

The Exculpatory Rule

By Aubrey Belue We NEVER hear from them Biblical definitions of real unity; we

In law, those who prosecute a case, seeking to prove a person guilty of a crime, are required by law to put forth ALL the facts, even if there were facts which contradicted the prosecution's case (everybody who watches "Law and Order knows that!"). In a sense, among brethren, some are prosecuting the case that we have no pattern, that God accepts the level of "unity" now existing, and that most sins are covered automatically without any effort on our part and that most sins are covered automatically without any effort on our part.

To one who is familiar with their tactics, one thing is clear. They NEVER bring up facts (scriptural facts) which contradict their case. It's kind of like the Baptists who NEVER bring up **Acts 2:38** when considering the role of baptism.

never hear how God actually dealt with conditions when unity was missing; we never hear how God advised the church so that unity could be achieved; we never hear the passages which make obedience to actual acts a necessity for salvation, etc.

If the case cannot stand up under the inclusion of such facts as these, what are we to conclude? How trustworthy is the "Bible teacher" who ignores scriptures which undermine his personal view of God's plan? He certainly is not following the apostle Paul, who did not "shun to declare the WHOLE counsel of God" (**Acts 20:27**)



Classes to Remember		
Our VBS Classes June 18-21	Tuesday 7 PM "Contending for the Faith" Class at the Bld.	Thursday 7 PM "Truth Seekers" at Student Center

Sick			
Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Marion Vanhal (Paula Davis' Uncle)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Virginia Crawford (Hunter's Sister-In-Law)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Betty Bradford	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Carl Alexander (Hannah Alexander's Uncle)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Melissa Walker (Chuck Hahn's Cousin)		

June Birthdays
1 - Kenlee Burton 3 - Philip Stephens 4 - Paula Davis 8 - Mac Searcy 9 - Kay White 11 - Hannah Alexander 11 - Clint Stagner 12 - Orié Cecil 12 - Riley Jones 13 - Addison Dembowski 14 - Jeremiah Johnson 17 - Brooks Pender 17 - Sara Norman 20 - Jonas Dembowski 22 - Seth Buchanon 22 - Paul Tam 24 - Justin Bice 25 - Corey Hunt 28 - Allison Chandler 28 - Clint Davis 28 - Craig Davis 29 - Lisa Lanier 29 - Josh Hudson

News and Notes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christopher White's and Anna Miller's grandfather, G.C. Pack, died Sat. morning. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let us remember David Hartsell and his family in our prayers. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let us remember Timothy Jones, Josh Carter and Kyle Gibson as they preach in the Philippines. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have printed VBS postcards in the foyer for you to use to invite others! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debbi Coleman's cousin, Johnny Welsh, died last weekend. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jon Coleman's brother, Jerry, has successful surgery on his leg. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walker's friend, Jeffery Miller, has returned home after successful brain surgery. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A friend of Melanie Smith's brother, Bailey Jones, was critically injured this week.

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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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The Corrupting Influence of Sin

By John N. Evans



Thoughts to Ponder

The people to worry about are not those who openly disagree with you, but those who disagree with you who are too cowardly to let you know.

For several years now I've enjoyed following bluetick hounds in pursuit of the wily raccoon. For me, there's something very exhilarating about the full-throated bawl of a flopped-eared hound beneath a big Texas moon. There's an old saying among hound men that's always intrigued me. Veteran handlers are fond of saying, "You'll have whatever kind of dog you'll put up with."

In dog talk that means if you'll put up with a hound that runs deer, guess what you'll have before long? That's right—a deer running hound. If you'll tolerate a dog that fights at the tree, that's what you'll eventually own—a growly, tree-fighting dog. Whatever you'll tolerate is what you'll eventually have. I've seen too many examples which prove this saying to doubt its truthfulness.

The same principle applies to the religious realm as well. Stated simply, *whatever sin we tolerate becomes a part of us*. Sin has a powerful, corrupting influence. Give it time and opportunity, and sin will invade every part of a Christian's life. The ultimate consequence of sin is spiritual death (**Ezek. 18:20, I**

Cor. 15:56). Sin separates us from God; sin brings us under bondage to Satan. The Christian must war against sin at every turn!

Clearly, those first-century preachers did everything within their power to root out sin. For example, when the Judaizing teachers crept in among the Galatian brethren and attempted to bind circumcision as a religious requirement, Paul wrote, ". . . we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you" (**Gal. 2:5, NASB**). Paul realized the danger of false teachers and the sin they bring with them! Furthermore, he admonished the Corinthian brethren to be on guard against sin: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (**I Cor. 16: 13**).

From a congregational standpoint, this means that we must ever be vigilant against the pervasive nature of sin. Remember, *whatever sin we tolerate becomes a part of us*. Paul warns the brethren about this very danger in I Cor. 5. As he addresses the problem of the man who had his father's wife, he writes in v. 6: "Your boasting is not good. Do you not

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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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know that a little leaven **leavens the whole lump** of dough?" Don't you *realize*, Paul is saying, *that once the yeast of sin infiltrates the congregation that it will spread throughout? Don't you realize that sin which is tolerated has a corrupting influence on all the members?*

Those who have been members of the Lord's body for any length of time have seen the truth of Paul's inspired warning. Once a congregation begins to care more for tolerance than it does for truth, it has taken the first step down the slippery slope of apostasy.

