

# Diligently Seeking God

By Gary Henry

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

**Our seeking of God must be diligent.** What does this mean? It means that we must give ourselves to the quest for God with a priority and a passion that we don't invest in any other pursuit. God must be first in our hearts. We must be ready to sacrifice anything else -- indeed *all* else -- to see His face. Our hearts must be purged of any conflicting interest or competing desire. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). In our longing for God we must be utterly sincere, and in our seeking of God we must be passionately committed. He deserves no less than our all.

God's making of the world is such that we find it necessary to seek and to search for Him, but in truth "He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). His hiddenness in this present broken world is not meant to hinder us from finding Him, but to entice us. As He whets our appetite

for Himself, God is weaning us away from our sinful, self-sufficient rebellion. He is teaching us to love Him. With convicting evidences of His power and loving tokens of His goodness, He is drawing us toward His eternal presence. "I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love" (Hosea 11:4). It is God's good pleasure to be found by all who long for Him in honest, obedient love.

God is not neutral with regard to the inclination of our hearts. He desires that we find Him. He yearns for those who delight in Him. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Yet there is a danger: we must not deceive ourselves that we are seeking *God* if in fact it is only certain blessings *from* God that we seek. Resisting the tendency to focus on ourselves, we must learn to seek *Him*, simply and contentedly. When we diligently do so, our reward will be God Himself and He will fill our deepest longings according to the design of His own love. Having sought God earnestly, we will be enriched by the joy of a heart that overflows with His glory.



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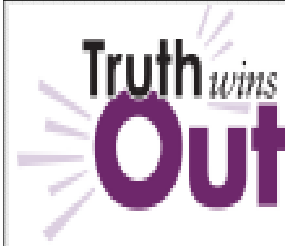
# The Auburn Beacon



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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## Thoughts to Ponder

Truth never need fear the light. Sunlight falling on a dead log may hasten the process of decay, but sunlight falling on a living tree makes it grow and become luxuriant.

**Do You Have a Bible Question?**  
Call (334) 734-2133 or  
E-mail:  
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com



## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

## Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## Baptism - A Peripheral Issue?

By Paul K. Williams

I was on the phone to a Methodist minister seeking information about the inter-denominational "March for Jesus." After he answered my questions he asked me why I asked, as I sounded disapproving. So I told him that the Bible is opposed to denominationalism and that the church of Christ in Eshowe could have nothing to do with the March. He let me know that I sounded proud and judgmental, so I told him that if he would just read what the Bible says about baptism and listen to what those verses say he would see one reason why the Methodist Church is wrong. He gave a mocking laugh and wanted to know why I was talking about such a peripheral issue.

I replied that Paul made it a central issue when he listed the "one baptism" along with "one Lord" and "one God and Father" in **Ephesians 4**. This the Methodist minister chose to ignore but said, "I have studied and debated this issue for years. If you would study with others you would change." I called his attention to the great

His point was that since people have debated and discussed baptism for many years and cannot seem to agree, it is not something which is important. It is "peripheral" (confined to the external surface of a body, hence not of central importance), hence we may differ on it while maintaining Christian unity.

pride his statement betrayed, and then said, "If you will debate me publicly on this subject I will be pleased," but he of course refused.

His point was that since people have debated and discussed baptism for many years and cannot seem to agree, it is not something which is important. It is "peripheral" (confined to the external surface of a body, hence not of central importance), hence we may differ on it while maintaining Christian unity. This position implies that there are central, or core, issues upon which we must agree, and peripheral doctrines upon which we

(Continued on page 2)

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### Classes This Week

<b>Sunday 5:15</b> Kid's Class at the Building	<b>Sunday Evening</b> David Tant will Teach the College Devo at the Johnson's	<b>Monday 7 PM</b> Men's Class at the Davis'
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### Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Ross Folmar	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Marsha and Lee (Toni Herd's Cousins)
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Kenn and Ellen Smith (Ken Sullivan's Parents)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Mike Reed (Friend of the Long's)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Jo Faust Williams (Manna Jones' friend)

### March Birthdays

- 2 - Maddie Norman
- 2- Angela Fowler
- 3 - Shawn Oliver
- 4 - David Perry
- 7 - Josh Pender
- 8 - Carmen Herd
- 10 - Parker Godwin
- 12 - Brad Hartsell
- 12 - Daniel Hogeland
- 14- Tyler Claxton
- 14 - Kaylee West
- 17 - Susan Sullivanne
- 18 - Kenzie Anderson
- 20 - Joy Liu
- 20 - Mary Ann Roberts
- 20- Jimmy Roberts
- 21 - Carter Hunt
- 24 - Audra Hargett
- 24 - Debbie Johnson
- 24 - Jordan Toombs
- 26 - Jared Burton
- 28 - Shelby Freeman
- 29 - Rachel Stephens
- 30 - Amanda Stephens

### News and Notes

- David Tant will be speaking tonight on the first of three lessons on the history of the institutional controversy.
- Tom Sutherland who preaches in Natasulga has successful Lung surgery and is recovering.
- Let us remember our expectant mothers in our prayers: Anne Morton and Jana Hall.
- Mike and Debbie Johnson's son, Matthew, is deployed overseas. Also David Golden will be deployed soon. Also Tim Morton is in Afghanistan.
- There is a meeting with Bill Hall at Union Springs from March 13-16
- There is a meeting with R. J. Stephens at Perry Hill Road - March 6-10 on "Worshipping God in Song."
- The Southeast church in Montgomery will have a meeting Gilbert Alexander March 10-13 on NT Worship.
- Those in special need of prayers at this time: Ed Mort, Erlene Davis and Ola Howie.

