

Closet Convictions

John 12:42-43 says: "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." From its beginning, the cause of Christ has suffered because of disciples with closet convictions; the kind of men who know and believe the truth but will not stand up for it. Consider, for example, these influential rulers of our text. Potentially, their worth to the cause of their un-confessed Christ was immeasurable; effectively, however, they contributed absolutely nothing. Worse, their influence remained where they did, as must always be the case. What a testimonial to the tremendous swaying power of cowardice and pride! It keeps them among those whom they oppose and puts them in opposition to their own faith and convictions. "But after all", they may have reasoned, "We do have our standing in the community to think about." And, besides, how could we ever explain to our friends of the synagogue circle about what we really believe? Why, what would they think?" So goes people-pleasing religion.

And so stay the people-pleasers in religion --- in their "synagogues" of compromise and out of God's kingdom. But most of them do not see their "going along" as being all that serious, let alone as jeopardizing salvation. For example, it is not unusual to meet denominationalists who freely admit certain unscriptural practices espoused by their church, but will not speak out against them. They know and believe certain Bible truths, but will not practice them, for fear....? Now,

by Dan Shipley

what is the essential difference between these and the elders of our text? Is it less honorable to deny Christ than His word? The false idea that men can honor Christ while ignoring, perverting and desecrating His doctrine is of the devil! "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**). Man's part in gaining a right standing with God lies in his knowing, believing, and obeying of gospel truth (**John 6:45; 8:32; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:17; James 1:21-22**). Every right relationship with God is a truth determined relationship! All that God requires of man and all that man can ever do to please and glorify God is made known in His word (**2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 John 9**). He who shuns it, compromises it, or adds to it reflects on the God who gave it (**1 Thessalonians 4:13**), whether Jew, denominationalist or Christian.

In recent years, many members of the church of Christ have "awakened" to find themselves in "synagogues" of liberalism. They share the dilemma of the rulers to some extent. "Shall we speak out and risk being put out --- or shall we go along to get along?" May God help them to see the seriousness and importance of standing up for the Lord by standing for His truth. To continue "going along" is to continue violating conscience and fellowshiping error. Friend, your influence is where you are. Demonstrate your allegiance to Christ and His truth while you can!



Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joanetta's aunt)	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)	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Reba Patterson (Heath Fowler's mom)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)	Tina Atnip (Orie's cousin)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sulli- vanne's broth- er)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joanetta's aunt)	Jane Hunt (Chuck's mother)	Charles Hunt, (Chuck Hunt's dad)
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	John Duke (Jared John- son's cousin)

June Birthdays

- 1-Braiden Jerkins
- 3-Philip Stephens
- 5-Cheyenne Redus
- 6-David Eison
- 7-Spencer Borden
- 7-Mark McKee
- 8-Joanetta Lauderdale
- 9-Kay White
- 10-Joah Green
- 11-Clint Stagner
- 12-Orie Cecil
- 12-Sanaa Strickland
- 14-Jeremiah Johnson
- 17-Brooks Pender
- 17-Sarah Norman
- 18-James Long
- 19-Melissa Grant
- 22-Paul Tam
- 24-Justin Bice
- 25-Corey Hunt
- 26-Katie Gentry
- 27-Ada Owen
- 28-Craig Davis
- 28-Julian Reid

News and Notes

- ☒ - Thanks for all who made our VBS a great success!
- ☒ - We welcome new members Clay and Sandra Chason and their daughter, Bailey!
- ☒ - We rejoice that Carlos Chavez, Marly Chilil and Pablo Chavez have put on Christ in baptism this week!
- ☒ - Please pray for Jeremiah Johnson's cousin's baby son, Alexander Locke.
- ☒ - Emma Ulrich's mom, Gay, is now in remission! She will continue her treatments.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Paula Davis and Xiang Li.
- ☒ - Abbie Harrison will undergo a series of surgeries/procedures to correct her knee in the coming months, beginning in July.
- ☒ - Toni Herd was taken by ambulance to Birmingham yesterday with blood being detected on the brain.
- ☒ - Please remember Orie Cecil's family in your prayers as his grandfather, Charles Cecil died late Wed.

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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A Heart of Wisdom

By Doy Moyer



Thoughts to Ponder

Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding. (**Proverbs 23:23**).

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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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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

"The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding. Prize her, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her." (**Prov. 4:7-8**).

"Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (**Prov. 23:23**).

Wisdom helps restrain us (**cf. Prov. 10:19; 29:11**), puts boundaries around our actions, and helps us see that serving God is not just about whether something is technically sinful, but is about gaining understanding and skill in the way we make daily choices. Just asking, "Is it a sin?" is elementary. While it is important to know if something is sinful, if that is the only concern, then it is the question of the novice who has little experience in spiritual discernment. Asking, "Is it wise?" is a mark of maturity and growth that comes from those who understand their times, with knowledge of what to do in their given circumstances (**cf. 1 Chron. 12:32; Esth. 1:13**). If

When we know that something is unwise, and our argument for doing it anyway is, "but it's not a sin," then we have missed the point of biblical wisdom. Wisdom isn't just about avoiding a line to be crossed, but is about positive growth in God's direction away from those lines.

we wish to move beyond the elementary level to a mature person in Christ (**Eph. 4:13**), then we need to be asking about what is wise. This is at the heart of discerning right from wrong, especially when something isn't spelled out exactly.

