responsibility for their sinful lifestyles. And there are the great number of children deprived of fathers by divorce.

However, the most disturbing trend of all is the one which has fathers taking a "hands off" approach to their children. These fathers live in the home, but they refuse to connect with their children. Some have an old, macho "children are women's work" mentality, but many others are just disconnected from their families. It may be their jobs, their hobbies or their friends, but they allow something to keep them from interacting with their families. The fact that this trend also impacts so many kids in the Lord's church makes it important for us to discuss.

The disconnected father is not the model found in scripture. In fact, the bulk of instruction given on raising children is given to fathers. There is the responsibility of husbands and fathers to provide for their families (**1 Tim. 5:8**), but there is so much more, and frankly, too many men think their responsibilities toward their children end with earning a paycheck.

God urges fathers concerning their children, "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (**Eph. 6:4**). It is easily recognized that mothers generally spend far more time with their children than do fathers, but that does not diminish the role God designed for men. God expects the father to be active in the spiritual nourishing of his children. How can we so easily see that neglecting the physical needs of children is condemned, yet we think somehow we can be right in the eyes of God while not providing for them spiritually?

How do fathers "connect" with their children? Time. There is no replacement for spending time with chil-

dren, if we expect to have any influence in their lives. And while we might be expected to focus on the spiritual, we also recognize the importance of "connecting" on a social level, and that can be time spent at children's ball games or music recitals, or it could be time spent with a child on Dad's favorite hobby or the child's favorite hobby. The point is, make sure your children know you are interested in their lives.

What happens to the children of disconnected fathers? First, when they reach their teen years, when children need more freedom and tend to push things, they are angered by fathers who now seek to set rules, to enact punishment for rule-breaking or to interact in their lives. They don't understand why this man who has never been involved on a "hands on" basis in their lives, should now be the one to whom they answer as they approach adulthood. God said, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger" (**Eph. 6:4**), and "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart" (**Col. 3:21**). Isn't this exactly what we do when we live disconnected from our children, only to try and "step in" when we think they need correction?

Another difficult problem for these children is in developing a faith in God which is theirs. They are not interested in the faith which has given them such a father, so they reject it. Unfortunately, if Dad's view of the "instruction of the Lord" is again, one of provider ("I took them to church every Sunday!"), they may reject the salvation of God based on Dad's poor representation of it. **Psalm 127:3** says, "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord." What a dreadful position to be in on the day of judgment if God has to point to children who have rejected Him and ask us, "What did you do with My gift?"

It is far better that we should be the kind of fathers who are connected with our children, and who live our spirituality before them and teach them of God's way. That is what Moses instructed for the fathers of his day (**see Deut. 6:4-9; Ex. 12:21-28**). God never intended for us to live disconnected from our children, because He has entrusted us with their souls.

