

# Of Politics and Preaching

by Greg Gwin

We hear it constantly in the news. Let one political candidate offer a single criticism of his opponent's position and the cry goes up, "Negative campaigning!" It has gotten to the point that no substantive discussion of political differences can be undertaken without someone making this objection.

In reality, such discussions are absolutely essential if we are to make a reasonable choice between those running for public office. Obviously, the candidate himself will not discuss his questionable past performance, or his unpopular views on critical issues. If his opponent is not allowed to bring those things up, how can we know? How can we make the right choice?

Please make application of this same principle to the work of preaching the gospel. There are some who are constantly fuming about what they call "negative preaching." Typically, this means that they oppose any teaching that specifies sin in people's lives; anything that says, "you're wrong, you need to do better."

But, think for a moment. If those who teach and preach never deal with such subjects, how will people be informed and motivated to make needed changes in their lives? Can't you see the vital need for "negative preaching?"

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was a 'scorcher!' That church was full of problems, and Paul hit every one of them. It wasn't pleasant, but it had to be done. As a result, the people repented. And Paul wrote: "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent... for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner..." **(2 Corinthians 7:8,9).**

We need the truth - even when it exposes and rebukes our sins. Let's demand it always!



Graduates					
Dylan Bartlett - Masters Douglas Bethea Conner Burleson	Anna Cagle Emmy Cantrell Alex Dobbins	Sarah Embry Anna English Will Harris - Pharmacy	Brandon Hester - Pharmacy Lauren Johnson	Katie Martin Kyle Ogden Alli Luther - SUCC	Alyssa Pritchard Cheyenne Redus - Masters

Lisa Carter (Daniel's mother)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Barbara Hasty (Ryan's mom)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's grandfather)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Kimzey Simpson	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Tory Colvin (sister of Case O'Dell)	Maria Williams	Barbara Chandler	Donna Jackson (Kristen's aunt)
Betty Bradford	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Earl Mitchell (Debbi Coleman's dad)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	EB & Ara Belle Rich (Joanetta's aunt)	Bobby Jennings (Brooke's uncle)	Doug Bailey (Keith's brother)
Helen Andrews (Susan's sister)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Mavis Hale (Chris Long's grandmother)

### May Birthdays

- 1-Daniel Eison
- 2-Effie Kirby
- 3-Paula Davis
- 3-William Smith
- 7-Isaiah Messer
- 7-Kyle Ogden
- 7-Cameron Ogden
- 10-Ian Norman
- 10-Ryan Hasty
- 10-Branson Williams
- 11-Scott Perkins
- 12-Frances Humphrey
- 13-Anna Grace Long
- 13-Jana Hall
- 15-Bryce Daniels
- 18-Curran LaChappelle
- 18-Heydi Perez
- 20-Kaleigh Williamson
- 24-Andy Roberts
- 25-Chuck Hahn
- 26-Fallon Hartsell
- 28-Barbara Weeks
- 28-Candy Long
- 29-Maria Williams
- 31-Rachel Tolliver

### News and Notes

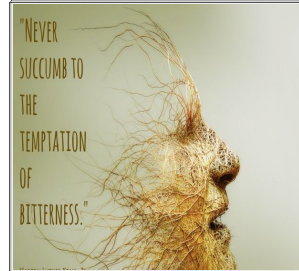
- ☒ - Group meetings are tonight!
- ☒ - The Ladies' class at the Rouse's on Monday at 7 PM, Topic: "Heaven"
- ☒ - VBS on "Parables of Jesus" will be June 10-13 in the evenings, 6-7:30.
- ☒ - Please pray for Lisa Carter who received a report that her cancer has shown some growth recently.
- ☒ - Ashley Miller's grandfather, Max Carter, continues stable but unresponsive since his surgery on April 3.
- ☒ - Please remember the family of Cheri Russell whose brother, Billy Hunt, recently passed away.
- ☒ - Abbie Harrison will have a new procedure on Monday, April 29th.
- ☒ - Pray for our expectant mothers: Kristen Diehl and Nakia Strickland.
- ☒ - Please see Patsy Ogle to contribute to the flower fund which has been depleted.

