

“First Love”

By Robert Turner

A tap at the study door announced a timid and frightened young couple. Their marriage was "coming apart" — or so they thought — and since I had "performed their ceremony," they had come to me for help.

The timid approach fooled me. What should have been an easy "patch-up" job grew more complicated as we discussed the details. Recalling each incident of friction led to charges of blame, efforts to justify, defense of pride. The situation was growing steadily worse when, in desperation, I tried the magic of "first love."

"Please arise, and stand here," I requested, indicating the exact spot where they had made their vows. Picking up my Bible, I stepped into place before them. "And now, will you join right hands." Then, as they grew silent with their memories, I reminded them of the pledges they had made "before God and to one-another" on that eventful day some months earlier.

Before my little speech was finished — maybe I was over-playing my part in the drama they interrupted to

thank me, and hurried out of the room, hand in hand. Perhaps they had heard little of what I said, but they recalled their own hopes and determinations of first love, and that was enough.

The Hebrew writer urged faithfulness by saying, "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions...." (**Hebrews 10:32**). When we "leave our first love," (**Rev. 2:4f**) it must be restored if our union with Christ is to survive.

When brethren "go a-gadding" after strange doctrines, human institutions, the social gospel, etc., they have neglected their first love — their espousal to Christ. (**2 Cor.11:1-3**) They profit little by tongue-lashings, ridicule, or even sound high-powered argumentation — especially if they are so self-willed as to be no longer interested in the Bible pattern. Unless their love for and determination to serve Jesus Christ can be rekindled, all else is vain.

Please join hands — with the Lord!



Classes This Week

Sun 5:15 PM Kid's Class at the Building	Sun After Services College Devo at the Smith's - Harold Carswell Teaching!	Monday 12 Noon Campus Study - Foy Cafeteria	Monday 7 PM Men's Class at Walker Davis'	Tuesday 7 PM Bible Reading at Hannah Alexander's	Wed. 12 Noon Ladies Class at Lisa Lanier's	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)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	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)	Debra Lowe (Toni Herd's Friend)

November Birthdays

- 1 - Jason Williams
- 2 - Debbi Coleman
- 3 - Darla Hahn
- 6 - Lauren Ledford
- 6 - Troy Godwin
- 7 - Leah Donahue
- 7 - Amy Godwin
- 8 - Ashley Miller
- 9 - Michael Hubbard
- 11 - Davis Fultz
- 13 - Toni Herd
- 13 - Emerson Daniels
- 15 - Rafia Qadeer
- 16 - Nichole Pender
- 17 - Art Daves
- 20 - Andrew Smith
- 23 - Mary Ann Roberts
- 24 - John Burns
- 25 - Timothy Stone
- 25 - Silas Weldon
- 27 - Scott Fowler
- 29 - Richard North
- 30 - David Simpson

News and Notes

- Remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Please remember Greg Lanier's father, Don Lanier, in your prayers.
- Please remember the family of Robert Holmberg, Clay Jones cousin, as he passed away this week.
- This Sat. the 1st-6th grade class will meet at the Jerkins and the 7th-12th Grade class will meet at the Jeremiah Johnson's.
- CD's of Bill Hall are in the foyer.
- Tonight Harold Carswell will be preaching and then leading the College Devo.!

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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Keeping Yourself Unspotted from the World

By Warren E. Berkley



Thoughts to Ponder

Love must be learned again and again; there is no end to it. Hate needs no instruction, but waits only to be provoked.

"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1:26,27)

One truth immediately clear from this passage is, it is not enough just to think that you are religious. Religion in the New Testament is not just a matter of your individual response of heart to God. It is the activity of your faith in Christ, beginning with baptism and continuing thereafter to trust and obey.

One truth immediately clear from this passage is, it is not enough just to think that you are religious. Religion in the New Testament is not just a matter of what you think and claim; it is matter of your individual response of heart to God.

iar admonition to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

The Term "World"

In the Scriptures, "world" is used in different contexts. The term is used in at least three ways: (1) the physical world, composed of water, soil, atmosphere, vegetation, etc. {**example: Naham 1:5**}. (2) The human world, made up of people; "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," {**Jno. 3:16**}. (3) The world in the moral sense, which is composed of all those things that attract us away from God {see **2 Pet. 1:4; Tit. 2:12; Rom. 12:2; 1 Jno. 2:15-17**}. The teaching of **James 1:27** requires that we shun any

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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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and every form of attitude, action or association that would move us away from God. Because of the influence of God's grace in my life, I should be determined to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and therefore – keep myself unspotted from the world.

