

## Takes More Than A Right Name To Make A Church Scriptural

The story is told of two boys who were playing with a cat. One said to the other, "If you called a cat's tail a leg, how many legs would he have?" His playmate replied without hesitation, FIVE! But the other said, "No he wouldn't." To which his companion answered, "I know he would. He has four legs, and if you call his tail a leg, that would make five." The other youngster, with a gleam in his eye, replied, "No it wouldn't, because calling his tail a leg wouldn't make it one!"

So it is in religion. Some folks think all we have to do to make a church scriptural is put up a sign with "church of Christ" on it. In the vein of the little boy we say, "Calling a group a church of Christ does not make it one." We are not minimizing the necessity of calling the church by scriptural titles.

We believe it is necessary to speaking as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), and we are always happy to see people forsake error and embrace the truth. It is necessary however, to point out the need for abandoning all error. We must believe and practice the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There is no salvation and should be no consolation in being half right.

by James P. Needham

It is encouraging to see some of the Christian churches changing their name to "church of Christ" and they are to be commended for such forsaking of error, but it is of little consequence when they continue in many other errors such as: The use of instrumental music in their worship, talent shows, social gospelism, political action, the operation of secular schools, begging from the pulpit, etc. etc. all of which are just as wrong as an unscriptural name. To be scriptural a church must not only be right in name, but also in doctrine and practice. It is always good to see people come nearer the truth, but it would be much better to see them come all the way. For this we shall pray and work.

As we have said many times, "If we are wrong show us. We will change." Our pulpit is open to any reputable person who will come and try to show us where we are wrong provided he will allow us the same privilege. We don't know how to be fairer than that. Will anyone else in this area make that proposition? - **January 29, 1973**



### Classes This Week

<b>Sunday 5:15 PM</b> Kids Class in Auditorium	<b>Tuesday 8:00 PM</b> Truth Seekers in room 2310 of the student center	<b>Thursday 7:00 PM</b> Ladies' class at Joannetta Lauderdale's house on "Seasoning Your Words"
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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)	Ruth Addison (mom of April and Julie)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Jay Jennings (Brooke Perkins' dad)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)	Tina Atnip (Orie's cousin)	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)	Charles Hunt, chuck Hunt's dad
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	Charles Cecil (Orie's g'dad)	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	John Duke (Jared Johnson's cousin)

### April Birthdays

- 1-Rachel Hobgood
- 2-Caroline Scott
- 3-Cameron Abernathy
- 4-Julie Henriquez
- 5-Tate Pender
- 5-Oseas Chavez
- 8-Laura Humphrey
- 8-Hannah Morris
- 8-Hayley Wright
- 9-Brooke Perkins
- 12-Becky Daniels
- 12-Austin Adams
- 14-Jesse Roberts
- 14-Anna Price
- 16-Carla Luther
- 16-Carson Fowler
- 17-Cal Sandlin
- 18-Spencer Sullivanne
- 18-Taylor Godwin
- 18-Joel Black
- 20-April Jerkins
- 20-RJ Martin
- 22-Paul Grubbs
- 23-Anna Miller
- 23-Catherine Butler
- 24-Bob Simpson
- 25-Elijah Jackson
- 28-Johnathan Hand
- 29-Ariah Strickland

### News and Notes

- ☒ - Jeff McCrary will be speaking tonight from the River City church in Columbus, GA
- ☒ - Please remember Bob and Ryan in your prayer as they are preaching in Guatemala.
- ☒ - Larry is away this week in a meeting in Athens, GA.
- ☒ - We encourage our members to always be looking out for visitors and reach out to them.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Brooke Perkins and Ingrid Chavez.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Gustavo as we are seeking to have approval of a work visa so he can continue to preach here!
- ☒ - All audio is immediately posted on [www.auchurch.com](http://www.auchurch.com).

# The Auburn Beacon



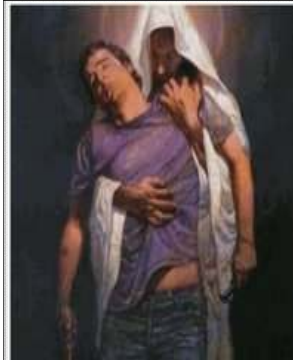
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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## Christians and Mental Illness

By M. W. Bassford



**Thoughts to Ponder**  
Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:29)

Yesterday, I put up a post about whether suicide was a sin. This produced a number of wide-ranging and interesting discussions online, but one conversation in particular stood out. A brother in Christ wrote about his struggles with depression and suicide and complained about what he saw as the insensitivity of his congregation to his problems.

This is an area where the experience of different Christians at different churches can vary dramatically. There are congregations (and I would include my congregation among them) that have a very compassionate attitude toward mental illness in general and depression in particular. We talk about these problems from the pulpit and from the lectern, members feel free to be open about their particular issues, and we encourage such members to seek professional help.

On the other extreme (so I've heard, though I've never seen this in real life) are churches that deny that faithful Christians should struggle with depression at all. If you're depressed, the reasoning goes, it points to a failure to put **Philippians 4:4** into practice. Counselors are regarded with extreme suspicion, and members who do have prob-

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lems with mental illness pop their pills in shadowy disrepute.

This is a complicated issue, but I thought others might be interested in how I see it. I don't have any professional training in dealing with depression and mental illness, but I have considerable experience. Though I was never formally diagnosed, in retrospect it's clear to me that I've gone through periods of clinical depression. After our daughter died, my wife was suicidally depressed. The experience led her to go back to school and get a master's degree in social work, thus becoming a mental-health professional herself.

