



## “ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH”

*by Jim Stauffer*

When Paul and Barnabas were sent forth by the Holy Spirit from Antioch of Syria they travelled all the way to Antioch of Pisidia preaching the gospel. They then went on to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in the region of Lyaconia, converting souls and establishing churches in every city.

After preaching the gospel in Derbe and making disciples there, they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch confirming the souls. They exhorted them to have the necessary faith to endure much tribulation in order to enter the kingdom of God.

It is then reported by Luke in **Acts 14:23**, “And when they had appointed for them, elders in every church.....”.

As we observe church after church in today’s world going extended periods without elders, one must question what the difference is.

It really doesn’t matter how you believe these elderships were established and under what power and ability they functioned. Some suggest these men were accorded a spiritual gift by the laying on of the hands of the Apostle. (**cf. Eph. 4:8-12**) Others have posited they were Jewish men experienced in their relationship with God and were able to bring that experience of obedience to the church with their conversion. Some explain the complete conversion of families as the custom was in that day (see Cornelius and Philippian Jailer - Acts 10, 16) as enabling that portion of their qualification. There are probably many other ideas I have not even mentioned.

But the real questions are these. Did God command and demand leadership for local congregations then that He does not now? Did God command and demand leadership then that we cannot be expected to provide now?

The answer is clearly no. God has provided for men of every age clear revelation of His will for mankind. **Heb. 1:1,2** explains he has used ‘divers portions and divers manners’ in accomplishing this. It also says the current age is to be guided by the revelation of His will directed by His Son. This

is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. (**John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-13**)

Now it is time for us to step forward and answer for ourselves why we are not complying with the requirements for men to meet the qualifications for such leadership. (**1 Tim. 3; Titus 1**)

Why are so few qualified according to this Biblical teaching to “tend the flock of God which is among you.”? (**1 Pet 5:2**)

Anyone who has had much experience in the proceedings of appointing elders is aware the two most difficult requirements to satisfy in our age are being, “apt to teach” or as Titus says, “able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers”, and “having children that believe.”

My observation is that the secular world has made its appeal reach our brethren through the medium of materialism. Far too many families are built on the foundation of the parents having the best jobs possible, (highest income) and teaching their children that secular education will help them reach that same goal when they become adults.

This attitude places Bible study and meditation on God’s word second to the aforementioned secular goals. The pursuit of wealth and the education that leads in that pursuit occupy the main portion of time and effort in many of our families today. This leaves men of a mature age unable to teach as required which is exemplified in the failure to be able to convert their own children to Christ.

This, of course, needs to be fixed. We often say “don’t fix what is not broken”, to dissuade people from meddling with a good thing. This is not a good thing.

The very first step is for those of us who preach the gospel to “exhort in the sound doctrine.” We must call the attention of our brethren to this serious need. We cannot protect our own comfortable positions with good salaries

**continued on page 2**

*continued from page 1*

and promising future earnings by serving our own bellies with smooth and fair speech. (**Rom. 16:18**)

Let us not only call attention to it. Let us begin to teach young men everywhere how to plan their lives so they are qualified to lead brethren when they reach that level of maturity.

## **My Dog Is So Dumb...**

When the subject of man's best friend comes up, you either hear praise for the dog or stories of how dumb the dog is. The expression "you dumb dog" is part of our culture, and it is applied to a dog that does not behave as a proper dog should. A dog that barks at nothing is a dumb dog. A dog that does not bark when there are intruders is a dumb dog. A dog that acts like a cat (yeah, dogs learn by example too) is a dumb dog.

Why are we talking about dumb dogs? Well God used this phrase describing the watchmen He had set forth to protect Israel.

In Isaiah **56:10-11**, we read: "His watchmen are blind, all of them know nothing, all of them are **dumb dogs** unable to bark, dreamers, lying down, who love to slumber; And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way. Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one."

Notice the descriptions of these watchmen called dumb dogs.

