

# Suppose...

...That a group of N.T. Christians should come into your midst and establish a congregation with just the doctrine, practice, worship, organization and plan of salvation as in the N.T. day – would you say, “one church is as good as another, and you can be saved out of the church as well as in it...”?

...That Jesus should come into your community and single out this church and tell you that He “purchased the church with His own blood”, and “gave himself for it”. Would you ignore and oppose the church, or would you love it, too, and help to

Selected spread its message over the land? WELL, HE DID (Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25; Rom 16:16)

...That Jesus should come into your community and say to all His professed followers, “I pray for all them which believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee..”; would you be willing to quit every divisive name and organization and practice in order to bring about as much of this unity as possible? WELL, HE DID! (Jn 17:20-21)



**Classes This Week**

<b>Sunday 5:15</b> Kid's Class at the building	<b>Monday 7 PM</b> Men's Class at the Davis'	<b>Tuesday 8 PM</b> "Truth Seekers" Student Center Room 2310	<b>Wednesday 12 Noon</b> Ladies "Proverbs" Class at the Rouse's
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**Sick**

Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	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)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Pat Webb (Friend of Jared Johnson)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Diane Hudson (Josh Hudson's grandmother)	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Don Meadows (Ashley Miller's step-father)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Roberts)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frances Fultz (Davis Fultz's grandmother)	Judy Nichols (Suzanne's Mother)	Ann Scaff (Hannah Morris' grandmother)

**January Birthdays**

- 1 - David Ogle
- 2 - Chuck Hunt
- 4 - Phillip Box
- 6 - Daniel Rogers
- 6 - Erica Seymore
- 7 - Hunter Collins
- 9 - Liseth Aragon
- 11 - Spencer Hall
- 11 - Shepherd Hall
- 18 - Scott Vaughn
- 21 - Jacob Jerkins
- 23 - Connor Godwin
- 25 - Caleb Daniels
- 30 - Ashley Tucker
- 31 - Jennifer Daniels

**News and Notes**

- ☒ - Please remember Glenn Weeks, Caralise Hunt's father, in your prayers.
- ☒ - All are invited to be a part of a singing at the Arbor Springs Nursing Home today at 2 PM. See Will Harris.
- ☒ - Betty Bradford will have surgery at UAB today.
- ☒ - Susan Sullivan had knee replacement surgery this week and has now at home.
- ☒ - Rusty Weldon's brother, Danny, has gone home from the hospital.
- ☒ - Bill Hall will be in a meeting at the Prattmont church on Feb 10-12.
- ☒ - The flower fund is running low. See The Roberts to contribute.

# 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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## The Dark Path of Bitterness

By Larry Rouse



**Thoughts to Ponder**

Those who would avoid the despair of their sinfulness by staying far from God find they have also missed the forgiving grace of God.

How is it possible for Satan to defeat and capture a child of God who has previously escaped his grasp? In conversion Satan is exposed for the deceiver that he is. Jesus described him as having “no truth in him” and as being a “liar and the father of it (John 8:44).” While it is inconceivable for a Christian to ever imagine himself as willingly placing his life under the control of the “evil one,” Satan in fact has a strong track record of accomplishing this very thing. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).”

Satan's goal is to cut off the word of God from your heart and then drive you by your emotions. The Bible frames this struggle in this way: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:12-13)” Over the years I have witnessed many of my brethren destroyed in this manner, and the vast majority were overcome with bitterness and anger.

There is a place for anger! When Jesus asked a straightforward question and received no reply, He looked into their hearts and responded in this way: “And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hard-

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ness of their hearts... (Mark 3:5).” My Lord was angry, and my Lord never sinned. There is a place for anger when it is under control and directed by the principles of God's word. “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27).” We need to be angry when we see sin! But always remember this warning “do not let the sun go down on your wrath,” because a failure to do so will give the devil a place in your heart and be assured, he will take advantage of it.

Why do so many of my brethren not take uncontrolled anger seriously? I know of

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**Elders**  
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**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**  
Sunday

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

**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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too many men that laugh about their temper and others who laugh with them saying “that’s just the way he is.” What does the Bible say? “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him **(1 John 3:15)**.” Does this verse get your attention? My eternal life is no laughing matter and anything that could come between me and my God has my attention.

Consider the works of the flesh: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, **hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions**, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God **(Galatians 5:19-21)**.” Did you notice the “anger family” in this verse? While we hear many good sermons on immorality and false doctrine, do we hear that same emphasis on uncontrolled anger? Remember “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The Bible plainly tells us of the difficulty of controlling our anger. “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city **(Proverbs 16:32)**.” Moses was commended by God above all others for his ability to control his spirit **(meekness – Numbers 12:2 ASV)**, but in a moment of anger he spoke rashly and thus sinned. “They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them; <sup>33</sup> Because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips. **(Psalm 106:32-33)**.” While Moses went to the ultimate Promised Land of God, heaven, he was not able to enter the physical Promised Land because of this one moment of anger.

When we begin to dwell on our hurts and nourish our anger, we are placing ourselves firmly in the hands of Satan. Have you ever tried to reason with an angry person? When you give in to a life of anger you also give up your ability to reason. “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle **(Proverbs 18:19)**.” The corrupt politician and the false teacher specialize in slander designed to shut down the thinking process. There are many Christians that I have known who, because of their anger towards a man, have quit serving God. What sense does that make? It is like getting mad at the dog and kicking the cat! In short your anger will make you a crazy person, unwilling to

listen or reason, and ready to fight anyone or anything that gets in the way of your desire for revenge.

