

# Forsaking True Worship

By Seth Buchanan

“After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other. Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made” (1 Kings 12:28-32).

In an attempt to solidify his rule as king, Jeroboam built two altars to “the god that brought the Israelites out of Egypt”, one in Dan to the north, the other in Bethel to the South. In doing so, he turned many hearts away from the true worship of the Lord, and started Israel down a path of sin that would lead the nation all the way to captivity.

While this seems so outlandish to 21st century Christians that the children of Israel would so easily turn their attention to golden calves, I would suggest that this kind of apostasy is peddled and accepted among the children of God today! Jeroboam’s new worship practices were not set up to the exclusion of worship to Jehovah, but as supplements meant to enhance worship. I can imagine the reactions of many Israelites whose faith was waning:

Finally, we have a graven image representative of the God of Abraham. Having a visual aid to look up to is sure to make their worship seem more real.

Away with the exclusionary, traditional practice of only having Levites as priests. God wants everybody to serve him, doesn't he? Everyone should be allowed to be a priest.

It's impractical for us to have to take time away from our jobs to travel to Jerusalem. That practice was surely meant for our forefathers, and is no longer relevant to an established nation such as ourselves.

The other nations do not worship their gods in tents, why should we? Worshiping atop the high places will be so amazing, so emotionally stirring. Our worship has become outdated and irrelevant anyways...get with the times!

The fact remains the same today as it was thousands of years ago: if our worship practice is not from God, our worship is a sham. The children of Israel gave up true worship for that which was fraudulent and sinful—Let us not do the same today. As we see in further study of the historic nation of Israel, it is a slippery slope from unauthorized “worship enhancements” to Baal worship.

“After this event Jeroboam did not return from his evil way, but again he made priests of the high places from among all the people; any who would, he ordained, to be priests of the high places. This event became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to blot it out and destroy it from off the face of the earth.” (1 Kings 13:33-34).



# The Auburn Beacon

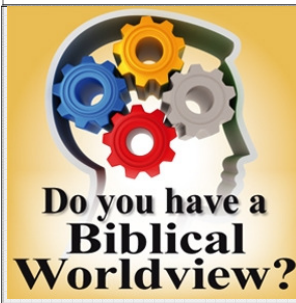
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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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## Thoughts to Ponder

Joy is that deep settled confidence that God is in control in every area of my life.

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Walker Davis (334) 703-0050  
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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  
**E-Mail:**  
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**Larry Rouse**  
Evangelist and Editor

## Redefining Happiness

By Steven Harper

Within the past few years, we have witnessed a great push within our society for ‘rights’ to do just about anything. Especially within the last week, we have seen joy expressed that the latest Supreme Court decision will pave the way for same-sex marriages nationwide, with many using shallow slogans to express their desire that ‘whatever makes someone happy’ should not be forbidden. “After all,” some are saying, “love is love!”

Forty years ago, some were calling this The ‘Me’ Generation, with a crop of young folks [and some not-so-young] coming up who believed they had every right in the world to do whatever they wanted, without restriction and without what they saw as burdensome and intrusive laws that ‘controlled’ what they could and could not do. Popular phrases that epitomized the attitudes of that time were ‘If it feels good, do it’ and ‘Looking out for number one’; both demonstrated a self-centered look on life and it seems like subsequent generations have gotten no less selfish.

Mankind has a knack for persistently pursuing the things that he falsely believes will bring happiness - even when past generations and past efforts have failed [and failed miserably] to achieve that end. It seems to not matter that history records those failures for us to learn from them, for someone will ignore history and inevitably try again or try something else, seeking happiness in a place it cannot be found. Often, the problem is that we just don’t want to

Does God want you to be happy? Sure, He does! But in your pursuit of happiness, make sure that what you are seeking is not, in reality, a lie. All the things this world offers may bring temporary ‘happiness’ [if any at all], but the results will be eternal misery.

admit those things will not bring true happiness, nor will we admit the truth of what God has said brings true happiness.

