

Complaints About The Church

By Greg Gwin

We frequently hear complaints about the church. That's nothing new. In fact, there were some folks complaining about the church in its very earliest days (see Acts 6:1-6). And, we know that some criticism is fully justified and is offered in a constructive way that will, hopefully, bring about needed changes.

However, we feel that there is a troubling trend evidenced by the kind of criticism that is most often leveled against local congregations. Seldom, if ever, do we hear folks say things like: "I'm disturbed that this church is not more active in the realm of evangelism." Or, "It really upsets me that we are not supporting more preachers." And we never hear, "I just think we ought to have more gospel meetings."

What we do hear are things like: "I just don't think this is a friendly church." And, "There are just not enough social activities, especially for the young folks." Or, "People here really don't seem to care about each other."

Two observations need to be made. First, the church is not a social institution. While it is important for people to have social interaction, God placed all such responsibilities in the realm of the home, not the church (1 Corinthians 11:34). If your main concern is about social things, you need to come to a better understanding of the work and function of the Lord's church.

Second, those who level these charges should spend some time looking in the mirror. If there are problems - if there are areas that need improvement - what are YOU doing to bring about those changes?

Complaints about the church are not new. Often-times they are needed and helpful. But, if you complain, be sure you're willing to lend a hand to make the needed improvements. Let's work together to make this church everything that God would have it to be.



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)

Volume 8, Issue 2

October 2, 2016

How To Form a Good Character

By Dee Bowman



Thoughts to Ponder

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; (Psalm 15:1-2)

Character is the accumulation of qualities that distinguishes one person from another. Character is not just one single trait, but the accumulation of all a person is, the sum total of all his traits.

Someone has suggested that reputation is what others think us to be, character is what God knows us to be.

How does a person develop and maintain a good character?

By getting in touch with yourself. Aristotle was not far off the mark when he suggested that one should "know thyself." Personal integrity is the key to developing a good character. We have to ascertain and admit to what we need in order to form a good character. In order to know where you're

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going, you must first realize where you are. "He that speaketh truth in his heart"—that's necessary to the development of a good character (see Psalm 15:1-2).

By a constant contact with God. It is He who defines what is a good character, for it is He who has defined what is good in the first place. His word is not only an expression of Who and What He is, but a revelation of how we

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Classes This Week

Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth Seekers in room 2326 of the student center	Thursday 7:00 PM ladies class at Rachel Bobo's at 7:00 p.m. "Seasoning Your Words"	Thursday 7:00 PM Hispanic Bible class meets in adult 2 classroom at 7:00 p.m.
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Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseith's Mother)

October Birthdays

- 1-Aiden Hahn
- 3-Jennifer Hasty
- 3-James Malloy
- 4-Jordan Corneil
- 6-Jessica Anderson
- 6-Josh Hartsell
- 7-Molly Borden
- 8-Heath Fowler
- 12-Stacy Norman
- 17-Abbie Harrison
- 18-Eric Shotts
- 20-Evan Pender
- 20-Keith Bailey
- 21-Zac Slay
- 22-Christopher White
- 24-Sara Beth Roberts
- 24-Suzanna Roberts
- 26-Palmer Daniels
- 26-Esther Biddle
- 29-Belle Johnson
- 29-Matt Hall
- 29-Julie Britnell
- 29-Madi Luther
- 29-Stewart West
- 29-Abby Ambrose
- 30-Caleb Gandy
- 31-Kitty Tam

News and Notes

- ☒ - Our New Quarter Starts Today!
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Amanda Stephens and Cristin Chavez.
- ☒ - We have five new members who have identified with the church: Hannah Slay, Mark McKee, Sean Ellis, Sandlyn Fultz and Anna Price!
- ☒ - Please remember friends of the Sullivanne's, John and Tab Wilson, whose newly adopted daughter is in NICU.
- ☒ - Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson.
- ☒ - Craig and Paula's baby was born Friday a.m. and everyone is doing well!
- ☒ - Sympathy is extended to the family of Dave Hosey whose uncle, Leonard Coggins, died on Saturday.
- ☒ - Please continue to park in the grass when possible at all services.

Elders

Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133



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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can become like Him, or be a “partaker of the divine nature” (**2 Peter 1:4**). His word tells us which way to go. A man of character does not walk just anywhere, but “his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate both day and night” (**Psalms 1:2**). “Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word” (**Psalms 119:9**). A man’s character is developed by paying due attention to where he is going, to his path of pursuit, and that means a constant contact with the Father.

