

The Power of Example

By David Smitherman

Once upon a time there was a local church that had a tradition. For several months each year on a selected night a "Men's and Boy's Training Class" was conducted in which those interested were trained and encouraged to develop and use their talents in God's service. This tradition continued for decades and helped to produce elders, deacons, preachers and other leaders in congregations to which these young men would, in later years, be scattered.

There was an old man in that church that rarely missed one of these classes. Even when he was in his eighties and in poor health he was present. He sat patiently as young men and boys led songs pitched too low and sung too slowly. He listened attentively as several struggled to make it through five minute talks on very basic Bible topics. Others read scripture in a voice that you could barely hear and in a manner that made listening difficult. The old man had never led a song, thus this phase of the training had no application to him. However, he had preached, taught classes and read from the Bible for half a century. But he had forgotten more scripture than most of these young men would ever know. Even in his old age he could still speak with much more skill of Bible themes than those to whom he was listening. He knew he was nearing the end of his life and that his most active years of service and assembly participation were behind him. He could have easily begged off and rationalized, "I'll not learn anything, I'll never use any of the training tech-

niques being taught, and it's difficult listening to the feeble efforts of these novices".

Then why did he attend the training classes? *The reason was simple: he was there to encourage and he was aware of the power of his example and the impact it would have upon others if he failed to attend.*

I've thought of this old man and this training class many times through the years. I've thought of it when brethren say they'll not participate in a class or some assembly because they don't care for the teacher, or the subject matter is something that doesn't interest them, or it has no application to them, etc., etc. I've wondered if they've thought of the power of their example. I've wondered if they realize that others are watching, and will remember, what they do and don't do. And I've wondered if it has dawned on them that, by what they are failing to do, they are being a discouragement to others and causing someone else to follow their poor example. And as I ponder these things, I more and more have less and less patience with such conduct.

This church, this class, and this old man are not some fictional scenario I made up to illustrate the power of example. This church is where I grew up. This training class is where I got my first instruction in public service. This old man was my grandfather.



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 PM Kids Class in Auditorium	Monday 7 PM Men's study "the Legacy of Jeroboam" at Walker Davis' house	Tuesday 8 PM Truth Seekers class in Student Center Room 2216	Thursday 10 AM Ladies Class on "Good Homes" at the Rouses
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Sick

Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	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)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Sarah Lanier (Caleb Gandy's grandmother)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Martha Godwin (Troy's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Patty Herd (William's sister-in-law)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)

October Birthdays

- 1 - Aiden Hahn
- 2 - Suzanne Nichols
- 3 - Jennifer Hasty
- 4 - Jordan Corneil
- 6 - Jessica Anderson
- 8 - Heath Fowler
- 11 - Mason Chandler
- 12 - Stacy Norman
- 14 - Grant Smith
- 17 - Abbie Buchanan
- 20 - Keith Bailey
- 20 - Evan Pender
- 20 - Olivia Hillard
- 22 - Meredith Bragwell
- 22 - Christopher White
- 22 - Hunter Crawford
- 24 - Sarabeth Roberts
- 24 - Suzanna Roberts
- 24 - AJ Price
- 25 - Josh Sutton
- 25 - Bethany Bradford
- 26 - Palmer Daniels
- 28 - Anne Morton
- 29 - Belle Johnson
- 29 - Matt Hall
- 31 - Kitty Tam

News and Notes

- Please remember these sick in your prayers:
Carter Drennan - Clint Stagner's relative
Amy Vest - BJ Winslett's cousin
Joyce Cooley - Sheryl Fowler's mother
Andrew Westphal - Brain tumor
- John Thomas has a good report on his follow-up from cancer surgery!
- Larry is in a meeting at Oak Mountain.
- Our next teaching quarter begins next Sunday.
- Perry Hill Road has a meeting with LA Stauffer through Friday. Weekday services will be at 10AM and 7PM
- We will have our group meetings tonight.

