

# Relevant Teaching

When Peter spoke to the Jews on Pentecost, he talked to them about their actions and needs (**Acts 2**). He did not center his lesson upon the Gentiles, who were not there to hear his words. When he spoke the gospel to Cornelius and the Gentiles with him, he gave them information which they needed in order to please God (**Acts 10**). When Peter wrote his letter to those of the Dispersion, he taught them things relative to their needs as those set apart to God (I Peter). Note how many times the word "you" is used in these three passages. He was talking to his hearers about those things relevant to their obeying God and remaining faithful. He didn't talk in vague generalities so as to avoid hurting someone's feelings or "offending" some who then would go away and be lost.

When Paul preached to the Gentiles at Athens, his approach was suited to the needs of his audience (**Acts 17**). He did not spend his efforts talking to them about the sins and needs of the Jews. When he talked to pagans, he pointed out to them the errors and vanity of paganism (**Acts 14:11-18**). When he wrote to the saints at Corinth, he addressed their errors and told them what to do to cor-

**By Gilbert Alexander** rect what was amiss (1 Corinthians). Each letter he wrote was relevant to those to whom it was written: Romans to the saints at Rome, Galatians to the churches of Galatia, Colossians to those at Colossae, etc.

Our teaching today needs to be relevant to the audience before us. We need to say those things which will inform, encourage, and correct those who hear. The Scriptures are our text, handled aright (**2 Timothy 3:16,17; 4:1-5**). In warning about dangers and dangerous men, Paul named names and was specific (**1 Timothy 1:19,20; 2 Timothy 4:10,14,15; 2:14-18; 1 Corinthians 15:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**). We, too, need to deal with specific truth specifically, so that people will know what we are talking about, what the Scriptures say, and what the responsibility of each one is. Preachers, do you preach so as not to make anyone uncomfortable, or do you, in love, tell your hearers what they need to hear in language that they will not misunderstand? How often do you use the word "you" in teaching others what they should do? Note **Acts 2:37,38**.



<b>Sunday 5:15</b> Kid's Class at the Building	<b>Monday 7PM</b> Men's Class at the Rouse's	<b>Tuesday 8 PM</b> "Truth Seekers" at Student Center - Room 2310	<b>Wednesday 12 Noon</b> Ladies "Parenting" class at Nichole Pender's	<b>Thursday 7PM</b> College Class at Bob Simpson's	<b>Saturday 6-8 PM</b> 1st-6th Grade class at the Daniels
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Sick			
Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	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)	Haylie Watson (Friend of Heath Fowler's Relative)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Andrew Hage-wood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Kathryn Crawford (Hunter Crawford's 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)	Betty Bradford	Ann Robinson (Sharon Bailey's Mom)	Debra Lowe (Toni Herd's Friend)

February Birthdays
2 - Wesley Herd
2 - Ken Sullivan
3 - Chris Long
5 - Mark Zeanah
5 - Josh Redden
6 - Jackson Fowler
8 - Grant Burton
13 - Leslie Freeman
14 - Leighton Daniels
15 - Terria Burton
15 - Ella Miller
16 - Seth Humphrey
18 - Caralee Hunt
20 - Haley Chittam
20 - Laura West
22 - Windy Dembowski
22 - Elizabeth Anne Calvert
22 - Alexander Calvert
23 - Greg Lanier
24 - Jeff Jerkins
26 - Maghen Smith
27 - Julie Johnson

### News and Notes

We mourn with Walker Davis at the passing of his mother Erlene. Visitation is Sunday afternoon from 1:30 - 3:30 and Funeral is Monday at 11:00.

Our college Devotional will be tonight at the Godwin's. Josh Carter will be teaching!

We will soon have new church directories. Let us use them to encourage one another!

The scheduled Men's meeting will be postponed to next week.

We are encouraged by the high participation of our members in our Eldership process. Let us continue to work together in this effort!

# The Auburn Beacon



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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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### Thoughts to Ponder

Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained.

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

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

### Is The Faithful Saint Continually Cleansed By The Blood Of Jesus Christ?

By Hiram Hutto

First of all, it should be pointed out that the question is self-contradictory. How? It speaks about the blood continually cleansing. **1 John 1:7** tells us that his blood cleanseth us from sin. So, if the blood is continually cleansing, it is continually cleansing from sin, which means that there is sin present that needs cleansing. That being true, the person who is being continually cleansed must be continually sinning. Now, how can a person be called a faithful saint (both terms) while at the same time he is continually sinning? Clearly, the question contradicts itself.

