

Hiding Behind a Hypocrite

The Finger of indignation, with a touch of smugness, has been pointed many times at a brother or sister who fell short of what they should be. "If that's what a Christian is, then I want no part of it," says the accompanying voice.

By Jere E Frost

So the sinner who feigns to be repelled by such hypocrisy turns around and does what guarantees that he will share a lost eternity with the hypocrite. He does not break rank with him; he has in fact joined him.

But the fact there are hypocrites in the church provides no justification or hope for the sinner outside the church. It is an exceedingly foolish argument. It is the equivalent of saying that because a professed Christian fails on one point, and his hypocrisy is so terrible that he (the indignant sinner) does not want to be that bad, that he will deliberately reject God and any profession of following his Maker.

Their difference is not one of substance, but of taste. It is the silly and vain idea that he may be wrong and a sinner, but at least his sin is not as bad as that of the hypocrite. And in so rationalizing he becomes one with the hypocrite in serving that which is evil and vile.

That makes no sense! Think about it. The hypocrite is wrong and will be condemned for it. He is lost, and without repentance will be forever lost.

The bottom line: the professed Christian's sin, no matter how ugly and repulsive it may be, is no justification for you to deliberately refuse to obey the Lord.

Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 PM Kids Class at the Building	Sunday PM College Devo and Singing at Jared Johnson's. Jeff McCrary from Columbus speaking!	Tuesday 10 AM Ladies Class at Laura Humphrey's on "Giving God Control"	Tuesday 8 PM Truth-seekers in Student Center Rm 2310	Thursday 7 PM Ladies Class at Abbie Harrison's on "Giving God Control"
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Wanda Price (Ada Owen's sister)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Joy Powell (Tori Luther's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	William Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Ray Humphrey (Seth's dad)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Eleanor McKay (friend of Erica)

December Birthdays

- 2-Debbi Coleman
- 6-Troy Godwin
- 6-Bridgette Borden
- 7-Amy Godwin
- 8-Ashley Miller
- 9-Darla Hahn
- 9-Casie Spencer
- 11-Andrew Hahn
- 12-Randal Porterfield
- 13-Toni Herd
- 13-Emerson Daniels
- 13-Dylan Bartlett
- 13-Ronaldo Henriquez
- 15-Jon Hornback
- 16-Nicole Pender
- 16-Victoria Dunaway
- 16-Alexander Dunaway
- 23-Mary Ann Roberts
- 24-John Burns
- 25-Olyvia Winslett
- 25-Silas Weldon
- 27-Scott Fowler
- 28-Will Harris
- 30-David Simpson

News and Notes

- ☒ - We Extend sympathy to the family of Matt Loggins as his dad, Allen Davis, passed away yesterday.
- ☒ - Gerald White returned home on Monday and is gaining strength!
- ☒ - Larry Lauderdale came home from the hospital on Monday and is recovering at home.
- ☒ - Gaston Love was baptized into Christ last Sunday night after dismissal. We rejoice with our Brother!
- ☒ - Please remember Betty Bradford in your prayers as she struggles with her health.
- ☒ - The LaGrange church will have a weekend meeting with David Hamlet, Nov 13-15.
- ☒ - Audio CDs are provided at the end of every service. Also audio is immediately posted to www.auchurch.com.

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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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Coping With Our Mistakes

By David Diestelkamp



Thoughts to Ponder

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

Nobody knew Jim was the one who did it, so he just shrugged and turned away. He didn't get far before there was a hard tap on his shoulder and, in an accusatory tone, some-one said, "But I saw you do it!" While still walking away, he mumbled, "It's no big deal," and when someone voiced an insistent, "What?!" he said, "It didn't hurt anyone... everyone does it—in fact you've done it yourself!" Jim managed to avoid them for a while, and he hoped it was over.

We don't like to be around problems. So we avoid people we have offended and hurt. And we don't feel like being around people who are peacemakers—people who show us our problems and urge us to resolve them.

Wait, wait, wait. Is that how we handle our mistakes? Do we deny them? Are we skilled at making excuses for what we do wrong? Is it our goal to escape facing problems we have caused and wish they will somehow go away? When we make a mistake - whether spiritual or physical, sin or just a slip-up - we need to stop and notice how we are dealing with it.

"When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer" (Psalm 32:3-4). It's sleepless nights. It's fear of being discovered. You can't get it out of your head. You feel like something is dying on the inside; your strength is gone, and life has lost a sense of joy, peace, and meaning.

When David tried to keep silent about his sin, when he hid and

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

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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Evangelist and Editor

Find us on the Internet: www.auchurch.com and www.aubeacon.com

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denied it, his life was eaten up by it – spiritually, emotionally, and physically. To make matters worse, living a lie sears the conscience (**1 Tim 4:2**). Hearts are dulled, and spiritual ears and eyes aren't open to pure truth anymore (**Mt 13:15**).

Self-justification leads us to “call evil good, and good evil... put darkness for light, and light for darkness... bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (**Is 5:20**). But the truth is still there. Denial, lies, and rewriting doesn't change or resolve anything.