This Is An Individual Responsibility

This section in James chapter one was not written as instruction to local churches. Begin with verse 19 and read to the end of the chapter. This is addressed to individuals. It is not about the budget of a local church; it is not about building and maintaining an institution. It is teaching directed to individuals: Bridle your tongue; do not deceive your heart; personally take up the cause of orphans and widows in their trouble.

And, keep yourself unspotted from the world. I cannot pay a committee to keep me unspotted from the world. I cannot hire an agent, to keep me unspotted from the world. I cannot make arrangements or enter into a contract for anybody else to do this for me (however they may love me, and however anxious I am for them to have the job). It is my job, based on my commitment to the Lord and my diligence with His word, to keep myself unspotted from the world.

Your family background can get you ready to do this; your friends can encourage you; the local church can provide teaching for this purpose. But in the day-to-day life you must live, you must do this: keep yourself unspotted from the world. Watch what you do, and who you associate with. Be careful what you think, what you say, how you deal with people and the approach of temptation. Use the Word of God to personally keep yourself unspotted from the world. You cannot really be a Christian until you accept this individual responsibility.

“Unspotted”

Often in Bible study, if you want more information about what a word or phrase means, you can find something on the same page that will help; contextual references near the phrase in question. Being unspotted from the world is defined within the book of James – before **Jas. 1:27** and after. Before the verse, in **James 1:21** – “*Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness.*” After the verse, in **James**

4:7,8 – “*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*” To keep myself unspotted from the world, I must lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and I must purify my heart and cleanse my hands. This is all about personal repentance and determination to avoid all sin and error.

God has forbidden us to participate in very specific mis-behaviors. “*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” (**Gal. 5:19-21**).

I must use the Word of God to monitor my heart. If I detect any beginnings of any of these behaviors, I must put them away, to maintain the activity of my faith in God and keep myself unspotted from the world.

This is “Pure and undefiled Religion Before God and the Father”

I'm afraid, when most people think of religion, they do not think of God the Father. They do not think first of Him and the spiritual blessings He provides in Christ. They think of church stuff (people, groups, organizations, buildings and movements). We are strongly influenced by the religious culture of our time – which is marked by denominations, churches, organizations, human tradition and ritual. It will be to our eternal advantage to identify religion first with God. Right religion is man's response to Him. When man's response is in keeping with His instruction and is expressive of faith in His Son – then you have “pure and undefiled religion.” Anything else is vain.

Finally, if I fail to keep myself unspotted from the world, it really does not matter what else I do! I may learn Bible history well; be able to quote the Bible freely and accurately; win debates with top denominational apologists and give all my goods to feed the poor . . . AND fast three times a week and give my body to be burned. But if I fail to keep myself unspotted from the world, I am not a God-pleasing participant in pure and undefiled religion. Where do you stand at this moment?



A Living, Transforming Hope

By Paul Earnhart

It is reported that several years ago researchers did a study to determine the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water from which they could not escape unaided. The researchers left one set in the water and found that within an hour the exhausted rats all drowned.

But genuine and humble souls should be made to rejoice at the implications of the story of the cross. However much tempered with sobriety, the response of such people to the preaching of Jesus should always, at last, be joy.

cere, the worldly hearers. The gospel is designed to cause them to stumble in their lusts. But genuine and humble souls should be made to rejoice at the implications of the story of the cross. However much tempered with sobriety, the response of such people to the preaching of Jesus should always, at last, be joy.

The other rats were periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. These animals swam for over 24 hours. Why? Not because they were given rest, but because they had hope! They had come to believe that if they held out just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. Without defending what seems to have been a rather cruel experiment, we simply observe that if this is the effect of hope on unthinking rodents, what must its power be in the lives of human beings?

There is nothing so critical to the success of gospel teaching as that it gives genuine hope to sincere hearers. Any supposed teaching of Christ which drives honest searching hearts to despair is a subversion of God's gracious purpose. “Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us” (**Hebrews 6:17-18**).

We do not speak here of the proud, the insin-

This is not to deny that the gospel begins with a profoundly painful indictment of sin, but it is easy to say that such should not be the final impact of the message. If the preaching of Christ begins by driving us to our knees in repentance, it must end by lifting us to our feet in confident faith and hope. Paul says that we are saved “in hope” (**Romans 8:24**) and truer words were never spoken. It is the confidence we feel in God's gracious promises and the assurance He gives us of our power to obtain them by faith that keeps us going and growing, serving God through good times and bad.

And there is every reason that those who have trusted in Christ should have a bright and confident hope. The most wonderful thing has already happened. God, in the cross, has demonstrated His love for us so powerfully that we can never again have cause to doubt the depth of His commitment (**Romans 5:8; 8:31**). As Paul wonderingly asks, if that is what God is willing to do for His enemies, what would He be willing to do for His friends (**5:10-11**)? It is beyond imagining!

