

## Two Ways to "Soundness"

One way to have a "sound" church is to teach sound doctrine. Plan a well — rounded teaching program that is positive — that covers Old and New Testaments — "in depth" studies and kindergarten topical studies on faith and baptism, heaven and hell, the church and honesty, brotherly love and the sting of rebuke. It is all there in God's word, and we can not have soundness without proper food. Take the initiative on subject matter rather than a steady diet of reaction to what someone else said or did.

Regarding reaction, be alert to social changes which may (and probably will) affect brethren. Get to the bottom of matters avoiding surface jabs at isolated cases of abuse. Be fair with the opposition. Maintain an "open pulpit" so that the search for revealed truth is never stifled. (There is no obligation to hear every man's opinion — judgment here must be based on the extent to which a "contrary" teaching contributes to or distracts from an objective consideration of God's word as final truth.)

This way to have a sound church challenges each individual member. It "disturbs" brethren, keeps them studying — and they must either learn to respect and deal objectively with one another, or they will break into warring camps. Christ must be the unifying factor here, or there is no unity. (Read carefully, Phil. 1:27-2:1-f.)

Another way (?) to have a "sound" church is to convince a few elders or leader that certain "positions" on current "issues" are "right" and that "taking a stand" here is equivalent to "soundness" in all parts. (Liberals who follow this course may

By Robert Turner

make a "token" contribution to some institution.) One of the convinced elders may order a few tracts from his party's most popular publisher — a sort of "status symbol" for the tract rack.

But perhaps the most important of all, in order to "soundness", is to get a preacher whose name is associated with the reputation you wish to establish. Obviously a church that is sound according to our "first way" will desire a preacher who teaches accordingly; but we refer here to the erroneous concept that the members are "sound" because the preacher presents a hard line. This "second way" to soundness builds its name on party loyalty rather than on individual understanding and conviction. A hard driving preacher, backed by a few determined leaders, may whip a congregation into line so that none dare buck the establishment.

Brethren, I write in all seriousness; I have known both "liberal" and "conservative" (by invitation) churches, that were little more than sectarian bodies, whipped into line, loyal to a "party" rather than to Christ. These are the churches that want no fair discussion of "issues;" that do their fighting with name-calling and threats. They are strong as horse-radish on the surface, and soft as mush at the individual's heart, where the real "soundness" must be measured.

Few if any churches will have 100% mature well-taught memberships. But we must improve on "party loyalty" or "soundness" becomes "sounding brass."



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)	Bill Rhodes and James Hall (Toni Herd's Uncles)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Josie Keith (Friend of Heath Fowler)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Richard Call Seth Humphrey's Uncle	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Great Nephew)	Mike Reed (Friend of Long's)

July Birthdays  
 3 - Nathan Rouse  
 11 - Madi White  
 12 - Aurie Adams  
 15 - Bradley Seymour  
 16 - Nathan Smith  
 23 - Drew Haley Smith  
 25 - Yvette Rouse

### News and Notes

- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Congratulations to Tim and Anne Morton at the birth of Charlotte Grace Morton on Wednesday!
- Let us remember Jared Burton and Chris Davis as they undergo treatments.
- Let us remember our expectant mothers in our prayers: Jana Hall.
- There will be a meeting tonight after services for all ladies interested in participating in the ladies classes that will be held in the homes this fall.
- There is a study at the Rouse's on Thursday at 7 PM on Lesson 4 of "the Cross of Christ."

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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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## What Can be Known Can be Shown

By Tim Nichols



### Thoughts to Ponder

Pride is the only disease that everyone around you suffers from except yourself.

All rational students of the Bible want to be told, by teachers and preachers, not just what to believe, but also why those things are to be believed. Every faithful teacher of the Bible is prepared to deliver both in clear terms. Bible doctrines are all taught by specific Bible passages and the connections between them can be described in terms that the average man can understand.

Those who have devoted the time and effort necessary to mine truth from the gold mine that we call the Bible are able to clearly trace the path to the treasure-trove for others to follow. The Bible is not a mystical book that can only be understood by the scholarly few who can then only pass along the correct conclusions without expressing the reasons for those conclusions. Instead it is a living book whose meaning is available to all who will seek wisdom (Prov. 9:1-6). The true Biblical scholar is one who has truly discovered truth and who is willing and able to show that truth, and its source, to others.

Pseudo-scholars exist among us today. The simplicity of the gospel is not enough for them. They are not content to simply learn what the Book of God says and to remain with it. They are constantly searching for something new and profound that will show others how wise they are.

This is why the pseudo-scholars of the first century stumbled over the simplicity of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:18-24). They demanded to hear what was "profound", "wise", "deep", and "intellectual" according to human standards and they were irritated with the "foolishness" of the simple gospel of Christ. To them, the gospel was shallow and they wanted what they perceived to be deep. When some with this mindset were "converted" they attempted to distance themselves from the simplistic, shallow teach-

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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

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ing of the apostles and to elevate themselves as the truly wise and sophisticated in the early church. Paul's inspired sarcasm was designed to warn them and not to shame them (**1 Cor. 4:9-14**).