# The Auburn Beacon



## Godly Ambition and Zeal

By Jeffery Kingry



### Thoughts to Ponder

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. **(James 3:14)**

**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

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

Where does one draw the line between godly ambition and selfish ambition? Is it possible to tell the difference between a zeal that is sincere and one that is bitter? James seemed to think so. When he wrote concerning the wisdom that should characterize the teacher of truth he said, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying (pikros zelos) and strife (eritheia) in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" **(Jas. 3:13,14)**. Paraphrased another way James was saying, "Who seeks to be known as a wise and understanding teacher? The method is to demonstrate that wisdom by the loveliness of one's character. Let that character demonstrate that all is prompted by a gentle spirit. But, if your wisdom is characterized by a zeal that is bitter (pikros zelos) and by selfish ambition

(eritheia), do not be arrogant of your accomplishments, for you are false to what God's truth demands of a teacher."

I make no pretenses at being a Greek scholar, but the scholarly books that are available to all agree that there is a fine line of definition in zelos between "to envy, be jealous" and "to imitate emulously, strive after with zeal" (Thayer, p. 271). Zelos is a word that can and is used to describe a sincere zeal to copy and follow that which is good **(cf. 2 Cor. 7:7; Rom. 10:2)**.

The same thing is true of the word eritheia. It originally meant "To spin wool, work in wool" (Thayer. p. 249. The meaning eventually came to be applied to "one electioneering or intriguing for office--a courting distinction; a desire to put oneself forward" (Thayer, *ibid*). It is a word that means to work for hire, and that eventually came to be used to describe one who used every base method available to gain

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selfish ends.

The truth does not lie in semantics, though, as much as it does in human nature. James is warning us of that sharp, bright, and extremely quick "wisdom" that works so hard for the wrong ends, and points out to us how susceptible teachers of truth are to such. There is a fine line between a sincere desire to copy the good in other men, and a jealous, envious, copying of the deeds of other men to attain or surpass the status of the one envied. There is a fine line between praise and pay for a work well done, and working for the praise and pay.

James points out for the teacher's self-examination that the true wisdom, the true zeal, the true ambition is something that is pure from all selfish motive. The divine wisdom brings men together with each other in God. This wisdom is not jealous of its own rights and self-justification, but offers the same reasonableness to its critics as it would like to receive itself. God's wisdom is easily approached, far from arrogant or self-inflated. The wisdom from above is sensitive to the needs of others and gives of itself without any partiality or falseness (**Jas. 3:17**).

But that other kind of zeal, ambition, and knowledge which is selfish seeks worldly prestige, power, and return. It is always characterized by disorder. Instead of producing peace among men, it produces hard feelings, isolation, and a divided mind (**Jas. 3:15,16**). As long as this `kind of motivation and attitude prevails, good and happy lives founded in right living can never find fruit. It takes a truly wise man sowing the seeds of right-relationships between men and God to harvest the fruit of righteousness. One cannot reap unity in

Christ by sowing selfishness (3:18).

In preaching, teaching, writing, and in our relationships with one another, we would do well to remember James' admonition. We can teach the truth, and lose our reward because of our attitude or method (**Phil. 1:15-16**). It is possible to "say it the wrong way." To be sure, the responsibility to obey truth, no matter how it is taught, is a responsibility of the hearer. But the fact that we teach truth does not absolve us of using all the wisdom, longsuffering, gentleness, and care we are able to muster as teachers. God judges not only the act, but the thought and the intent of the heart as well. The goal in our teaching is to bring men to truth; not to win a cheap personal victory over another (**2 Tim. 2:24-26**). We teach truth and oppose error because we wish to see those enslaved by error to come out to the light. We are to use the verbal tool that best fits the job - but one tool does not fit every situation (**Jude 22,23**).