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

### 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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In addition, I've been a hymn writer for 20 years. The stereotypes about artistic excellence and mental instability have at least some truth to them, so many of my closest friends and collaborators grapple with chronic depression. Also, in my work as a preacher, I've studied and worked with any number of people who battle depression and other mental problems. It's not an exaggeration to say that mental illness has been one of the themes of my adult life.

The first thing that this has taught me is that mental illness is complicated. It's not about moral failure on the part of depressives, but neither is it (usually) the mental equivalent of a meteor strike from outer space. It doesn't automatically destroy you so that there's nothing you can do. It's a result of a combination of brain chemistry, situation, and what you choose to do about it. The balance among those three factors is going to be unique to any person at any particular time.

It's important, then, when dealing with a Christian who has depression or other mental issue, not to blindly follow any set of cookie-cutter guidelines. First of all, we shouldn't simply dismiss the very real problems that depression causes. Probably the best example of depression in Scripture is Elijah in **1 Kings 19**. When Elijah begs God to kill him, God doesn't brusquely order him to stop feeling sorry for himself and get back to work. Instead, He responds with nourishment and encouragement.

This is a useful pattern for us to follow. Mental illness becomes a problem when it leaves those who suffer from it with a diminished ability to function, and we should not discourage Christians in that position from seeking the help they need to return to a more abundant life. Doctors can prescribe various medications that may help (though experience has taught me that psychotropic drugs are almost never a silver bullet), and visits to a counselor may also prove useful. Certainly, some counselors are raging atheists and should probably be avoided, but there are plenty who operate from a faith-based perspective and can do great good.

This help can also come from ordinary Christians. Those who are not licensed mental-health

practitioners should not attempt to fill that role (and this includes preachers), but nobody needs a license to be loving. When we are free with our help and support for vulnerable brothers and sisters, we're giving them what they need not merely to stalemate their problems, but to overcome them.

At the same time, though, we should not allow mental illness to become a blank check for bad behavior. Obviously, some people have issues they will never be able to handle, but most don't. Our brothers and sisters need us not only to be there for them, but to gently encourage them.

This doesn't mean that when we learn that Sister A has depression, we should march over to her side of the auditorium after services and set her straight. It does mean, though, that we should build a relationship with her, so that when she knows in her bones that she can trust us, we can help.

This is a tricky topic to approach because both extremes are wrong. Mental illness is a real problem, but it does not (usually) absolve people of responsibility for their actions. Medication can be useful, but it can also become a crutch. It may seem compassionate to deny the second part of each of those statements, but that's not the kind of help that mentally ill Christians or their families need.

I'm thinking here particularly of bipolar disorder. Major depression is bad enough, but from what I've seen, bipolar is the real-life equivalent of a family curse. Bipolar sufferers who can't or won't rein themselves in will devastate their spouses and children. Even the ones who are trying to control themselves will do some damage, but it's imperative that they make the attempt, and they need spiritual family members who will remind them of that.

There is no one short of God who understands all the ins and outs of mental illness. It eludes the comprehension of even the most brilliant psychiatrists and researchers. Far be it from me, then, to claim that I've got it all figured out! However, whether we grasp it or not, we still have to deal with it. Every congregation of any size most likely has at least one depressed member. This is a common challenge, but like all of the challenges in our walk with God, we will be best served when we meet it with humility, compassion, patience, and love.



## Self-Control

By Bill Hall

What is the value of self-control? Self-control is that which enables us to hold our tongues when we are tempted to viciously put someone in his place once and for all; or when we know a juicy bit of gossip that would be entertaining to the group and would turn us into the "life of the party"; or when an occasion almost demands that we betray a confidence that must not be betrayed under any circumstances.

Self-control is that which enables us to control our passions when another is provoking us to anger; that keeps the clinched fists in the pockets when the agitator is only half our size; that keeps the lips sealed when another is railing and swearing at us. Self-control is that which enables us to be like our Lord "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 2:23**).

Self-control is that which enables us to maintain purity of heart and to thrust out evil thoughts before they can take root; that enables us to place the best possible construction on another person's actions when unproven rumors could easily destroy our confidence in him; that helps us to maintain a cheerful disposition when everything around us has turned sour. Self-control is that which enables us to love the unlovable and to hate that which the world loves.

Self-control is that which enables us to rule our appetites; to say "no" when our lusts

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would lead us to sin or when that which is harmful to our health is placed before us. Self-control is that which enables the smoker to put down his cigarettes and the alcoholic to put down his drink and never return to it. Self-control is that which enables us to rule rather than to be enslaved.

The Bible does not glorify the indifferent and impassive. It is not our goal to be uncaring. To be like Paul, we must be able to have our spirit stirred within us when we are surrounded by evil (**Acts 17:16**). To be like our Lord, we must sometimes feel anger when surrounded by hypocritical self-righteousness (**Mark 3:5**); we must even react with occasional outbursts of goodness on occasions, as when the Lord cleansed the temple (**John 2:13-17**). But, all such outbursts must be tempered with self-control, that in our anger we "do not sin" (**Ephesians 4:26**).

God does not view our uncontrolled actions with amusement. Our temper tantrums and harsh, unbridled words are soul threatening, a potential bar to the abundant entrance into the Lord's everlasting kingdom (**2 Peter 1:5-11**). We must not minimize the danger. We must not surrender to this evil.

What is the value of self-control? It is one of the qualities that enable us to go to heaven. The possessor of it is rich indeed.