Local churches can be devastated by just one man who plants seeds of bitterness. We are warned in the scriptures to be “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled **(Hebrews 12:15)**”. Bitter people often try to build their own personal kingdoms that one has described as “the fellowship of the miserable.” You will be received and flattered by this group as long as you hate whoever the leader hates. I personally have been attacked by such groups for doing nothing more than showing kindness to someone that was an object of another’s anger.

Bitter people will be lost if they do not repent. The greatest evangelists for Satan today are those Christians who plant the seeds of hatred in the church of our Lord.

In time bitter people will burn themselves out and their kingdoms will disband. Sometimes the bitter person will repent and return to the grace of God. Sadly, however, they often are unable to reverse the effects of the angry seeds they planted in the hearts of those that were closest to them. It is in the lives of their friends and especially in their children that the harshest fruits of planted bitterness will be seen.

There is a better way. “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. **(Ephesians 4:31-32)**” You will never regret releasing the desire for vengeance upon those who have hurt you. Our God has pleaded with us in this regard: “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord **(Romans 12:19)**.”

Do you really believe in God? Are you really a Christian, willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? Look carefully at the specific footsteps our God has placed before us: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously **(1 Peter 2:21-23)**.” The next time you are tempted to inflict punishment upon your enemy, I hope you will remember the pleading voice of God where he said “vengeance is mine.” If you really trust God then you will let it go. Please do allow Satan to do his work through you.



## Worship or “Playing Church”?

By Dee Bowman

What an exalted privilege it is to worship God— to know who He is, to understand what He expects, to be confident that our heart-felt and humble devotion, our reverence and veneration, come before His majestic presence as an honor to Him. It’s almost too wonderful to contemplate.

I fear that far too many people are not as impressed with this great privilege as they ought to be. That fact is often shown by the inconsistency with which some participate in the worship services. They only come when it’s convenient to do so, and then only for as little time as they feel they can spare. I fear, too, that with some, participation is little more than a ceremonial observance, a scant observance devoid of any heart-felt spiritual commitment. Somehow they have decided that their mere presence is all that is necessary for acceptable worship.

There is great benefit to be derived from the public worship. But there is a danger, too—a danger that ritualism will replace sincere, heart-felt worship. A danger that the mere observance of the various ordinances is all that is due Him. In Ecclesiastes five, the wise man says, “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God. And be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil.” The meaning is clear: to lack the involvement of the heart when we come to worship is sin.

True worship is a desire to reach out to our Father and accord to Him the filial devotion He so rightfully deserves, and it seems to me that proper preparation for those acts of worship that accomplish that is essential. And sometimes neglected, if we’re not very careful. Just as any good thing to be done requires forethought and planning, so it is with worship. In fact, especially is that so regarding worship, mainly because of its supreme importance and high privilege. I want to cite a few things I believe will improve our personal participation in the public worship services.

Begin early. Sometimes we are so involved in filling our weekends with pleasures of various sorts, we have only scant time to prepare our thoughts and minds for the worship of our Father on the Lord’s Day. We plan activities on Saturday that reach far into Saturday night and then sleep as late as we possibly can on Sunday morning. When we do get up we are dull, listless, unprepared to offer praise to God. If we get a good night’s sleep on Saturday, we’re much more apt to be refreshed on Sunday morning, then ready to make our plans for the grand privileges we are to

enjoy at the worship services. “My God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land” **(Psalm 63:1)**.

Participate. I don’t mean just be there (although you can very well participate if you’re not even there), but get involved mentally at the start of the services. That means you have to take control of your mind and drive it in the direction of God. After all, that’s what worship is. Only when you get your mind involved can there be true worship. And I don’t mean a casual thought of Jesus or a passing amen to the prayer, but a full-fledged effort to extol and praise him from the innermost part of your being. “God is a Spirit: and that that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” **(John 4:24)**. That means you reach down to the vital part of who and what you are and give yourself to God for a period of adulation and praise-giving.

Look past the leader. All public worship services require a leader to be effective. That may present a distraction, if we’re not careful. Sometime we become so fascinated with the leader—or, on the other hand, so distracted by him—that we actually find our minds wandering away from the purpose for being there. Even if the leader hasn’t chosen the songs you like, even if the one chosen to lead can’t do as well as you’d like, even if the prayer is longer than you would like, don’t let that have an adverse effect on your personal worship. And even if the leader is so good that his work borders on the artistic, it should not be allowed to cause you to lose sight of why you’re here and what you’re to do while you’re here.

Take it home with you. If you bring a big enough container to the public worship, there’s no reason why you can’t take a goodly portion of those services home with you. For one thing, they can supply you with fuel for meditation and spiritual reflections when you get home. Meditation is a vital part of public worship and the fodder gained from such meditation is invaluable to your private worship after you leave the building. After you have participated in the worship services you should have feelings of warmth, new devotion for your Father, an even deeper care for those brethren with whom you have shared a time of praise and adulation. Worship—public or personal—is intended to bring glory and honor to God Almighty and to strengthen the one offering such praise to Him. And if you really care for Him as you should, you cannot leave your praise and devotion for Him at the building when you leave.