The Auburn Beacon



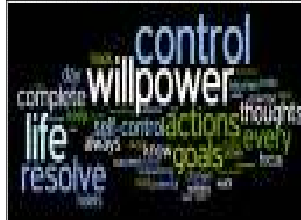
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Caring for the "Unstable" in the Flock

By Larry Rouse



Thoughts to Ponder
Discipline begets abundance.
Abundance, unless we use utmost care, destroys discipline.
Discipline in its fall pulls down with it abundance.

A crucial work of a shepherd is to protect the flock. Knowing both the strengths and weaknesses of each member is important in order to know how to help each one. Because of his experience, a capable shepherd can see danger coming before the actual time of crisis. The ability to be alert, to warn, and to have a plan of action when danger comes will often make the difference between spiritual life and death to vulnerable sheep. (Heb 13:17)

A new Christian, by his very nature, has not yet learned the doctrine of Christ to the point where he is grounded in it and – as a result – he can be, "carried about with every wind of doctrine." This back and forth instability makes one especially vulnerable to those who have an agenda of whom the Holy Spirit describes as influencing others in "cunning craftiness" and "deceitful plotting." (Eph 3:14-15)

Identifying the Unstable

One may be unstable for many reasons. In addition to a lack of knowledge and experience, one may be very prone to being overwhelmed by his emotions. Consider some of the fruits of instability.

Some seek to spread "the gospel of bitterness" by stirring the anger of others toward an individual or toward brethren in general. The apostle Paul faced a schism that was formed by those seeking to "exclude" others from Paul by stirring passions so that others may be "zealous" for these new "enlightened" leaders. (Gal 4:16-17)

- 1. He is undependable.** Just like a ship without an anchor, those who lack consistent direction will often let others down. Children who lack maturity often "forget" the assigned task to do something fun. Unstable people can be full of excitement and sincerity but have a difficult time seeing things through to the end. The parable of the sower illustrates the fruits of the one who, "has no root in himself, and so endure only for a time." (Mark 4:16-17)

- 2. He has trouble maintaining**

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Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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long term relationships. It is difficult maintaining relationships when you are undependable. Also the unstable can become accustomed to quickly moving on when another person has disappointed him or no longer meets his “needs.” Some unstable people live in what I call “the land of throw-away people.” You can go from being a dear friend to a disposable “opponent” overnight. Jesus acknowledges this as a characteristic of undependable, fickle men. **(Jn 2:23-25)**

3. He can quickly change his sense of “reality.” When instability is a product of uncontrolled emotion, one can imagine almost anything about what is “real.” King Saul allowed jealousy and bitterness to dominate him to the point that he made his most loyal subjects, David and Jonathan, enemies in his own mind. **(1 Sam 22:8; 20:32-33)**

4. He can become ego centered. Some unstable people have made themselves the center of their own universe. As a result they are always looking at people and events only as they relate to them. **(2 Cor 10:12)** This self-centeredness can quickly lead to pride where putting others down to feel better about themselves can become a common way of thinking. **(Lk 18:8, 11)**

5. He has difficulty developing a doctrinal core. This can especially be a problem for one given over to their emotions. The one who learns to conceal and bury his anger may over time battle chronic depression. When one is already burdened by his own past and weakened by his present emotions, he will often withdraw from things that are difficult. Doctrinal beliefs are profitable only when one has a faith to stand in it. **(Heb 10:34-37)** When one is seeking to escape conflict at all costs then taking the easy way out is preferred. Rather than contending for the faith, the unstable may become angry with the contender as a “troublemaker.” He would rather be left alone undisturbed. **(Jude 3)**

Helping the Unstable

1. You must be patient and gentle. Because

he is unstable, he may both attack you and praise you depending on the occasion. As much as he will allow you to associate with him and teach him, let the wisdom of Christ guide you in your efforts. **(Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:24-26)**

2. Help him develop a doctrinal core and have the courage to stand on it. He needs to build a Biblical faith where the unchangeable God is at the center of his life. Help him build a faith where doubts and questions are openly brought before God, knowing that God has answers! **(Psa 77:5-15)** Let that faith be one that learns of God’s nature and promises through His written word and that is expressed in public worship with the people of God. **(2 Pt 1:3-4)** He also needs to learn how to identify his own bouts with false realities by plainly knowing God and His ways. **(Psa 73:11-17)**

3. Help him to establish relationships with solid people. It is often true that the ones who need help the most from good people are the very ones who draw back from them or make it very difficult for others to have a relationship with him. An unstable man can seek to dominate others by demanding that others line up with his own changing realities. He needs the firmness that comes from one who is grounded in the love of God and His ways.

