

# Stillness and Joy

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

By Gary Henry

Nowadays, one reason we *know so little about joy* is that we *know so little about stillness*. In this age of the world, most of us are busy with a myriad of priorities and projects. And we *pride* ourselves in it. The person whose schedule is packed has more prestige than the fellow who “doesn’t have much to do.” But joy — real *joy* — is in seriously short supply.

We’ll try to define “stillness” in a moment, but just think, by way of contrast, how unlikely it would be for joy to surface in the kind of lives we lead. Our “busyness” produces so much clamor and clatter, the voice of joy is drowned out. It simply gets lost in the shuffle. Even if joy were to appear, it would go unnoticed.

But what does it mean to be “still” before the Lord? It doesn’t mean being physically still, though stillness of the body is often involved. And it doesn’t mean not saying anything, though that is often involved as well. “Stillness” before God means reverence, humility, openness, and forgetfulness of self. It means putting our minds into a thoughtful posture. It means having our activity stilled and our words hushed by a compelling sense of the power of God Al-

mighty. Above all, it means having a servant’s readiness to *obey*: “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:9).

I suggest that it would be rare for a person to experience genuine joy if he or she were not mentally disposed in the manner we’ve just described. That is the only kind of environment in which real joy can make an appearance. Just as happiness eludes those who “pursue” it, joy is even harder to bring under our own power. It doesn’t come “on command,” but rather it is experienced, often quite unexpectedly, by those who are “still” before the Lord. Unstill people are simply not good candidates for joy.

So God’s instruction to us is this: *Be still, and know that I am God*. We shouldn’t obey that instruction selfishly, simply so we can have the joy we want. Nevertheless, we won’t have any joy if we don’t obey it. Without a reverent stillness at the center of our hearts, joy has no chance to break through the noise of earthly life. Of all the killjoys in the world, irreverent busyness is the worst.

“The heart that is to be filled to the brim with holy joy must be held still” (George Bowes).



### Classes This Week

<b>Sunday 5:15 PM</b> Kids Class in Auditorium	<b>Sunday Evening</b> College Devo and Singing at “the Preserve” with David Golden teaching	<b>Monday 7 PM</b> Ladies’ study on “History and Geography” at Karen Padgett’s house	<b>Tuesday 8 PM</b> Truth Seekers class in Student Center Room 2216
---	--	---	--

### Sick

Amy Vest (BJ Winslett’s Cousin)	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 - Sarah Beth 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

- ☒ - David Hartsell had hip surgery on Wednesday. Please remember the family in your prayers as he will have a difficult recovery.
- ☒ - Sandlyn Fultz will have more surgery on her back and leg this week.
- ☒ - Next Sunday night at 8 there will be a college girl’s class at Savanna Spohn’s.
- ☒ - Our next teaching quarter begins today.
- ☒ - Perry Hill Road has a meeting this week with LA Stauffer through Friday. Weekday services will be at 10AM and 7PM
- ☒ - All sermons will be posted immediately at [www.auchurch.com](http://www.auchurch.com) and audio CD’s will be in the foyer after services.

# 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)

Volume 4, Issue 48

October 6, 2013

## The Origin of the Sinner’s Prayer

By Ryan Hasty



### Thoughts to Ponder

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. - Acts 22:16

**Elders**  
Walker Davis (334) 703-0050  
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

E-Mail:  
[larryrouse@aubeacon.com](mailto:larryrouse@aubeacon.com)

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

No method of conversion has gained such popularity amongst mainstream denominations in the last century than that of the “Sinner’s Prayer”. It has been said that thousands of people utter this prayer daily in response to alter calls and one-on-one conversations between friends, relatives, co-workers, and school mates. To find the origin of this method of conversion, one must rely on extra-biblical evidence as neither the term “sinner’s prayer” nor the concept can be found in God’s holy word.

The beginning of this conversion method has its foundation in the middle 18<sup>th</sup> century as the First Great Awakening was underway. It was in 1741 that a preacher named Eleazar Wheelock devised a technique called the “Mourner’s Seat” by which to draw the penitent believer. Wheelock would target sinners by having them sit in the front pew while pronouncing from the pulpit “salvation is looming over your heads.” Not only were these individuals susceptible to further counsel, they were vulnerable to whatever method of conversion Wheelock prescribed. False conversions from his revivals were numerous though it took almost a hundred years for other preachers to begin mimicking his process.

In 1801, the “Cane Ridge Revival”

The true method of conversion can be found in our Lord’s teaching in the Great Commission and then following the “Acts” of the Apostles as they attempted to follow our Lord’s instruction. Jesus taught the apostles in the Great Commission that they were to teach belief, repentance, and baptism (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

began in Kentucky and lasted for several weeks. The temperature outside was so hot and attendees endured such long periods without food that many became delirious and began rolling around in the aisles and barking like dogs. Such an abuse of the emotions by the preachers at this revival gave thousands of individuals a mistaken notion about their rebirth. Some ministers such as J. V. Coombs rightfully condemned such behavior as a mockery to Christianity. However, other ministers caught on to the fact that gospel preaching could be modified to manipulate the emotions of the listeners into “conversion”. Others in pews around the country placed unreasonable expectations on preachers to pro-

(Continued on page 2)

Check Us Out On the Internet: [www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)

(Continued from page 1)

duce the same “religious experience” that was found at the Cane Ridge Revival.