Usually sin creeps into a congregation gradually, almost imperceptibly. Perhaps it starts with a preacher who decides to ignore Paul's example in **Acts 20:27** of preaching "all the counsel of God" and decides to steer clear of the "touchy subjects." Or maybe it begins by looking the other way when a couple we're fond of continues to live in a clearly unscriptural marriage. Or perhaps it starts when a false teacher first spreads his doctrine among members, and we fail to correct him because we don't want to "create a confrontation." Or maybe there's a brother or sister who's clearly walking disorderly and we fail to heed God's commandment in **II Thess. 3:6** to withdraw ourselves from that person.

I'm not talking about going on a witch-hunt or playing house detective among the brethren. There's no excuse for plain old nosiness. I'm simply encouraging all of us to recognize a fundamental Bible principle: **Christians by their lives and by their actions cannot condone or encourage sin.** In fact, we are to do the exact opposite. **Eph. 5:11** tells us to . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (KJV).

Sin, by its very nature, tends to grow and spread. The best way I know to illustrate the point is to think of Bermuda grass. I like to garden, but I don't like Bermuda grass. Unfortunately, I'm not as diligent as I should be about rooting it out. Ill see a little sprout of it in one

corner of the garden, and Ill think, "I can always grub that out tomorrow; after all, it's just one little sprout." Of course, tomorrow never comes, and I fail to reckon with the tough, invasive roots beneath the soil's surface. And, because Bermuda is a perennial, creeping grass, it returns stronger year after year.

So it is with sin. Develop an attitude of tolerance, and it will never leave. In fact, it will grow stronger over time. The devil guarantees it. Like leaven in that lump of dough, it spreads throughout. If it had been dealt with decisively, when it first invaded the local church, it could have been eliminated. Allow it to grow, as I've done my Bermuda grass, and the task becomes nearly impossible.

The same is also true for the individual. We are deluding ourselves if we think one "pet sin" is all right. "Every man has his vice" is the motto of the worldly individual. Instead, the Christian remembers **I Thess. 5:22**: "Abstain from every form of evil" (NASB). No man can sin with impunity. Sin always bears consequences. Yes, we can be forgiven of sin when we repent and turn to God. But sin exacts a price. It scars the soul. It may ruin our chance to influence others. It may harden our hearts to the next sin. It causes us to set a bad example for others. It hurts friends and family. It weakens the congregation because it turns our minds away from God. It grieves our Father in heaven.

Dan Shipley puts it this way: ". . . The individual who thinks he can hold on to that one 'little' sin and be spiritually healthy, is deceiving himself. It will permeate the soul, separate from God, kill spiritual appetite and interest and encourage other sins. **One sin retained is ten sins gained.**"

Instead, let us get as close to Jesus and as far away from sin as we possibly can. **Rom. 13:14** speaks volumes: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Like the wise old hound man who knows to cull the errant dog from his hunting pack, let us drive sin from our lives.



The Importance of Thoughts

By Bill Crews

If you are concerned about your character, your conduct, your life and your destiny, **then be concerned about your thoughts.** "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (**Prov. 4:23**). The heart is the mind, and the mind is the center of thoughts. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (**Prov. 23:7**). A man may not be what he appears to be, but he is what he thinks.

What goes **into** your mind, then, is extremely important. Be careful about the interests you acquire, the tastes you cultivate, the desires you develop. They shape what goes into your mind. The conversations you listen to, the scenes you observe, the movies you view, the TV programs you tune into, the newspapers, magazines and books you read, the songs by which you are entertained, the jokes you laugh at, the things you are taught all have a part in feeding information into your mind.

You evaluate and monitor all that you hear and see. Your standard for evaluation and your conscience are vital and play their roles. You may seek out or receive what is vulgar or distorted, or you may reject and refuse it. You may pursue

It is your own little secret world -- except that God knows all about it, and will one day bring it to light when you have to answer for it in the judgment
(**Ecc 12:14; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10**).

and embrace what is wholesome and true, or you may have no interest in it and neglect it. Be cautious, particular and selective about what goes into your mind. If you allow garbage to go in, then garbage will come out in the form of words and deeds.

What goes on **in** your mind is also extremely important. Be careful about your thoughts, meditations, desires, ambitions, daydreams and fantasies. You determine what goes on in your mind. You are the master of it because you have control over it. It is your own little secret world -- except that God knows all about it, and will one day bring it to light when you have to answer for it in the judgment (**Eccl. 12:14; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10**). And sooner or later it will find expression in your life and make itself known.

We cannot be like God without thinking the thoughts of God. We cannot know the thoughts of God apart from the revelation of the things of God in the word of God (**1 Cor. 2:11-13**). We cannot have the thoughts of God in our hearts apart from reverent study of and meditation upon the word of God, coupled with a sincere desire to do the will of God (**Jn. 7:17**).

