

# It Is Not About Me

When Paul heard comments about his preaching style being weak and bodily presence contemptible (2 Cor.10:10), he had to remind them that it was not about his style, his bodily presence or looks, or his oratory skill. He was among them in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling (1 Cor.2:1-5). He made it a point for it not to be about him, but about Christ. His goal and mission was to try to get the brethren to center their faith in Christ.

When it is all about Christ and His will, we come to have the same mind and same judgment (1 Cor.1:10), pleasant unity from the inside out. When it is about how you entertain "me", how you hold "my" interest, what have you done for "me" lately, etc., it becomes about us and our personal desires, which divides out to multiple missions and self-interest. "This wisdom does

by Terry W. Benton

not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there" (James 3:14,15).

Preachers and teachers must remember that it is not about them, it is about WHO you are trying to get people to believe in. Listeners and learners need to learn that it is only good teaching if it is Christ-centered and fully biblical. It must always be about learning Christ, not feeling good about yourself or being entertained. We can only feel good about ourselves when our hearts are lined up with Christ and His will, not by some psychological pep talk. It is not about me; it is about Christ and Him crucified! That is everything we need!



Jason Liu - Doctoral degree Cameron Abernathy Alaina Barham Michael Bassie	<b>Graduates</b> Taylor Bethea Morgan Cavender Jordan Corneil Haley Gay	Sara Lail Hayden Phillips Julian Reid Rachel Tolliver
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Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joanetta'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 (gmom of April and Julie)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Anna Price	Betty Bradford	Reba Patterson (Heath Fowler's mom)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)	Tina Atnip (Orie's cousin)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joanetta's aunt)	Jane Hunt (Chuck's mother)	Charles Hunt, (Chuck Hunt's dad)
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	John Duke (Jared Johnson's cousin)

### August Birthdays

- 1-Trinity Jerkins
- 2-Emma Miller
- 6-Allyson Houlton
- 6-Sandra Chason
- 8-Alli Luther
- 9-Elliot Weldon
- 9-Troy Swenson
- 10-David Hartsell
- 11-Walker Davis
- 12-Jon Coleman
- 13-Ariel Ramsey
- 15-Kalee Reid
- 15-Everleigh Crawford
- 16-Sharon Edwards
- 18-Heidi Abell
- 18-Chris Britnell
- 21-Matt Cavender
- 22-Case O'Dell
- 23-Jordan Holliday
- 23-Colton Miller
- 24-Sophie Hall
- 26-Payton Davis
- 27-Chip Freeman
- 28-Larry Rouse
- 28-Cole Johnson
- 28-Alex Dobbins

### News and Notes

- ☒ - Our meeting with Wilson Adams is Sunday-Thursday, Aug 27-31. Cards are available to invite others!
- ☒ - Sandra Chason's mom, Mary Edwards, was hospitalized this week after a fall, but was released to Sandra's for therapy and will return to her home in a few days.
- ☒ - Please pray for Phil Bufford, the grandfather of Alex and Austin Hutto (who are new to Auburn). Phil has had a recurrence of prostate cancer and will receive test results this week.
- ☒ - David Hartsell had a major seizure on Wed morning, but is doing much better.
- ☒ - Please pray for Matt Cavender as he is due to be deployed in October.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Paula Davis, Xiang Li, Mallory Randolph and Suzanne Stagner .
- ☒ - Emma Ulrich's mom, Gay, is home from the hospital and awaiting a bone marrow transplant in a few weeks.
- ☒ - Shawn Lauderdale was able to come home this week! He is receiving outpatient rehab. His address is 10835 Black Wolf Way in San Antonio, TX 78245.
- ☒ - Please get your picture made or update your picture after the Sunday morning service in the foyer!
- ☒ - Please carpool and park in the grass when possible this fall. Lets make room for all who attend our services!

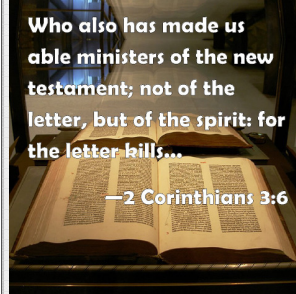
# The Auburn Beacon



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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### Thoughts to Ponder

Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

(2 Corinthians 3:6)

### 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

### E-Mail:

[larryrouse@aubeacon.com](mailto:larryrouse@aubeacon.com)

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## The Letter and the Spirit

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Earl Irvin West, in Volume 2 of his The Search For The Ancient Order (p. 250), introduces a chapter called "Prophets of Liberalism," with an astute observation about what he calls "seeds of liberalism":

Whether in the halcyon days of the restoration there could be found the seeds of the later liberalism that swept the brotherhood, may be doubted. Certainly, however, it can never be questioned that these seeds are discovered buried deep in human nature. There are always those who believe they sense something in the "spirit" of a thing contrary to what may be found in its "letter," or, who, reacting against what they consider a radical extreme of isolationism devote their energies to popularizing a movement. The restoration period came to know these individuals following the war between the states. The church appeared to them to be too narrow and restricted, and their ambition therefore was to lift the brotherhood to a "dignified church" in a world of denominationalism, commanding at least some respect from these religious bodies.