We don't simply want to avoid what is technically sinful; we want to choose what is positively wise and moves us in the right direction. There is a difference. One can go through life asking

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about what is sinful, trying to avoid the technical sin, and yet never fully develop a heart and life of wisdom. The one who only asks, "Is it a sin?" is looking for the edge of the line, wanting only to know if he has crossed it and how close he can get to it before going too far. This mentality can dry up the heart, wearing out the desire to do right because what's across that line just looks too good. It can result in constantly peering over the edge of the line, wishing to take part on the other side while always having to pull up short and never really understanding why. Consequently, growing weary in doing good can become a familiar reality (cf. **Gal. 6:9**). This is the one who can never really find true joy in serving God because it's always about what he's not supposed to be doing. This becomes a religion of "do not's" rather than one of glorifying God.

The ones who seek wisdom not only will avoid the edge of the line, they will develop habits that don't push that edge at all and will lead them away from the line altogether. The habits of the wise will cause them to lose interest in peering over the edge. Why? Because they aren't thinking just in terms of avoiding sin and what they can't do, but in terms of glorifying God and drawing closer to Him (cf. **Luke 11:24-26**). They know that pushing the edge of the line is not drawing near to God; it's getting too close to the sin and hedges bets against giving in. The wise are eager to dive into God's word, to meditate deeply on Scripture (**Psalms 1:1-3**), and to act in ways that show skillful handling of a life in service. The one who only asks about sin is wanting to stay just on this side of a line while getting as close as possible, but may soon weary of the effort. The tight-rope walker has an extremely difficult task, and

he may soon fall because it is easy to lose balance if he develops spiritual vertigo.

Wisdom helps us fill in the gaps in trying to answer difficult questions. For example, the list of the works of the flesh is not exhaustive, but concludes with "things like these" (**Gal. 5:19-21**). How do we know what "things like these" are, given that they aren't spelled out? Gaining a heart of wisdom in glorifying God will help us identify "things like these" and recognize that even though not everything is spelled out, we can still skillfully learn to make godly choices when faced with difficult questions. Likewise, the Hebrews writers speaks of the mature, who, because of practice, have their senses trained to discern good and evil (**Heb. 5:12-14**). Discernment takes a heart of wisdom. Both of these passages show that we cannot approach every issue just by asking what the Bible technically and specifically condemns. Rather, we need to approach every question with a heart of wisdom and learn to discern and make appropriate judgments about those matters that may not be specified. What is the wise thing to do if there are questions?

When we know that something is unwise, and our argument for doing it anyway is, "but it's not a sin," then we have missed the point of biblical wisdom. Wisdom isn't just about avoiding a line to be crossed, but is about positive growth in God's direction away from those lines. Again, those who are mature are discerning and aren't only looking for specific condemnations on the other side of a line. They are looking at principles and seeking to draw near to God through their godly choices. Consequently, they won't want to push the line of what's questionable; they will want to look toward heaven and see how they can best reflect the image and presence of God.



How Men Act When They Repent

By Steve Klein

In **Matthew 12:41**, Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." According to Jesus, the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jo-

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nah. You remember the story, don't you? God had commanded Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (**Jonah 1:2**). Now Nineveh was not only a city filled with wickedness, it was also the capital of the Assyrians, hated enemies of the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to go. He fled from God's presence. However, after being given some quality time in the belly of a fish to reflect and pray, Jonah decided to obey God. Jonah walked through the city proclaiming the judgment of the Lord upon these pagan people: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (**Jonah 3:4**).

The people of Nineveh repented. They "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (**Jonah 3:5**). When word came to the king of Nineveh, "he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." He decreed that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock" were to eat or drink and that "every one" was to "turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hand" (**Jonah 3:7-8**).

The text says that, "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them" (**Jonah 3:10**). God can read men's hearts. He knows more about what is going on in our heads than we do ourselves. But He did not need to read the minds of the Ninevites to

know that they had repented. He "saw their works, that they turned away from evil". When the men of Nineveh repented, nobody was left to wonder whether or not their repentance was genuine. Nobody was left guessing about their intention to stop committing evil. Nobody would have doubted they had actually repented of their sins.

We really need to learn this lesson from the men of Nineveh. We need to learn how to act when we repent. Repentance isn't just saying "excuse me," "my bad," or "forgive me," and then going on with our lives as if nothing happened. Repentance should produce real change in our actions. We are to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (**Matthew 3:8**). I am afraid that too many of us think that our repentance should go unnoticed. We are incognito repenters! And while God hardly asks us to don sackcloth and ashes today, He does ask us to "do works befitting repentance" (**Acts 26:20**).

Let's resolve to turn away from sin in our lives, and make sure that we behave in such a way that folks can tell that's what we've done!