Pseudo-scholars exist among us today. The simplicity of the gospel is not enough for them. They are not content to simply learn what the Book of God says and to remain with it. They are constantly searching for something new and profound that will show others how wise they are. When questioned about the book, chapter, and verse of their novel "discoveries" they are not able to locate them specifically because they are often several steps away from what the scriptures actually teach and separated from the Word of Truth by the great gulf of pure human speculation. Even so, they are seldom at a loss for words when questioned. Their answers emphasize their own wisdom in some way and suggest that their conclusions ought to be accepted because of the greatness of the miner who brought them forth. But they cannot point the way to the mother-lode.

One such brother argued, in my hearing, that we should accept his conclusion because he had spent several months studying the matter under consideration in the great library at Harvard University. A "televangelist" suggested recently that his doctrine was true because he had spent years with the subject constantly in his mind. Others are heard to affirm that their conclusions are to be accepted because of the number of hours they spent studying the subject, or because of the degrees that they hold, or because of their own ability to see what is not clearly taught. But they cannot produce a "thus saith the Lord". Such is just too shallow for the "wise".

The true Bible student who attempts to teach his subject to others is delighted to have

questions concerning the source of all that he teaches. He takes those things in the Bible that may appear complicated at first and explains them in terms that a child could understand without the first thought of whether he is or is not perceived by his hearers as "wise" or "profound". And he is not intimidated, in the least, by those among his hearers who call his work "shallow".

Pearl S. Buck, in her novel, Pavilion of Women, placed the following words in the mind of Madam Wu as she was being instructed by "Brother Andre": Now, his manner of answering questions was exceedingly simple, but this was because he was so learned. He did not need, as lesser men do, to talk over and above the pith of the matter. Instead, he knew how...to put into a handful of words the essence of the essence of truth. He stripped the leaves away, and he plucked the fruit and cracked the husk and peeled the inner shell and split the flesh and took out the seed and divided it, and there was the kernel, pure and clean (p. 174).

This is a good picture of a true scholar. He has knowledge to share but no need to prove that he is noteworthy. His delight is in helping others to find what he has found. His goal is to know truth and to point the way to it without seeking recognition for his own abilities. He knows that what can be known can be shown and that the feigned knowledge of pseudo-scholars is fools gold. Any map showing the source of such spurious teaching would have to trace a path to the mind of some proud pretender who desires to be recognized as a great teacher, who does not understand what he is saying or what he is affirming (**1 Tim. 1:7**).

So be diligent in questioning what you do not understand from any teacher of the word. Anyone who has found the truth can show you its source. Others will point in obscure directions or simply become angry with the questioner.



## What Prayer Does for the Pray-er

By Dee Bowman

It seems to me significant that our English word "prayer" indicates, by its very nature, someone who does it. A prayer is something prayed by a pray-er.

Have you ever stopped to think about what prayer does for us? It's interesting.

Prayer makes us like Him whom we adore. People who associate closely begin to adopt one another's characteristics, personality, demeanor. When you keep in touch with God, you will become more and more like Him. Peter says, "Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (**2 Pet. 1:4**). How exciting to think it possible to take part in the divine nature—to be holy, to be full of love, to be considerate of others—and the multitude of other characteristics inherent in the Divine One. If you want to be like God, meditate on His promises and pray for His goodness and it will come to pass—you will be more like Him.

Prayer exercises our spiritual senses. A lack of exercise results in flaccid muscles. A lack of spiritual exercise produces the same flaccidity—only it's much more serious. You become disinterested, irregular in attendance, unconcerned about spiritual matters. Regular prayer keeps us in good shape, makes us stronger, more able to function in difficult situations, more able to perform in hard places. "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (**1 Thess. 5:17-18**).

Prayer humbles our elevated spirits. We live in a world so comfortable that it's easy to forget from whence our blessings come. We get so caught up in our multitude of blessings that we forget their source. You can't have a spirit of pride and thank God for His blessings at the same time. You have to

Prayer elevates our broken spirits. Life if filled with unexpected down times. We must face difficult situations at times. No matter how unfaithful people are, when death comes, or a serious operation is in the offing, they pray.

humble yourself somewhat to give thanks; it places you in a proper position when you pray. The condemnation given the Gentile nations by Paul in Romans 1 says, "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (**Rom. 1:21-22**). Prayer and humility are connected. No

humility, no prayer.

Prayer elevates our broken spirits. Life if filled with unexpected down times. We must face difficult situations at times. No matter how unfaithful people are, when death comes, or a serious operation is in the offing, they pray. How sad that it is reserved only for such a time. Prayer, for the faithful, enhances his ability to endure by connecting him to the immutable Father, but giving him assurance that Jesus has been there, "For," we are told, "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (**Heb. 4:15-16**).

And finally, prayer is our lifeline to spiritual energy. To be constantly in touch with God is to be connected to His strength, to share His power, to imbibe of His energy. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," He said, so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (**Heb. 13:6-7**). How encouraging is that! How absolutely consoling! How totally comforting.

"Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?"

