

Gifts for Your Children

Three great gift ideas for your children this year:

By Lonnie Oldag

- 1) A better marriage for their parents** (One of the best things you can do for your child is to give them a mommy and daddy that love each other, like each other, and are committed to each other). 12 months of working to improve your marriage is a gift they will be thankful for for life.
- 2) More of your time and attention** (which may mean you can't afford

as many toys for them, but they will always treasure the gift of your time and attention).

- 3) Spiritual training** (Take God's word and live it in your own life, teach it diligently to them, and train them in the way they should go). They will thank you through all eternity.

They may look back at this year's gifts as the best ever.

Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name." **(Romans 15:8-9)**

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 Sullivanne'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 Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Esther Biddle

Those Graduating This Week:

Matt Loggins - Master's degree

Justin Bice
Jacob Bradshaw
Tyler Cox
Heath Donahue
Chase Harrison
Joey McGee
Nathan Rouse
Erica Seymore

News and Notes

- ☒ - Anthony Sanderson's dad, James Yell, continues to recover at home.
- ☒ - Greg Lanier continues to improve from a back procedure.
- ☒ - Ada Owen is receiving therapy for her shoulder.
- ☒ - Pray for Betty Bradford as she suffers from a wound in her foot.
- ☒ - The flower fund low. See Mary Ann Roberts to make a contribution.
- ☒ - Please pray for Lisa Carter (Luke's mom) as (colon) cancer has spread to her lungs. She has been accepted to go to MD Anderson and will be admitted on Jan 13th.
- ☒ - Charles herd, William's father, remains in serious condition in CA.
- ☒ - Esther Biddle continues at home in recovery from her hip surgery.
- ☒ - Gerald White continues to recover at home.
- ☒ - Joy Powell, Tori Luther's grandmother, has returned home from the hospital.
- ☒ - Teachers and hosts are needed for the upcoming monthly kids class.

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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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Good Relationships Among Brethren

By R. J. Evans

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."
- First Peter 4:8

Thoughts to Ponder

Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **(Romans 15:5-6)**

The Scripture provides much information concerning good relationships among those who are children of God. There are many positive teachings concerning how to get along—especially all the commands to love one another. There are a number of warnings against gossip, tale bearing, backbiting, slander, and sowing discord among brethren. The book of Proverbs is filled with wise instruction concerning relationships with others.

But what about those occasions when we believe someone has sinned against us? Are we told what to do? Are we supposed to go around telling everyone, except the person himself, that he has sinned against us? Indeed, the Bible does give clear instructions on what to do in this situation—see Matthew 18:15-17.

In the church, many problems have occurred because someone failed to abide by the teachings of God's Word. Brethren are told to put "away lying, each speaking truth with a neighbor, for we are members of one another" **(Eph. 4:25)**; we are warned against causing "dissensions, contentions and heresies" **(Gal. 5:20)**; those who are factious, causing "divisions and offenses" are to be marked **(Rom. 16:17)**; a divisive person is to be rejected "after the first and second admonition" **(Titus**

3:10); also, there are warnings against being "idle, wandering from house to house, not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not" **(1 Tim. 5:13)**.

But what about those occasions when we believe someone has sinned against us? Are we told what to do? Are we supposed to go around telling everyone, except the person himself, that he has sinned against us? Indeed, the Bible does give clear instructions on what to do in this situa-

(Continued on page 2)

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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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(Continued from page 1)

tion—see **Matthew 18:15-17**. Notice the very first step: “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother” (**V. 15**). How many do this? It seems to be so much easier to go to someone else first, and gain a sympathetic ear, rather than following what the Bible teaches. Quite often, those who operate like this, have not even been sinned against. It’s often pettiness, hurt feelings, jealousy, an “ax to grind”, etc., and not actually a sin, to begin with. Also, the other person may be totally unaware of any wrong they might have done. The passage goes on and gives further instructions: “But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (**Vv. 16-17**).

Years ago, when living in another state, we had a sister move from across the city and place membership with the congregation where I preached. We’ll call her “sister Smith”. Before she identified with us, the preacher where she had been attending told me that she had many admirable qualities, but to be careful, because she occasionally had a tendency to “stir things up.” Well, after she had been with us for several months, I was in my study one day and the phone rang. It was sister Smith. After the usual greetings, she then proceeded to start telling me how she had been “wronged” by a particular couple in the congregation. I’ll just refer to them as the “Jones”. They were fine Christians, very faithful and diligent in the Lord’s work. They had been with us a number of years. As soon as I realized what she was attempting to do, I stopped her. I told her that I should

not be a party to what she was beginning to tell me about this couple. This brother had his own business, so I gave her his office phone number and suggested she call him immediately and set up an appointment with him and his wife. Sister Smith immediately became somewhat “rattled” and started backing away from what she was about to tell me. From that point on, with my insisting that she contact this couple, the conversation ended rather quickly. At the next service of the church, I asked sister Smith if she had contacted the Jones couple about her complaints. Essentially, what she proceeded to tell me was that after giving it some more thought, she realized that it was all a big misunderstanding on her part and she had no problem with this couple. Never again did another incident like that one ever come up involving sister Smith.