(Continued from page 1)

may disagree while being pleasing to God.

### How Do We Classify Issues?

The problem with this is that each person classifies different issues "central" and "Peripheral." There has been and continues to be debate and disagreement on every Bible doctrine, including whether Jesus is the Son of God and whether he rose from the dead. Who is going to classify these issues? What standard are we to use to classify doctrines as important or unimportant? We are seeing the result in religious circles where "every man does what is right in his own eyes" (**Judg. 17:6**). This kind of thinking makes every man a judge, judging by his own standard, not God's.

The Methodist minister's proof that baptism is not important was that the Salvation Army does not baptize or observe the Lord's Supper, yet God works great things through them. I think it is significant that his proof is not biblical, but "experience." By testimony and experience one can prove every religion on earth, including ancestor worship and the Muslim religion. Experience is what keeps people in those religions. They are convinced those religions are true because they believe they work - that God works through them.

### Bible Classification

But when we take the Bible as our authority, a different picture emerges. God's commandments cannot be divided into central and peripheral commandments. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me, in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always,

even to the end of the age'" (**Matt. 28:18-20**). Not only were the apostles to teach all that Jesus commanded, they were to teach the disciples to observe all that he commanded. Jesus did not say that we must obey the central commandments and can obey or not obey the rest!

The psalmist loved the commandments of God. "The sum of Thy word is truth ... .. All. Thy commandments are truth." "From Thy precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way" (**Psa. 119:160,151,104**). He did not divide the commandments into some to be loved and some to be ignored!

Paul pleaded, "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (**1 Cor. 1:10**). Paul did not give us the liberty to disagree and divide on the doctrines revealed by Jesus.

The only peripheral issues are those in which we have liberty, where God has neither commanded nor forbidden. According to **Romans 14** we must not condemn one another in these things, nor must we force one another into our opinions. In matters of meats and days God has given us liberty. We can choose to eat or not eat, observe or not observe. But in matters of revelation and commandment, we must observe all things Jesus has given.

Baptism is not a peripheral commandment, nor is any other command given by Jesus. When we ignore or despise a single precept of Jesus we are showing our complete lack of respect and love for him.

"How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! From Thy precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way" (**Psa. 119:103-104**).

Guardian of Truth - January 1992



# Rascals Are Always Sociable

By James W. Adams

We live in a time when a "good personality" is idealized. Too many churches, when selecting preachers for meetings and local work, are more concerned about their being "personable" than they are about their knowledge of the Bible, ability to preach the Word and character to sustain it, their faith or their convictions.

Schopenhauer, famous German philosopher, was so right when he made the observation which is our title. Our law enforcement agencies constantly remind us that "con-artists" never look like crooks. This is as true of purveyors of pernicious error in the religious realm as it is of crooked monetary entrepreneurs in contemporary society, and as foolish as many are in being duped by "get rich quick"

schemes, they are even more susceptible in the religious realm.

This reminds me of what occurred at a Florida College Lectureship several years ago. In an audience of several hundred brethren, a preacher stood and asked to speak. His request was granted, so he asked the man seated next to him to stand. The man, obviously embarrassed, stood. The man, though unknown by face to most of the audience, was known by reputation to all as a teacher-practitioner of pernicious religious error. The first brother then said, "Many of you do not know this man; he is Brother \_\_\_\_\_. Look at him! Do you see any horns?"

Many in the audience laughed. I did not. It was not amusing. The flamboyant introduction was obviously done to lay at rest any suspicions that faithful brethren might have concerning the man. Obviously, the flamboyant demonstration was to palliate the errors of the man being introduced, and to recommend him to the acceptance of the audience which was a cross section of conservatives throughout the nation. Whether done for this purpose or not, it had the effect of exonerating the man from the onus that rested upon him by reason of his unscriptural and divisive doctrine and practice.

I probably erred on that occasion by not arising to say: "No, we see no horns, but it was Paul, the apostle, who said concerning teachers of error in his day, 'Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and no marvel,- for even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.'"

My reason for not doing so: I did not wish to be publicly unkind to the man thus introduced, for I was certain that he was not privy to what occurred. I mention the incident in this article only to address a matter that stems from the attitude demonstrated by it.

We live in a time when a "good personality" is idealized. Too many churches, when selecting preachers for meetings and local work, are more concerned about their being "personable" than they are about their knowledge of the Bible, ability to preach the Word and character to sustain it, their faith or their convictions. We do not minimize the importance of preachers developing personalities that help rather than hinder the acceptance of the truth which they preach. However, when a "good mixer" is given precedence over a "good preacher," something is fundamentally wrong with our sense of values.

We often hear brethren bewail the lack of depth in members of the church today. The "pew" will never rise above the "pulpit" is almost without exception true. People who are brought into the church (?) by the impact of human personality rather than the influence of truth and are nurtured by the same means cannot be expected to have spiritual depth or be safe from error.