I believe West correctly assesses the beginnings of liberalism. It is thinking that interpreting and/or applying law to the "letter" is unnecessarily restrictive, exclusive, or even harsh. So, the liberal thinker turns to something called the "spirit of the law" to relax the restrictions and harshness imposed by the "letter." He may freely admit that

the actual wording of the sacred text, strictly applied, would demand a certain thing. However, he appeals to a higher (?) court called "the spirit of the law" for a broader application than the actual wording would permit. Having dismissed the objective "letter," in favor of the more subjective "spirit," he can now freely adjust to the situation at hand. In reality, his so called "spirit of the law" is nothing more than his subjective view of what the law should be.

If God's word does not mean exactly what it says; and if we do not need to follow it exactly, then we are free to believe and do as we jolly well please, which is what a true liberal does, convincing himself that he is justified because he is within the flexible boundaries of the "spirit of the law" - which boundaries he and his liberal cohorts define and redefine as the situation warrants.

It is not unusual for these, "Prophets of Liberalism" to appeal to the Lord and his word to defend their stance. They see our Lord as one more interested in the "spirit" while the Pharisees insisted on the "letter." They are not at all bashful about comparing modern day "conservatives," who insist on doing exactly what the text says on every subject, to the Pharisees.

To me, it is the height of absurdity to suggest, as I recently heard one preacher do, that the Pharisees were the

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"conservative church" of that day who really wanted to do just what the law said. They were no such thing. They demanded that others do exactly what their traditions said, while they themselves would not take their own medicine (cf. **Matt. 23:4**). Where is the passage where Jesus ever criticized a Pharisee for being hung up on "the letter of the law"? He criticized their hypocrisy, their inconsistency (**Matt. 23**) and their making void the commandment of God by their tradition (**Matt. 15:1-7**), but never their strict application of the law itself.

Jesus' rejection of the Pharisees' sabbath traditions is freely used to illustrate Jesus' rejection of the "letter" in favor of the "spirit." The truth is that the "letter" of the Old Testament did not forbid the kind of things that Jesus and his apostles did on the sabbath. It was the "traditions of the elders" (which were often inconsistently and hypocritically applied) that forbade such things.

Jesus expresses his attitude toward keeping the law to his disciples in the Sermon On The Mount. He not only insisted on personally fulfilling the law down to the smallest letter (jot) and the smallest marking (tittle) (**Matt. 5:18**), he warned his disciples that by breaking the "least of these commandments" and teaching men so, they would forfeit their entrance into the kingdom of God (**Matt. 5:19**).

The Bible really says nothing about obeying either the "spirit of law" or "letter of law." It simply speaks of obedience. Some think they have found a distinction between the "letter of the law" and the "spirit of the law" in **2 Corinthians 3**. However, a close look at the chapter should make it clear that two laws are being contrasted rather than two methods of interpreting and/or applying law. Notice **verses 6, 7 and 8**:

Who also made us sufficient ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

The contrast is between the two Testaments - the Old (**v. 14**) which was written on stones (the letter) and the New written by the Spirit on the hearts of the apostles. The Old Testament (letter) was ushered in by the letters written and engraved on tablets of stone. The New Testament (spirit) was ushered in

by the outpouring of the Spirit, engraving the New Testament on the apostles' hearts.

The "ministry of the new covenant" (**v. 6**) or "ministry of the Spirit" (**v. 8**) or "ministry of righteousness" (**v. 9**) is contrasted to "the ministry of death" (**v. 7**) or "ministry of condemnation" (**v. 9**) or "Old Testament" (**v. 14**). "The letter" that kills is the same as the "ministry of death" (**vv. 6-17**), while "the spirit" that gives life is the same as "ministry of the new covenant (testament)."

The rest of **2 Corinthians 3** is given to a contrast between the two covenants or testaments. The contrast is not between two methods or manners of interpreting and/or applying either testament, but a contrast between the two testaments themselves.

The Jew under the old system had to obey its requirements - those that applied both to his outward and inward conduct. The Pharisee often meticulously, to "the letter," if you please, applied those commands that affected outward conduct without doing the same with those commands that governed his inward conduct. Jesus said that he did what he should have done with the former without leaving the latter undone. We, under the new system, must "observe all things" commanded (**Matt. 28:18**), down to the last letter (cf. **Matt. 5:19**), that apply to both our inward and outward behavior.

