

It's not a Contest "to be the Best" - but it is a Race

It's not a contest against other Christians (or unbelievers) who are all trying to be "first in heaven" but it is a race we must run with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, (who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.)

By Nathan Dial

"MOST modest," certainly. But we don't respond to that by being as close to immodest as we can get, do we?

We don't "win the game" by going to all the church services, but we certainly don't strive for the prize by going to as few as possible do we?

We certainly shouldn't say "thank you that I'm not the tax collector" but ... that is because we are the tax collector. We are the unworthy one, who without God's grace would be lost and condemned with no recourse. If I recall his attitude was not to assert "It's not a contest" but rather to acknowledge his own failings and penitently plead for mercy.

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize."

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."



We are not saved by our own behavior and we never could be. And I am aware that some Christians really do see it as some sort of "be-good game" with a mentality not much more advanced than my 3-year-old daughter. Don't get me wrong, I think it's wonderful that at such a tender age she is beginning to recognize right and wrong, modest and immodest, sharing and not-sharing, and to care about things like attendance and lack thereof or things in the Bible and not in the Bible. But to her child's mind it is still just playing a game and I deeply hope that as she matures she grows beyond that to a genuine understanding of what the Gospel really means. As I noted earlier, some Christians have failed to progress beyond such a childish perception of righteousness.

But while recognizing that faith is not a game of "who is best at following the rules" we also must know that faith cannot be separated from obedience. It's not about who's being the

Classes This Week

Sun 5:15 PM Kid's Class at the Building	Monday 12 Noon Campus Study - Foy Cafeteria	Monday 7 PM Ladies Class at Emily Jones	Tuesday 7 PM Bible Reading at Hannah Alexander's	Tuesday 8 PM "Truth Seekers" Room 2222 in Student Center	Wed. 10 AM Ladies Class on Parenting at the Rouses'	Thursday 12:30 PM Campus Study - Foy Cafeteria	Thursday 7 PM Revelation Study at Caleb George's
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Sick

Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Lori Holloway	Mike Reed (Friend of Long's)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Josie Keith (Friend of Heath Fowler)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Stacey Harrell (Marcus Harrell's Dad)	Ann Robinson (Sharon Bailey's Mom)	

October Birthdays

- 2 - Suzanne Nichols
- 6 - Jessica Anderson
- 8 - Heath Fowler
- 9 - William Edwards
- 11 - Mason Chandler
- 12 - Stacy Norman
- 14 - Grant Smith
- 20 - Evan Pender
- 20 - Olivia Hillard
- 20 - Keith Bailey
- 21 - Scott Shields
- 22 - Chris Davis
- 22 - Hunter Crawford
- 22 - Meredith Bragwell
- 22 - Christopher White
- 24 - Sarabeth + Suzanna Roberts
- 25 - Josh Sutton
- 26 - Sara Sutton
- 26 - Palmer Daniels
- 26 - Mel Ambrose
- 28 - Anne Morton
- 29 - Matt Hall
- 29 - Belle Johnson
- 31 - Kitty Tam

News and Notes

- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- We will have our monthly singing tonight.
- We will have our monthly men's business meeting this afternoon at 3:30.
- We express sympathy to Seth Humphrey's family at the death of his uncle, Richard Call.
- Audio CD's will be available after each service. Distribute these freely.

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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

Your children need your presence more than your presents.

Listen Son!

By Gus Nichols

Listen son! I have a confession to make as you lie on your pillow, one little hand crumpled under your cheek, and the curls stickily wet about your eyes, as though you had cried yourself to sleep.

Just a few minutes ago, as I sat reading my paper, a great wave of bitter remorse swept over my soul. I felt so guilty that I was forced to come to your bedside and seek relief.

As I tried to read my paper tonight, my thoughts rambled back over the day, and brought to me a hot, burning sense of shame and regret, because I had been so cross to you today. This morning, when you awoke and came in to put your little arms about my neck, I scolded you because you were not fully dressed. When you were dressing for school, I criticized you for merely giving your face a dab with the towel. You did not shine your shoes, and left some of your things upon the floor.

At breakfast I also found fault. You spilled some juice, gulped down your food, and put your elbows upon the table. I grew bitter and

Tomorrow, I will be a real daddy. I will chum with you, suffer with you, laugh and play with you, and help you to be happy. In the future all correction and discipline shall be exercised in wisdom and sweetened by love.

very unkind when you neglected to brush your teeth. And when you started off to school, and I was leaving for my work, you waved your little hand and said, "Bye daddy." But I only frowned and said, "Straighten up, and hold your shoulders back."

Then it began all over again in the afternoon. As I was coming in from work, I spied you at play down on your knees upon the ground. I reproved you before your little friends, and made you march before me up to the house. I informed you that clothing is very costly, and that if you

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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

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had to buy and wash your own clothes you would be more careful. How stupid! How foolish, to think that clothes is everything and a child is nothing! Imagine that, son, from a father!