It wasn't until 1835 that another preacher named Charles Finney emerged on the scene to develop a hybrid system of conversion by combining Wheelock's “Mourner's Seat” with the experience of the Cane Ridge Revival. This traveling preacher named his technique the “Anxious Seat” and developed an entire theological system around it. The practice was essentially a psychological technique in that it manipulated people's emotions to make a tearful profession of faith without a true conversion. Its success was entirely dependent upon the ability of the preacher to stir up his audience's emotions. Finney did not attempt to hide his confidence in this man-made system when he stated, “The church has always felt it necessary to have something of this kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles, baptism answered this purpose. The gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ, were called out to be baptized. It held the place that the anxious seat does now as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians.”

In the 1860s, the concept of the “Anxious Seat” was modified further by a preacher named Dwight Moody. Moody's method was named the “Inquiry Room”. Moody utilized the same psychological techniques that preyed on emotions, but in addition asked those who responded to his teaching to join him and his trained counselors in another room. In this “Inquiry Room”, questions were asked, certain scriptures were read, and then Moody and/or his counselors would pray with the potential converts. Moody considered prayer to be the last step in the conversion process. A man named R. A. Torrey succeeded Moody in 1899 and he modified Moody's system by taking the “room” out of the equation and performing “on the spot” street conversions. Torrey's method of conversion made popular instant salvation with no strings attached.

In the early 1900s, well known baseball player Bill Sunday had a conversion experience in Moody's Chicago mission and therefore left the diamond to pursue preaching. Sunday was one of the most popular, charismatic, and entertaining speakers of his generation. He used various antics, showman-

ship, and humor to stir up the emotions of his listeners. Sunday preached that one could be saved simply by walking down his tent's “sawdust trail” to the front where he was standing. Later on, people were said to have received salvation simply by publically shaking Sunday's hand and stating that they would follow Christ.

Finally in the 1940s, the next big crusade preacher hit the scene. A young man named Bill Graham trained counselors to encourage those who responded to his “altar call” to pray that Jesus would come into their heart. This concept of praying for your salvation came from a tract Graham developed called “Four Steps to Peace with God” which merely originated from another tract 50 years prior called “Four Things God Wants You to Know.” In the 1950s, Bill Bright took this concept and coined the expression, “The Four Spiritual Laws” which ends with the so-called “Sinner's Prayer”. This prayer goes something like, “Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

Sadly, the concept of the Sinner's Prayer can be found neither in Jesus and the Apostles' teaching nor seen in the numerous conversions found in the book of Acts. It is entirely man made and falls under the category of “another gospel” that Paul confirms and then reaffirms in **Gal 1:6-9** will condemn those who proclaim it.

The true method of conversion can be found in our Lord's teaching in the Great Commission and then following the “Acts” of the Apostles as they attempted to follow our Lord's instruction. Jesus taught the apostles in the Great Commission that they were to teach belief, repentance, and baptism (**Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47**). We know the Apostles followed His instruction because we see this being done in the conversion of the 3000 Jews on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:36-39**), the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch (**Acts 8:35-39**), the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 22:16**), the conversion of the Philippian Jailor (**Acts 16:29-35**), etc. And while the temptation is great to listen to the words of men as they tell us a simple prayer will do the trick, let us instead listen to the simple words of God and put our trust in His plan and no other.



## Subjective Spirit Leading

By Terry Benton

Subjective “Spirit Leading” is when one is moved by imagined nudging and impulses, then attributes that imagination to the “leading of the Spirit”. It often never is in complete harmony with Spirit “revelation” in the Bible. It is sometimes outright contrary to Spirit guidance through “revelation” (**Eph.3:3-5**).

Yet, he is basically telling people to imagine the Spirit “showing up” in some emotion-driven and imagination-perceived way, and all such imaginations automatically becomes self-confirmation that the Holy Spirit instead of Satan as an angel of light is doing this “showing up”.

It is completely subjective as to whether it is the Holy Spirit instead of a deceiving spirit or just plain human desire and imagination. Yet, you get drawn into the language and thinking that imagines the Lord walking and talking with you, and then you start saying “the Lord told me this” or “the Lord showed me this”.

Francis Chan offers stories from those who have experienced “real encounters” with God. He says each of us has the choice every day “to depend on yourself, to live safely, and to try to control your life. Or you can live as you were created to live—as a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, as a person dependent on Him, desperate for God the Spirit to show up and make a difference.” Yet, he is basically telling people to imagine the Spirit “showing up” in some emotion-driven and imagination-perceived way, and all such imaginations automatically becomes self-confirmation that the Holy Spirit instead of Satan as an angel of light is doing this “showing up”.

Beth Moore is another that uses this imagina-

tion-driven approach where her imagination of talks with God become conversations with God in which she reports “what God told me”. This kind of thinking is very dangerous, and yet some of our brethren are jumping on the bandwagon of these kind of authors and speakers and promote them as truly guided by God.

The real “Holy Spirit” showed up in guiding the apostles into “all truth”. He revealed and confirmed “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” – **Jude 3-4; Heb.2:1-4**. He powerfully leads through that revelation (**Heb.4:12; Eph.3:3-5**). When we are listening to the Spirit in scriptures used correctly we are listening to the voice of the real Holy Spirit.

Imaginations must be cast down and not exalted to the level of God's word. When a person does not “abide in the doctrine of Christ” but gives greater or equal guiding authority to their imagination of conversations with God, they have quit “holding fast to the Head” (**Col.2:19**) and have “intruded into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (**Col.2:18**). This is “empty deceit” because it imaginary conversations with God told as if it happened in reality, and this is a form of lying since God did not actually tell them anything. It is purely adult form of make-believe and empty of real revelation. Be careful of those who promote such.