That there are times when we will "miss the mark" (a meaning of the word translated "sin") and have to ask forgiveness, is admitted by all. We may even at times have to be patient and gentle with others who miss the mark. But that is a far cry from blurring the mark by invoking something called "the spirit of the law" that assumes that we have the liberty to loosely apply what the Book actually says.

Again, I maintain that the idea of "the spirit of the law" is not only not found in the New Testament, it is nothing more than a device to set aside what the Bible really says in favor of each man subjectively deciding what the law should say.

The liberal mind may even convince himself he has as much respect for God's law as anyone, but it is just that he emphasizes the "spirit" rather than the "letter." But, the New Testament is given in words taught by the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor. 2:12, 13**). We are to live by "every word of God" (**Luke 4:4**). If we are not to live by the very wording of the Bible, the "letter of the law," if you please, then why not just toss the whole thing aside? Then we could decide, from scratch, for ourselves what God's will should be, without having to search through the "letter of the law" and then dismissing what we find in favor of the "spirit of the law" as we see it.

Guardian of Truth - February 2, 1989



## What is the Meaning of Fellowship?

By Roy E. Cogdill

Since so much is being said and written on the subject of "fellowship," it seems good to examine the use of this word in the scriptures so we may see what its true significance is and what scriptural fellowship embraces, as well as how it is manifested.

"Koinon" in the New Testament can properly be defined as "sharing something with someone." It denotes a partnership in work or legally, such as Peter shared with James and John in the fishing business (**Lk. 5:10**).

It is used to express a common relationship or nature. Jesus, in order to destroy the power of Satan over mankind, shared with man "flesh and blood" that He might deliver man through His death and destroy the power of Satan over him (**Heb. 2:14**).

We become "partakers" (sharers) of the divine nature through the precious promises of God and the provisions of His grace (**2 Pt. 1:4**).

The Gentiles became "partakers" of the "root and fatness" (the full nature) of the olive tree when they were "grafted" in as branches and shared such fullness with the Jews (**Rom. 11:17**).

We are enabled to enjoy "fellowship" with the Apostles and with God and Christ through the Gospel revealed (**1 John 1:3**).

Through this Gospel we have been called by God into the fellowship of His Son (**1 Cor. 1:9**). This participation with Christ is as a member of His body, which is the church, into which we are baptized under the direction of the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor. 12:13**). As members of His body we participate with Him and the benefits of His blood, subject to His authority and in the doing of His will (**1 Cor. 12:11-14**). He is the head of that body, over all things to it, and gives to its member's life and strength (**Eph. 4:15-16**). In that relationship Christians enjoy the bounty of His grace (**Eph. 1:23**).

This participation in Christ and fellowship with Him is made a reality when through faith our lives are identified with His and we become fellow-laborers with Him. Personal participation with Christ is made possible in Christian worship at the Lord's Table in His Kingdom in

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the observance of the Lord's Supper. Paul makes a very explicit and impressive argument on this in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians.

The argument runs like this: 1) In Jewish worship the altar where God's name was recorded represented and meant the presence of God to the Jews. Those who ate of the Jewish sacrifices became "partakers" of the altar, which meant to them "participation with God" because the altar was His, His name was re-recorded upon it, and it repre-

sented His presence (**1 Cor. 10:18**).

2) Paul points out that in like manner in the assembly of the saints, when the bread and wine are taken in commemoration of His death there is "communion" (fellowship) with the Christ, with His body and His blood, and therefore participation or sharing with Christ, personally (**1 Cor. 10:16**).

3) In such observance of the Lord's Supper there is common union with Christ upon the part of Christians and therefore (fellowship) common union upon the part of Christians with each other in this worship. Partaking of the one loaf, in commemoration of the one body Christ gave as a sacrifice, affords and expresses union and fellowship with Christ and unites those who thus participate with Christ in fellowship one with another in the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 10:17**).

4) He follows with the conclusion that since this is true (union with Christ and with one another in the Lord's Supper) so also participation in false worship unauthorized by Christ, but in harmony with the will of the Devil, meant union with Satan and those who serve him (**1 Cor. 10:20**).

5) The argument concludes with the fact that those who participate in this false worship serve Satan rather than God and as a result cannot be identified with or participate with Christ (**1 Cor. 10:21**).

This very plain teaching unmistakably condemns those who think they can fellowship religious error, participate in it and encourage it, or bid God's speed to those who take part in its practice and promotion and yet have "fellowship" with Christ.