And because you forgot to clean your feet when coming into the house, I drove you out. When you finally came back inside, I reproved you for wanting to laugh and play when there are always important things to be done. You were told that the living room is a place for company, and is not a place for kids to romp and play.

Finally, when I was reading my paper in my favorite rocker, you came in softly, timidly, with a sort of hurt, hunted look in your eyes. I glanced up and frowned at you for interrupting me, but you hesitated and stood still. Then I snapped out, "What do you want?" You said nothing, but made a tremendous plunge and landed in my lap. You threw your little arms around my neck and kissed me, again and again. You hugged me tight with affection which God planted in your little heart, and which my cruel neglect had not destroyed. Finally you went away, and off to bed.

Well, son, when I tried to read my paper again, it soon fell from my hands, and a terrible sickening fear came over me. Suddenly I saw myself, as I really was, an unreasonable, and overbearing father. I felt sick at heart, and my thoughts troubled me more than I can express. What had habit been doing to me? The habit of bitterly criticizing and faultfinding? And why should such a sweet little boy have to suffer so much for simply being a child, and not a full-grown man?

Son, it was not that I did not love you, but because I put a man's head upon a boy's shoulders. There was so much in you that was lovely, beautiful and fine, that I should have acted upon the proverb that an ounce of praise is worth a pound of criticism. True, you are not perfect, but you are as fine and good mannered as the best of children around us, and that in

spite of the fact that your little heart has starved for love and appreciation. You did not deserve my treatment of you, my son. Your little heart is as big as the dawn at the rising sun, and as deep as the ocean wide.

This was demonstrated by your impulse to rush in and kiss me "Good night," even when you feared what the outcome might be. But I am not too busy now, son! I have come to kneel at your bedside, choking with emotion, and in deep repentance! I know you could not understand these things if I were to say them to you in your waking hours. But I have come to make free and full confession, and I have prayed to God to strengthen me in my high resolve and purpose of heart.

Tomorrow, I will be a real daddy. I will chum with you, suffer with you, laugh and play with you, and help you to be happy. In the future all correction and discipline shall be exercised in wisdom and sweetened by love. I will bite my tongue when impatient criticism seeks utterance. I will keep saying over and over in my mind: "He is nothing but a mere child, and needs tender care." Yes, I shall be cheerful and good-natured, and keep my home happy. I will be the father I should be. In the past I have asked entirely too much of you, my darling—too much!

Dear boy! My dear little son! I want to thank you for what you have done for me! Your unbounded love and unoffended innocence have brought me humbly to your little bed in the moonlight tonight this confession to make. God bless and keep you, my sweet little son, and make me more like you! I now kiss your little fingers and forehead. Good night! Good night, little son! Good night, my darling!



Is Your Heart Big Enough?

By Steve Klein

So much of what it means to live for Jesus is summed up in the word love. Among other things, love is an essential ingredient in the recipe for unity among believers. The body of Christ builds itself up "in love" (Ephesians 4:16). Love is "the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14).

The love which binds us together is more than mere feeling or sentiment. It is a powerful force which inspires us to behave in specific ways (cf. **1 Corinthians 13:1-8**).

Because love "does not rejoice in iniquity," one thing it compels us to do is to correct the errors of those whom we love. **Galatians 6:1-2** commands the following: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

In Galatians we are shown that "the law of Christ" is as a law rooted in love. Paul asserts that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything "but faith working through love" (5:6). "Through love" we "serve one another" (5:13). "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (5:14). And, "the fruit of the Spirit is love. . ." (5:22). The point is that the law of Christ is a law of love and we fulfill it by bearing one another's burdens, includ-

More than anything else, we need hearts enlarged with such love - love that refuses to sit idly by and watch as brothers and sisters in Christ are overcome with sin. "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

ing helping one another overcome sin.

Paul exemplified this spirit of love in his dealings with the Corinthians. In his first letter to them, he severely rebuked the Corinthians for their errors. In his second letter, he explained that "out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not

that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you" (**2 Corinthians 2:4**). He spoke so openly to them because his heart was "enlarged" (**2 Corinthians 6:11**). His heart was swelling with love for the Corinthians, and he could not bear to see them lose their souls.

More than anything else, we need hearts enlarged with such love - love that refuses to sit idly by and watch as brothers and sisters in Christ are overcome with sin. "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins" (**1 Peter 4:8**). It should be noted that this passage does not say that love covers sins by ignoring them. Love "covers a multitude of sins" by encouraging the sinner to repent, and by readily forgiving him when he does. "Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (**James 5:20**).

Is your heart big enough to restore your fallen brother or sister?