4. Help him avoid “toxic” relationships. The scriptures give numerous warnings of how other unstable men can take advantage of “the simple” by “smooth words and flattering speech. **(Rom 16:18)** An unstable man is vulnerable to special attention and flattery from one seeking to gain a following. Some seek to spread “the gospel of bitterness” by stirring the anger of others toward an individual or toward brethren in general. The apostle Paul faced a schism that was formed by those seeking to “exclude” others from Paul by stirring passions so that others may be “zealous” for these new “enlightened” leaders. **(Gal 4:16-17)** Those who are captured by such deceivers are often destroyed spiritually.

May the Lord help each of us to identify and help those to move from an unstable condition to one where they are firmly planted in the love of God! **(Eph 3:14-21)**



On the Power of an Implication

By Doy Moyer

Every Christian believes in the binding power of an implication, including those who deny that implications have any binding power. How so?

First, anyone who is a Christian today is one because of the acceptance of the implication that people of all places and all times ought to be Christians. After all, where is there a direct statement telling us that 21st century Americans should be Christians? We infer that Christianity was intended to be taken beyond the boundaries of the first century time-frame. If you are a Christian, do you believe this inference is necessary? If you don’t believe any inferences are necessary, then on what basis are you a Christian?

Second, when we follow particular commands in Scripture, we do so because we have inferred that those commands are viable and vital for those beyond the original audience who first heard them. That these commands are viable and vital is evident, but if we believe we should be following particular commands that were given to the Roman, Corinthian, or Colossian Christians, then we do so on the basis of what is implied by Scripture and what we infer as interpreters. Are these inferences necessary? Are any inferences necessary?

Now let’s look at a case in point. Take the statement by Jesus that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind **(Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34)**. Would anyone deny that this is still the greatest commandment? I surely wouldn’t. But if you believe it is still the greatest commandment, then on what basis do you believe it? Why ask this? Because it illustrates the power of an implication.

1. In context (and context is vital), Jesus was speaking about the Law and the Prophets. He said nothing, in that context, about the New Covenant. So if it is to be understood beyond the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Covenant), then we are inferring its necessi-

Do you believe in the power of an implication? If you are a Christian, and you believe that loving God with all your heart is indeed the greatest commandment today, then you believe in the power of implication, and you have inferred that this is necessary for you.

ty beyond the original context and the original audience.

2. This command is not stated this way anywhere else in the New Covenant Scriptures. There are plenty of passages telling us to love one another. There are plenty of passages telling us to love God. But that loving God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind is the greatest commandment? Where is that? The only place that is found is in a passage that contextually is speaking of the Law and the Prophets.

3. Where, even in the Hebrew Scriptures, does it say that loving God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind is the greatest of the commandments? Yes, the command is there **(Deut 6:4)**. But it doesn’t say it is the greatest commandment there. How were they to know this? If they were expected to know it, then they knew it by what is implied in the command. Interestingly enough, some did get it. For example, that lawyer who asked Jesus about inheriting eternal life answered the question correctly **(Luke 10:25-29)**. How did he know that inheriting eternal life was so connected to loving God with all the heart? That is not stated in Deuteronomy 6. Where does that passage say anything about “eternal life”? Yet, Jesus said that the lawyer answered his own question correctly. That must have been a pretty significant inference. Was it a necessary one? Was it a binding one?

Do you believe in the power of an implication? If you are a Christian, and you believe that loving God with all your heart is indeed the greatest commandment today, then you believe in the power of implication, and you have inferred that this is necessary for you. Indeed, it is exactly what needs to be inferred.

So, really, the question is not whether implications and inferences (even necessary ones) are an important part of our understanding of the Scriptures. What we need to make sure of is that what we infer is reasonable, not forced.