That kind of teaching that is more concerned with promoting self than truth is damnable and ought to be. That kind of teacher who puts on a zeal for truth in order to garner prestige as a "killer" in debate is headed straight from hell. That kind of bitter rebuke that is intent on destroying another, rather than restoring, is common with the snarling of beasts of prey. For us to deny that such exists among our brethren is to deny the motivation behind the words of James. The words of the Spirit are not empty admonition, but are directed towards the nature and inclinations of man. We can assure one another by saying that such sins do not affect any of us (**1 Jn. 1:8**), but we would only be deceiving ourselves. It was not for naught that the Lord warned us, "Be not many of you teachers, knowing we shall receive greater condemnation."

Truth Magazine - September 12,



## Will a Properly Trained Child Never Go Wrong?

By Wayne Jackson

Does **Proverbs 22:6** teach that a properly-trained child will never go wrong? Is the "rod" mentioned in **Proverbs 13:24** literal or figurative? Is it a form of abuse to spank a child?

**Proverbs 22:6** reads as follows in the American Standard Translation: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Several textual matters should be considered first. The term "train" conveys the idea of a dedication, whether of a person or thing, to the service of God. The verbal form is found in **Deuteronomy 20:5** and other passages (cf. **1 Kings 8:63**; **2 Chronicles 7:5**), having to do with the dedication of the temple. In the current context, it would have to do with the parents' mental resolution to train and guide their children toward eventual service on behalf of their Creator.

However, the Hebrew text more precisely says, as reflected in the footnote of the ASV, "Train up a child in the way of his going." Some scholars suggest this indicates that wise parents will not only train their children in divine truth, but also consistent with each child's temperament, personality, etc. (see Kaiser et al. 1996).

Combining both of the ideas suggested above, the passage seems to be saying that when godly parents determine that they will rear their children for the service of God (not as a mere appendage of life, but in passionate service), and when they are wise enough to do that training in harmony with the child's unique personality (and every parent with more than one child acknowledges sibling individuality), that it generally will prove to be the case that the child will remain faithful to his training.

Does this mean that a good youngster can never go wrong? It does not. Every person has been granted the individual power of choice. He makes his own decisions, and sometimes they are bad ones—in spite of what he has been taught and what he knows to be right. God once said regarding Israel—whom he regarded as his "children": "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (**Isaiah 1:2**). Surely no one would dare suggest that the Lord was remiss in his "parental" responsibility.

There is a general truth here, namely, that when a person lives a godly life, which will be characterized by high, ethical standards and a benevolent disposition toward others, he will attract the admiration of his fellows—even his enemies—and such will create a more peaceful environment for him.

Proverbs are designed to set forth general truths—not iron-clad rules that are without exceptions. Let me introduce another passage to illustrate this point.

When a man's ways please Jehovah, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (**Proverbs 16:7**).

There is a general truth here, namely, that when a person lives a godly life, which will be characterized by high, ethical standards and a benevolent disposition toward others, he will attract the admiration of his fellows—even his enemies—and such will create a more peaceful environment for him.

Of course, that will not always prove true. Some are so evil that they are not affected by the kindly conduct of others. Did Christ's "ways" please God? Of course. Were his enemies peaceable toward him? They were not. But this fact (exception) does not negate the general principle. So similarly with the "train up a child" maxim.

Second, as to **Proverbs 13:24**, there is no reason to view the term "rod" in any light other than that of a literal tool of corporal punishment. One scholar has noted:

[The] failure [of the parent] to use the preventive discipline of verbal rebuke and the corrective discipline of physical punishment will end in the child's death (Waltke 1980, 897).

No parent, of course, should physically abuse his child. To inflict physical damage is reprehensible. A properly measured spanking, however—especially in younger children who cannot yet reason effectively—certainly is not out of line. One would think that a wise parent could find a more judicious mode of administering discipline in an older youngster. Even in punishment, a child's dignity should be respected whenever possible.

Unfortunately, however, too many parents in our modern society have been propagandized by pseudo-psychologists, who view all "hands-on" discipline as abusive.