Any parent will tell you it is difficult to watch as one of your children ‘hear’ what you say and then go and do whatever they want to do. It could be decisions about their financial choices, their education, where to live, what career to seek, or even their boyfriend or girlfriend; but, like a lot of young folks do, they ‘hear’ what is said, but don’t really listen, and they find out only too late that what their parents told them really wasn’t so dumb, after all. Some of those things will not bring any physical harm to them, but some of those things do, and it brings us no joy and does not ease the pain to just be able to say, “I told you so.”

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Check Us Out On the Internet: [www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)

## 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)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Meredith NeSmith (Jessica Anderson's Cousin)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)

## August Birthdays

- 2 - Emma Miller
- 2 - Heath Donahue
- 4 - Will King
- 5 - Andrew Cagle
- 6 - Isaac Burton
- 7 - David Golden
- 7 - Anna Leigh Peek
- 9 - Elliott Weldon
- 9 - Troy Swenson
- 10 - Sarah Tam
- 11 - Walker Davis
- 12 - Jon Coleman
- 13 - Brendon Kirby
- 14 - Elizabeth Wiggs
- 15 - Kaleb Reid
- 16 - Cade Smith
- 18 - MaKayla Chittam
- 19 - Brettlyn Currier
- 16 - Me-Shell Looney
- 20 - Caleb Law
- 24 - Sophie Hall
- 25 - Emily Jones
- 27 - Chip Freeman
- 27 - Stephen Ambrose
- 28 - Larry Rouse
- 28 - Cole Johnson

## News and Notes

☒ - Our Meeting with Bryan Gibson begins today! Let us freely distribute the card and flyers in the foyer.

☒ - Our first college singing and devotional will be tonight a Gold Hill. All high school and college students are encourage to attend. Bryan Gibson will be teaching.

☒ - The weekly ladies classes will begin soon. See Nicole Pender or Yvette Rouse for details.

☒ - All sermons will be available on CD in the foyer each evening.

☒ - We encourage all of our members to enroll at the new website: [www.auchurch.com](http://www.auchurch.com). Also continue to visit our teaching site at [www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)!

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It is most trying when spiritual instruction is not valued or simply ignored altogether, and when the child rejects God's ways for the ways of the world, thinking God's ways are 'too strict' and the worldly ways will bring true happiness. Parents point to others as real-life examples of poor choices or even use personal examples to show that happiness is rarely, if ever, found where most people seek it, but the devil's deceptions are enticing and many young people have fallen prey to the lure of his promise of pleasure, joy, and 'happiness' and walk the wide, smooth road that leads to destruction (cf. **Matt. 7:13**).

Just like the advertising for alcohol that we see on television, what is 'advertised' by the devil and his helpers is the 'fun' and the 'excitement' and the acceptance and popularity one gains from society when you join with them in their pursuit of fleshly pleasures. Just like the airbrushed women who wear next-to-nothing [or, nothing at all] in pornographic images, what is promised is perfect beauty and pleasures of the flesh and no one to tell you it's wrong.

What the alcohol advertising doesn't show is the homeless man on the street who got there because he became an alcoholic, and how all the help his family and others could offer was not accepted, or could not bring him back. The ads never show the homes destroyed by the fathers and mothers who become drunks and who also then physically and mentally abuse their spouses and/or their children. The ads do not show the horrific automobile accidents where lives have been taken because someone chose to drink and drive. The ads do not talk about the withdrawal symptoms, the liver disease, and impaired judgment. The ads show all the happiness and very little of reality.

What the propagators of pornography and 'free sex' do not show is the broken homes and destroyed lives that result of the addiction to it, the diseases it brings, and the emotional scars that sometimes last a lifetime. The pornographers want you to believe it is your 'right' to view whatever you want, but will not tell you about those who have gone so far into the filth that they start acting out their fantasies and desires on others who are unwilling participants. They don't tell you about the serial killer who admitted his raping and torture and killing began with pornography.