Further, to imply that a Christian is one who continually sins is to contradict the Bible. It says that a Christian does not practice sin (**1 John 3:9, NASB**; the same tense and idea is in **3:6 and 5:18**). If a person who is continually sinning isn't practicing sin, what on earth would he have to do to practice it? Again, when Paul asks, "Shall we continue in sin?", he answers "God forbid" (**Rom. 6:1**). According to the position we are examining, he should have said, "Not only may we continue in sin, but we will be faithful saints while so doing"! The fact is, this passage and others show that sin is not the norm for the Christian, it is the exception.

What is frequently meant by such questions as heads this article is: Is the faithful saint automatically cleansed of sins of ignorance and/or weakness. **1 John 1:7** is cited to prove that he is. Not only does **1 John 1:7** not teach that doctrine, the

passage says absolutely nothing per se about sins of weakness or ignorance. It says the blood of Jesus cleanses us "from all sin." Whatever the passage says about sins of ignorance and weakness, it says the same thing about sins of rebellion and disobedience. It says "all sin." But someone might respond (and the idea is current), the person under consideration in **1 John 1** is said to "walk in the light" and a person who is walking in the light will not be guilty of sins of rebellion and disobedience, only sins of weakness and/or ignorance. Who said so? Did God? If so, where? Obviously, a person who is guilty of rebellion and disobedience is not "in the light" at the point at which he is guilty of rebellion or disobedience, but no sin is "in the light." After all, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (**1 John 1:5**), and if sin is not darkness, what is? There is no sin (rebellion, disobedience, or whatever) in the light.

Consider another point. In **Hebrews 3:2** God says that Moses was "faithful in all his house"; yet at Meribah God said that Moses "did not believe in me" (**Num. 20:12**) and that he "rebelled against my rod" (**v. 24**). Although, in general, Moses was described as faithful, he certainly was not faithful there, neither did God approve nor automatically forgive him. Instead, God was wroth (**Deut. 3:27**) and would not hear Moses, but rebuked him. I cannot conceive of anyone's thinking that he was faithful in the point where God said he did not believe, and that he was rebellious. To say

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otherwise is to say that a person can be full of faith (faithful) in a point where he is lacking in faith. A person might be faithful in a number of areas, and yet be unfaithful at some particular point, and as it was in Moses' case, a very vital point. Surely nobody would claim that Moses died still impenitent and rebellious about the matter but God forgave him anyway. The idea that the only kinds of sins that a faithful Christian (one who walks in the light) commits are sins of ignorance and weakness is not taught in the Bible, nor does it teach that God automatically forgives those (or any other) sins.

To say that a person is automatically cleansed, like the windshield wiper (or that he benefits; i.e., is forgiven, even as he sins), sounds too much like the Baptist preacher who said that he could seduce some woman but God would work it out for his good (benefit). It reminds me of the Baptist who affirmed in a debate with me that a child of God could get drunk, that he could die drunk, and would go to heaven anyway; that a child of God could lie, that he could die with a lie on his tongue (as did Ananias and Sapphira), and he would go to heaven anyway; that a child of God could commit adultery, that he could get killed in the act, and the child of God could commit adultery with a person who was not a child of God, that both of them get killed in the act, and the child of God would go to heaven but the one who was not a child of God would go to Hell. Frankly, it surprised me when he affirmed this publicly and openly, but it shocked me to learn that some brethren evidently believe it and some teach that which logically leads to the same conclusion. I did not believe it then, and I do not believe it now.

The Bible clearly teaches that a child of God can sin. John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (**1 John 1:8**). But it just as clearly teaches that a child of God does not have to sin. In fact, John wrote his first epistle so that his readers would "sin not" (**2:1**). If a Christian cannot keep from sinning, he has to sin, and John wasted his letter. Such a claim impugns the wisdom of God. And Peter says, "If ye do these things, ye shall never stumble" (**2 Pet. 1:10**) that a child of God can not fall (note the important difference between "cannot" [impossible] and "can not" [possible not to]). He doesn't have to fall. If a Christian must sin ("man, because he is man, sins" is as false when taught by "conservative" brethren, as it is when taught by Edward Fudge or John Calvin), why does God hold him responsible for doing something he could not keep from doing anyway? Such does away with man's being a creature of choice. Man sins all right enough, not because he must sin, but because he

chooses to sin, and therefore is guilty. The idea that a faithful Christian saint is continually cleansed because he is continually sinning is not in the Bible.