That’s interesting, isn’t it? How many problems could be solved if Christians were willing to simply follow Bible instructions concerning establishing and maintaining good relationships among brethren. Some make a practice of dropping little “bomb shells” about someone, but immediately follow it up by saying— “But I don’t know anything about it,” “But I’m not getting involved,” or “Oops, I shouldn’t have said that.” Such subtle actions, in reality, already have them involved. They are simply “stirring things up”! They have already done their damage. Those who conduct themselves in such a manner, destroy what credibility they may have had by their “behind the back” actions. Please note, concerning the seven things that God hates, what is listed in **Proverbs 6:19**: “A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”

When dealing with such deeds as just mentioned, the information that might have been revealed should be dealt with in a similar manner as having received an anonymous letter—dispose of it in the proverbial “File 13”!



Denying God Secretly

By Rick Liggin

Can you honestly say the same for yourself? Before you answer, you'd better examine yourself--your own heart. You'd better recognize that God knows everything you do even the things you do secretly in your heart.

If I have put my confidence in gold, and called fine gold my trust, if I have gloated because my wealth was great, and because my hand had secured so much; if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon going in splendor, and my heart became secretly enticed, and my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, that too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, for I would have denied God above.” (Job 31:24-28).

Recently, when I once again came across these words of Job, I was struck by how serious he was about avoiding every form of sin and even the slightest of transgressions. In this text, Job is asserting his integrity before God and trying to argue his absolute faithfulness to God. Job recognized, and bluntly declares here, that any paganism at all—even in the smallest of forms—would constitute an utter denial of God.

When Job speaks in this text of looking at the sun or the moon in their splendor, he’s not talking about simply admiring these great heavenly bodies as God created them. All of us, from time to time, stand in awe of God’s creation and admire its beauty and rightly so! We should admire what God has made.

But this isn’t what Job is talking about in this text. He’s talking about looking at the sun or moon with the intent of worshiping these created things. Job is saying that if somehow he felt a desire to worship the sun or the moon by throwing a kiss at them—if he only entertained these thoughts secretly in his own heart—even that would be an outright denial of the true God of heaven.

Job knew, as we do, that the moon and sun are only parts of God’s creation; they are not deities to be worshiped. Only God is God; and only He is worthy of our worship. And that means that even the slightest move by man in the direction of paganism would be an iniquity deserving of judgment.

Now, when I think about what Job says in this text, I cannot help but think of at least two lessons we need to learn from it:

1) A person does not have to overtly and openly deny God to be guilty of denying Him. One can deny the Lord secretly in his heart without ever doing anything openly to suggest that he has denied God. When we longingly look at temporal things and begin to secretly think in our hearts that maybe these things can make us happy and give our lives real purpose, we are taking steps in the direction of denying God.

2) Even the slightest move in the direction of putting trust in some-

thing else or someone else other than God constitutes paganism and a denial of the true God. Now this may not mean a whole lot to us in a society that traditionally does not literally bow down to images and idols. But when we understand that Job, not only speaks of kissing the sun or moon, but also of putting confidence in wealth and in our ability to secure so much for ourselves (31:24-25), we begin to see the point.

We live in an extremely earthly (worldly) society. Oh, we may not literally bow to idols, but we most certainly devote ourselves to the pursuit of material things and material pleasures. And that makes us just as pagan as the man who throws a kiss to the moon or bows before an idolatrous sun god. And what we need to be acutely aware of is that even though we may consider ourselves to be Christians, and even though we may faithfully worship the true God on a regular basis, when we put (even some of) our confidence in physical pleasure or our material things or our ability to secure wealth, we have in essence denied God. And in denying God in this way, we are just as guilty of “an iniquity calling for judgment” (31:28).

Job’s words are sobering, but he knew his own heart --that he’d never been guilty of any of these iniquities. Can you honestly say the same for yourself? Before you answer, you’d better examine yourself--your own heart. You’d better recognize that God knows everything you do even the things you do secretly in your heart.