And we are told this is 'happiness.'

There once was a man who sought happiness as many today still do; he said to himself, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure" (**Eccl. 2:1**). In that pursuit of pleasure, he said he "searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine" (**Eccl. 2:3**), and "made my works great...built

myself houses, and planted myself vineyards...made myself gardens and orchards,...planted all kinds of fruit trees in them...made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove...acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house...I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were...before me...gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces...acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds" (**Eccl. 2:4-8**). But was he happy?

This same man would say of this pursuit of happiness in worldly offerings, "Indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun" (**Eccl. 2:11**). After this vain pursuit and after he had tried everything there was to try, he said, "Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (**Eccl. 2:17**). This very wise man concluded the pursuit of happiness in worldly offerings was useless - it could not be found in those things!

Fortunately, for him and for us, he did find where true happiness was. In the end, he would say, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (**Eccl. 12:13**). True happiness would not be found in the pursuit [or attainment] of material, fleshly, worldly things, but in the service of our Creator!

Other men have come to this same conclusion, without going through the wasted time, money, and energy. Some have written, "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!" (**Psa. 144:15**), and, "Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (**Psa. 146:5**), and, "Whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he" (**Prov. 16:20**). We can argue about the truthfulness of these words until time ends, but let us consider that they were inspired by the God who does not lie. They are true, whether we ever deem them true or not.

Does God want you to be happy? Sure, He does! But in your pursuit of happiness, make sure that what you are seeking is not, in reality, a lie. All the things this world offers may bring temporary 'happiness' [if any at all], but the results will be eternal misery.

Seek true happiness in God.



## How Our Pets Teach Our Children

By Mark McCrary

Years ago while teaching a parenting class, I interviewed a couple in our church who advocated letting children have pets. Pets, they said, teach children about life. They are born, get sick, must be cared for, and die. Having grown up on a farm-- though I had never consciously made that connection-- I knew they were exactly right.

Therefore (it seems to me), God allows us to suffer at the moment. He allows us to be reminded of the pains we face here, so that with each sorrow we can let go of this world of sorrows around us. He does not do so indifferently; He hurts as well (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Alena learned that lesson today when we discovered we would have to put one of her bunnies to sleep. Cupcake (the bunny) had either a tumor or an abscessed tooth under her chin. Surgery would be required with the likelihood of continued problems down the road either way, with both options costing a lot of money. (Please don't think I'm an ogre; I'll spend money on our pets within reason; but when you have a family to take care of, there are limits.) When I told her Cupcake would have to be put to sleep she cried, trying to come to terms with the loss of something she loved and the pain in her heart.

My heart broke as well. Not so much for the bunny; I learned years ago that pets come and go. You love and let go of them. No, my heart hurt for Alena, my child that I love. I hurt because she hurt. I hugged her and squeezed her as she trembled and sobbed. And the kicker is I could have stopped it from happening. I could have paid the huge amount of money needed to keep the bunny alive. But no amount of money would change the fact the bunny would eventually

die. Death must be faced in life. So, I chose for Alena to learn that physical things come and go—even things that we love. That's a life lesson every child needs to learn. I chose for her to learn that sometimes life stinks-- that's why we long for heaven. And, I chose for her to face it with her family at her side loving her.

As I sat down at my desk later and reflected, I began

to wonder if this is what God feels like when we hurt. Just as I had to choose, God chooses, too. He could remove all our immediate sufferings and problems. Every one of them. However, to do so would not teach us that hanging on to a physical world and things that will eventually hinder our desire for spiritual things. Therefore (it seems to me), God allows us to suffer at the moment. He allows us to be reminded of the pains we face here, so that with each sorrow we can let go of this world of sorrows around us. He does not do so indifferently; He hurts as well (**1 Peter 5:7**). As we sing, "His heart is touched with our grief." But in doing so, He reminds us through His word that He loves us, wraps His arms around us and squeezes all the harder.