Some have even claimed that when a person unknowingly violates God's law, God automatically forgives him (like the windshield wiper), then later when man learns that he has broken God's law he must repent, etc. Why should he repent? What does he have to repent of? After all, if God forgave him at the time he sinned, the sin isn't on his record; he doesn't need to repent. What he should do, if the argument is correct, is thank God for having already forgiven him without repentance and before he ever learned about it! Still others claim that a person who unwittingly violates God's law is not then guilty (they need to read **Lev. 4:13,22,27**) but when he later learns that he has violated God's law, if he does not then repent, he is guilty. Among the many problems with this argument is, it changes God's definition of sin. God said, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (**1 John 3:4**). This doctrine says, "No, this is wrong.

Sin is not the transgression of the law. Sin is the awareness of the transgression of the law." But the Bible doesn't teach that either.

Yes, Christians sin, and God has made provisions for them when they do, but he has made no provisions for them to live in sin. When John states that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, he does what is frequently done in the Scriptures - he is simply stating a truth without giving all the details of the matter. Just as Jesus said, "Father, forgive them" (**Luke 23:34**), he did not give any conditions for forgiveness, and it was several days later when Peter told them what those conditions were (Acts 2:36-38). So the blood cleanses us from all sin (**v. 7**), but it is **verse 9** that mentions one of the conditions man must meet for that forgiveness; it does not mention all of them for it says nothing about repentance. That is learned, elsewhere. The passage also says that we must confess our sins. It does not say we are to confess that we are sinners, nor does it say that if we confess that we are sinners, God will forgive. That may or may not be true, but **1 John 1:7-9** does not say so. It says that we are to confess our sins to be forgiven. Instead of teaching one to be confident of his salvation and feel secure about it because the blood of Christ will automatically or continually cleanse our sins, we need to teach people as Peter did Simon, "Repent . . . of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (**Acts 8:22**).

No, the faithful saint is not continually cleansed by the blood of Christ because a faithful saint is not continually sinning. But a saint may be often cleansed by the blood, just as often as he meets the conditions given by God. – **Sentry Magazine June 1987**



## Effective Prayer

By Steve Klein

We need to understand not only that God has the power to give us what we need, but also that He wants to give it! When we ask God for anything according to His will, He hears us (**1 John 5:14**)

Prayer is the means by which weak and frail men tap into the boundless power of an Almighty God. There is "nothing too hard" for God (**Jeremiah 32:17**). He is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (**Ephesians 3:20**). Despite this, there are Christians who have little confidence in their prayers. They may know their responsibility to pray (**1 Thesalonians 5:17**), but they do not feel that their prayers have much effect. Perhaps this is the way you view your own prayers. What can be done to make our prayers more effective, powerful and life-changing? Try the following:

### Pray Before All Else Fails

All too often, we use prayer as a last resort. We try everything under the sun to solve our own problems, allow those problems to overwhelm us, and then we think to call upon God. In **Psalms 63:1**, David said, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You." Note the word "early." We need to realize that the first and best solution to every problem is to seek God's help. We need to give it to God before it overwhelms us! "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him" (**Psalms 32:6**). Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." If we'd start with that mindset, we might be amazed at how effective prayer suddenly becomes for us.

### Pray in Faith

We need to understand not only that God has the power to give us what we need, but also that He wants to give it! When we ask God for anything ac-

ording to His will, He hears us (**1 John 5:14**). If we do not trust that He has our best interest at heart, or that He has the power to grant our requests, it does little good to ask Him. James commands that we "ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-7).

### Work to make it happen

Faith without works is dead (**James 2:26**). If we are praying in faith, we will work to make our prayer happen. Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became one of the most eloquent voices for freeing the slaves in the years leading up to the War Between the States; Douglass once said, "I prayed for twenty years (for my freedom) but received no answer until I prayed with my legs." We need to pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended upon us.

### Live a Righteous Life

**James 5:16** says, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." God listens to people who listen to Him. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (**1 Peter 3:12**). But God does not listen to those who pay Him no attention. "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (**Proverbs 28:9**).

Your prayers can be powerful! "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matthew 7:7-8**).