### **Blind:**

The context suggest that these watchmen are blind by choice. They choose NOT to see the truth of God's word. They choose NOT to do God's will. Some people cannot help being blind. But to choose blindness is very dumb.

### **Ignorance:**

These choose to know nothing. We as Christians are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). Acquiring knowledge of God makes us more informed on how to please Him. These people choose to remain ignorant of God's saving message, but they still want to enjoy the benefits. Knowledge of God is the greatest acquisition man has ever acquired, and many choose to stay ignorant.

### **Unable to bark:**

We could turn this around to mean that when they should be barking, they are not. As Christians we are to be set for the defense of the gospel. We should be able to warn people that their souls are in danger. But these mentioned here are so dumb, that they have no idea that a warning needs to be sounded. Error may be right under their noses, but they do not know any better, or that what is being

done is condemned by God.

### **Dreamers:**

These people have grand ideas, and really think that God needs to get with the program. They think they can save the world, yet they do not even look or try to save themselves. These people will try any method and any means to acquire knowledge, but the one method they will not use is study the Bible. Now that is dumb.

### **Lying down:**

Awake from your sleep. Folks, it is crunch time and we better be getting our battle gear on. We are running out of time, so we need to prepare. We need the preparation so that we can enter battle with the forces of evil. These people are so secure in themselves, that they do not feel the need to do any preparation at all. Satan is prowling about, but they just lay there, usually sleeping. Now, how dumb is that?

### **Love to slumber:**

Consider the ant, thou sluggard... These people think that work will harm them in some way, yet science has proven that inactivity will kill faster than some diseases. We are not talking about a Saturday afternoon nap out in the hammock. We are talking about those who choose to not do anything for themselves or their souls. That is also dumb.

### **Greedy:**

Greed is associated with idolatry. Greed drives most of the world economy these days. Many are not satisfied to just do their job and enjoy life. They want more, and they want it now. They gamble with the hope of hitting the big one. They bet on just about anything imaginable. They jump onto get rich quick schemes, even knowing that it is probably a scam. Greed has to be at or near the top of any list of sins by rank or danger. A Christian learns to be content in all his/her situations. Greed destroys contentment. Greed is dumb.

### **Not Satisfied:**

Just like the grave, there is never enough. Most people who gamble and hit the big one, will usually turn around and spend it all trying to get a bigger one. It is the excitement that you can profit that turns people on. It is no different than not doing your job, but expecting to be paid for your time. Theft is wrong in any form. The scriptures mention the wicked who are never satisfied; in fact, it speaks of those who weary themselves doing what they should, but always find the strength to practice their wickedness. And who do we know who is never satisfied about anything? Our boss? Our spouse? Don't we consider that to be dumb?

### **No understanding:**

At least the type of understanding that should get

*continued on page 3*

*continued from page 2*

understanding are crucial elements in our learning about God, but these people choose the wrong understanding. The scripture tells us to trust in the Lord and lean not on thine own understanding.

### **Turned their own way:**

Of course, this speaks to everyone who chooses a way other than the Lord's way. Jesus said He was the way, but people make their own way. By doing so, they make their own rules, their own laws, and do nothing more than ease their own conscience. That has to be the dumbest things of all.

The sad thing is that we all know people who fit these descriptions, and there seems to be more of them around us all the time.

Take warning, and avoid the dumb dogs.

**By Carey Scott 6/10/2011**

## **Calm Enough to Consider**

*by Gary Henry*

"He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit" (**Pro. 17:27**).

It is dangerous to let our minds become so agitated that we can't consider our actions carefully. Our adversary, the devil, specializes in confusion. He loves to prey upon minds that are torn and upset by multiple worries, and he often has his greatest success in tempting us when we're so beset by cares that we act on impulse, failing to consider the consequences of our actions.