By accumulating—a little at a time—the right pieces of holiness. Holiness is not some huge characteristic (notice the word, please) that a person somehow suddenly develops, but rather the piecing together of small bits and pieces of goodness and piety. Small habits—those little acts of kindness and goodness—are what define a person’s character. Holiness helps to define a man’s character by setting him apart from the trivial dross of life; it is observed in his habitual acts of goodness. Holiness illustrates in one’s life the character of God. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (**1 Peter 1:15**).

By regular exposure to right influences. One of the ways we develop good character is by observing and associating with people whom we know to be of good character. Time

spent with a good person will increase your chances of having being good yourself. “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...” (**Hebrews 10:24**). We need each other. What one man lacks, another man has. What another has, one man lacks. “Be thou an example of the believers” is good advice, and to find and follow those who set good examples helps to formulate right courses and plan right avenues of pursuit. Character is helped considerably by associating with those who have it.

By looking forward to the reward. Character and hope run on the same track. One who has an abiding trust in God and His word will build the kind of character that assures for him an eventual heavenly home. “Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that worketh righteousness,” we are told (**Psalms 15:2**). Those who have placed a high value and importance on a well-orchestrated life are fit for an entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?” (**2 Peter 1:11**). Our hope helps us see the need for a holy character by connecting us to that which has the highest quality and value—eternal life.

Please be advised—the absence of these things in our lives will result in our having a distorted view of what is important in life, and cause us to place emphasis and enthusiasm on the wrong things.



The Bitterness of Shimei

By Steve Wallace

Most have had to deal with the problem of bitterness at some time in their lives. You may have encountered it in another person or perhaps you were tempted to become bitter towards someone else. Bitterness generally does not exist by itself for long. Rather it leads to other sins. It is corruptive in nature. The problems that it causes in churches and relations between brethren in general are many.

David faced a bitter person at least once in his life. When he was fleeing Jerusalem in the face of Absalom’s rebellion, a man named Shimei came out to curse him. The example of Shimei’s bitterness helps us see both how one might be tempted to become bitter and the fruits of such bitterness.

2 Samuel 16:5-13

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man....And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along of the hill’s side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

His Bitterness

1. Based on false premises. According to Shimei, David’s suffering came upon him because “the Lord hath returned upon him all the blood of the house of Saul” (**v.8**). The idea behind blood returning upon someone is that of one’s bearing guilt and suffering consequences of murdering someone (**cf. Matt. 27:25; Acts 5:28**). Whether Shimei was implying that David had something to do with the death of Saul or someone of Saul’s house, the Bible shows that his charges were false (**1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25; 2 Sam. 4:1-12; 9:1-13**). Shimei’s bitterness against David was groundless! But is

The results of years of private seething ferments and, finally, when a convenient excuse is found, boils over in a torrent of abusive language or perhaps even physical harm. Thus it can come to pass that not only the bitter person and his enemy are affected, but rather “many be defiled” (**Heb. 12:15**).

this not the case with bitter brethren today? They imagine insults or slights. In the event that bitterness is based on an actual occurrence, it often is the result of a deed that a brother either did out of concern for the bitter one’s soul or a wrong of which he has repented and for which he has asked forgiveness (**James 5:19-20; Matt. 18:21-35**). Even when it is based on something that actually happened, bitterness is always wrong. There is no good reason to be bitter (**Eph. 4:31-32**).

2. Nurtured for years! A study of the book of 2 Samuel shows that Saul had been dead for at least twenty years at this point in the history of Israel! What a terrible comment this is on the heart of one of God’s people! Instead of filling himself with worthy thoughts he has utterly polluted himself with sinful ones! (**Phil. 4:8**) Bitterness is to be “put away,” not nurtured (**Eph. 4:31**).

3. Rejoiced at another’s misfortune. David and all the people with him were weeping as they fled from Absalom’s forces (**2 Sam. 15:30**). The perverseness of bitterness is so clear at this point: The Bible shows the Christian’s responsibilities to brethren who suffer (**Rom. 12:13-15; 2 Tim. 1:16-18**). Bitter people like Shimei have neither room in their heart for nor the inclination towards doing good to the objects of their bitterness, which brings us to our last point.

4. Sets a terrible example. The picture of Shimei publicly cursing David and throwing stones at him shows the shameless conduct that can result in those who harbor bitterness. The results of years of private seething ferments and, finally, when a convenient excuse is found, boils over in a torrent of abusive language or perhaps even physical harm. Thus it can come to pass that not only the bitter person and his enemy are affected, but rather “many be defiled” (**Heb. 12:15**).

Conclusion

Shimei would later ask forgiveness of his sin against David (**2 Sam. 19:16-23**). If you have been guilty of harboring bitterness, pray to God that he will forgive you this sin (**Acts 8:22**). From this brief look at this sin I believe that we can all see that it is of the devil and needs to be treated as such.