Excuses Aren't Resolution

“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate”... “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (**Gen. 3:12-13**). Beginning with the very first sin, the art of excuse making was born. So which excuse will we use today: bad crowd, bad parents or childhood, public school, stress, physical illness, weakness, “It didn't turn out as planned,” “I can't help it,” “I was made this way,” “Everyone does it,” “It didn't hurt anyone,” “I have stronger desires than others,” “You don't understand my life...”?

“Abraham is our father” was a popular first century Jewish conscience salve (**Jn. 8:33-41**). But explanations and exceptions and excuses don't change the past—they don't make a mistake into something right, and they don't make sin into righteousness.

Escape Isn't Resolution

“But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord” (**Jon. 1:3**). We don't like to be around problems. So we avoid people we have offended and hurt. And we don't feel like being around people who are peacemakers—people who show us our problems and urge us to re-

solve them. We scoff at Jonah —fleeing from the presence of the Lord! But how often have we run and hid from dealing with mistakes and sin? I asked a friend why people kept using

drugs and alcohol when it clearly often didn't make them feel good and exacerbated their problems. She said it was because it dulled what they didn't want to feel and made it so they didn't have to face life. There is a sense in which the book of Ecclesiastes is one man's attempt to escape life (and death). But distraction, pleasure, burying one's self in work, and numbing one's senses are all empty. In the end, nothing has been resolved. The problems, mistakes, and sins are still there.

Repentance, Admission, and Forgiveness Are Resolution

Remember David who was being consumed by the guilt of his sin in Psalm 32? Now see how it was resolved: “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin” (**Psa. 32:5**). It's not about pride, what others think, always being right, or defending one's self. Those things fuel denial, excuses, and escape.

We need to be people who resolve our mistakes. When we're wrong, whether it is sin or not, we accept it, admit it, and apologize. As sons of God, we are peacemakers (**Matt. 5:9**) who want to quickly agree with our adversaries (**Matt. 5:25**). And we crave forgiveness more than having a false veneer of perfection. So we admit our faults to others (**Jas. 5:16**). We confess our sins (**1 Jn. 1:9**). We say that we're sorry and ask to be forgiven, without denial, excusing, or hiding. This is how things are really resolved with one another and with God.



Local Church is no Sham

By Robert F. Turner

Paul wanted to “join himself to the disciples” in Jerusalem (**Acts 9:26**). What does this mean? It means he “wanted to be accepted and known among the saints in Jerusalem as being a true disciple and to enjoy all the blessings of fellowship and common togetherness enjoyed by the disciples.” That is the explanation one brother makes of it, as he, of all things, ridicules the existence of the local church with its functions.

And what is a local church, but that relationship which he has described? Note, (1) Paul WAS a saint in Jerusalem, whether they accepted and recognized him or not. That relationship was established with God when he obeyed the gospel. But now he wanted something else--and rightly so. He wanted to be accepted and recognized by fellow saints. And to what end? (2) To enjoy the blessings of fellowship, etc. Does this mean he wished to worship with them? Who will deny it? Did he wish to work with them, as he encouraged saints to work together in **Phil. 4:15**; **1 Thess. 5:12**, and elsewhere? Consistency demands it. And (3) what is this “common togetherness” of which our iconoclast speaks? Could it include such things as “had all things common” (**Acts 2:44-f**), selling possessions and making a pooled fund available for specified purposes (**5:32-f**)? If so (and I affirm it is) this is collective action by every fair standard of definition.

Paul's early rejection, then later reception by the Jerusalem disciples shows they exercised their will in this matter (**Acts 9:26-f**). (Remember, Paul WAS a saint before acceptance.)

When someone seeks to prejudice his readers with sectarian terms, and denies the very existence of the organized local church--apparently because he doesn't like the word “organization,” although he admits every element legitimately demanded by such a word--that fellow is getting close to being a true “iconoclast.”

So put it all together. Paul “held membership” (which in a scriptural sense means nothing more than being one of the group of saints who worked and worshipped together) in Jerusalem.

When someone seeks to prejudice his readers with sectarian terms, and denies the very existence of the organized local church--apparently because he doesn't like the word

“organization,” although he admits every element legitimately demanded by such a word--that fellow is getting close to being a true “iconoclast.” Don't let the old meaning “breaker of images” fool you. Today an iconoclast is “One who attacks cherished beliefs as--(note, AS, not “or”) shams; a radical” (Webster's Unabridged). The first or historical definition does not fit today's ridiculer of the local church.

If there are those who have an erroneous conception of “church” (and I do not doubt they exist, and have written many articles on this theme) then meet their actual error. Positively set forth the scriptures on the subject. And get out of the local church (saints in--who enjoy all the blessings of fellowship and common togetherness) that supports you from a common treasury. Consistency would surely demand this.

Certainly “church” has been abused, as has many other words long used. If “ecclesia” had never been translated, usage would have abused it. (Witness “ecclesiastical.”) Changing the word will be of little help today unless we teach the N.T. meaning of whatever word we use; and an iconoclast never builds anything.