Solomon observed that "a man of understanding is of a calm spirit." But how can we have a "calm spirit" when many stressful things come at us at once, all of which have to be considered? There surely can be no question that this is one of life's most difficult challenges, and there are no easy answers. Like most difficult things, however, cultivating a calm mind is a matter of training.

Our brains may have a more complicated connection to our spirits than the other parts of the body, but the brain (i.e., the physiological mind) is still a part of the body, and as such, it has to be trained to serve, rather than hinder, the spirit. Naturally unruly and seemingly with a will of its own, the mind has to be put in its place, disciplined, and taught to help us get to heaven.

Training our minds to be calm is like every other kind of training in that it has to be done in small steps. It's a matter of incremental growth over time. What we do is put ourselves on a deliberate regimen of training, and we "exercise" each and every day. We find some little thing we can do today to help calm our minds, and that victory encourages us to do the same tomorrow.

At the very least, we need to consciously value a calm spirit. We need to pursue it, and when we find ourselves without it, we need to be wise enough to see the danger we're in and make godly efforts to recover our calmness as soon as possible. If we can't always be calm, we can certainly grow in that direction. Today, like

every day, there is some step you can take that will lead to a mind that's more peaceful -- and more careful.

What is that step?

"A calm mind is a great asset in this life. Without it your devotional life will not bear much fruit. If your heart is troubled, you are vulnerable to the enemy of the soul. When you are agitated, you are not able to make good decisions. You will

stumble into snares" (Lawrence Scupoli).

## **Illustrating Gal. 3:10**

**Robert F. Turner**

Preachers are asked out to many homes, and when there are small children in the home, we can picture what takes place before we arrive. Mother has prepared her favorite fancy foods plus some new recipe she wants to try on the preacher. She has borrowed a lace table-cloth, with the uneven knobs and swirls; and perhaps some dinner candles, to cast shadows. She gets out her best dishes, the tall stemmed water-glasses, the best silver. The top-heavy water glasses balance precariously on the knotty lace cloth; grape jelly is put in a cut-glass bowl, and one is expected to fish the jelly across that lace cloth with a tiny glass spoon. The gravy bowl is a booby-trap: sometimes it is attached to the plate below, sometimes it is not. Woe is me!!

The children are then washed and polished, and given a little lecture. The preacher is coming to dinner, and I expect you to sit at the table like little ladies and gentlemen. You are to mind your manners: say Yes Sir, Please, and Thank you. Keep your fingers out of the food; and if you get one drop of that grape jelly on the table cloth, if you make one bobble, so help the, I'll skin you alive and send you straight to bed.

The kids may as well take their licking and go on to bed. There is no way they can make it through the meal — she has put them under the curse!!

Would you believe that Paul wrote about this to the Galatians? Well, would you believe this illustrates something about which he wrote?

**Gal. 3:10** reads: *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* He does not blame the law (**Rom. 7:12-f**), nor can we blame a mother for wanting her children to be perfect. But do. .all has an ominous sound to those who recognize their bent for failure. In a system of law (nothing but law and the penalty for failure) there is no forgiveness — and mother said do the law with no hint of mercy.

But Christ became a curse for us when he died on the cross (**Gal. 3:13-**) so that through faith in Him, we who strive but fail may be forgiven. The demand to sit up straight is still there, and a spill is a sin; but our hope is in Him who understands and forgives those who come to Him.

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**2 Tim. 3:10** *But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience,*

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study  
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship  
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship  
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, J.R. DANIEL,  
LILLIE KEECH, ALMA  
BAUMGARTNER AND PAT  
CLOTHIER.

GOSPEL MEETING WITH  
RANDY HARSHBARGER WILL  
BE APRIL 20-23. IT DOESN'T  
HURT TO PLAN EARLY AND  
SET THOSE DATES ASIDE.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY  
AND WEDNESDAY IS  
CURRENTLY IN ZECHARIAH AS  
WE TAKE THE MINOR  
PROPHETS IN ORDER.



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10