

His Workmanship at Westside

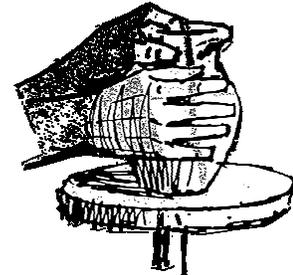
"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

—Ephesians 2:10

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Isaiah 64:8

What Is "Lawlessness"? by Jefferson David Tant

Two four-letter words that have become unpopular in the modern world are "obey" and "duty." From a French root word *obeir*, combining *ob* = "toward" and *oedire* or *audire* = "to hear," obey means "to follow the commands or guidance of; to comply with; to mind, to heed; to perform [another's] orders or directions." Duty is from Old English *deu* = due, and means "1. conduct due parents or superiors (respect); 2. obligatory tasks, service, conduct, or functions that arise from one's place or position; assigned service or obligation; moral or legal obligation." Both words arise from our relationship to the law or to someone in authority over us.

Jesus addressed a misconception that many had about authority and our duty to obey authority: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'" Mt 7:21-23. That misconception still exists today.

The popular appeal made by many preachers is "Just accept Jesus into your heart, and you will be saved." Although we must "accept Jesus," there is more to

salvation than that. Jesus pointed out that obedience/doing the will of the Father is also necessary. Many do not like the idea of "obedience." They just want to do what "seems good to me" or "feels good."

So, then, just what does it mean to "do the will of the Father"? Many of us have a will—our Last Will and Testament. Upon our death, whatever possessions we have will be given to our children. We can put any conditions in the will that we want. That is our prerogative. Thus, if our children want to inherit, they must meet the terms and conditions of the will. Our Heavenly Father has also prepared an inheritance for us, which is far greater than treasures of silver and gold. He has also written His Last Will and Testament. It is called the Bible. That's where we must go to learn the terms of His will.

Now, in Mt 7:21-23, Christ mentioned people who will be surprised when they are denied entrance into heaven. They may argue that they have done many good deeds, and they even called Jesus "Lord." So—what's the problem? The problem is that they failed to show respect to His authority, to give their Heavenly Father His due, to do their duty, which is obedience to His com-

mands. They were doing "good things"—or at least what they thought were good things—but for which they had no authority. They were committing "lawlessness." Other translations may use "iniquity" or render "those who practice iniquity" as "workers of evil." You see, when we go beyond what is authorized, we are lawless, or acting outside the law or without authority.

The original Greek word for lawlessness is "anomia." It is derived from *a* = "without," and *nomos* = "law." The Greeks did the same as we do in English with certain words. If we want to make a word negative, we may put "un-" in front of it. The opposite of "healthy" becomes "unhealthy"; the opposite of "lawful" becomes "unlawful." We understand what "It is unlawful to smoke here" means. It means that we have no authority to smoke there. The Greeks put an "a-" in front of "nomos," so "lawful" became "anomia," meaning "unlawful," or "lawless." It is clear that in Mt 7:21-23 Christ was picturing Himself telling people on judgment day that while they were doing things that seemed good to them, they actually were doing things for which they had no authority—they practiced unlawful or lawless things.

Consider an example. There was a denomination in the US where they used potato chips and Coke for the

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What Is “Lawlessness”? from p. 1 Lord’s Supper. They called upon the Lord and did what seemed good to them. But it was “lawlessness” and “without authority.”

We understand what “in the name of” means—it means “by the authority of.” When a policeman knocks on your door and says, “Open up in the name of the law,” he is claiming that he is acting with authority. So Paul wrote to the Colossian church, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father,” Col 3:17. He taught them that “in word” (their teaching) and “deed” (their actions) they were to be under the authority of the Lord Jesus; everything is to be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus”—by His authority, not by our own.

Many churches today do many things that seem “good” to them, but they are absolutely without any authority from God. When we go to the Word of God, where do we find authority for churches sponsoring ball teams, holding raffles, using women preachers, playing instrumental music in worship, giving honored titles to their ministers (“Reverend,” “Father,” etc.), wearing special robes to set “clergy” apart, having car washes to raise money, building gymnasiums, and the list goes on and on.

The point is that these things are “without authority,” and therefore Christ calls them “lawless,” as they are not in “the will of My Father.” If they were in the Father’s Will (the New Testament), then surely we could point to the passage of scripture that mentions them.

The church which was established by Christ 2,000 years ago was given instructions as to its doctrine and practice. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,” 2 Tim 3:16-17. The Holy Spirit said He gave us all that we needed, all that was authorized. We cannot add to or detract from the scriptures, or else we practice “lawlessness.”

Cliques and Groups, by Kyle Pope

A common criticism leveled against churches by guests, new members, or even those who have become dissatisfied with their identification with that particular church is that it practices “cliquishness.” A clique is “a small, exclusive group of friends or associates,” American Heritage Dictionary. The word clique is derived from the Old French verb cliquer meaning “to click, make a noise,” The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology, and refers to a “set, gang, or party.” This word is what grammarians call an onomatopoeia—i.e., a word that sounds like what it means. The clicking and noise of a group of people chattering and gossiping is imitated in the name of the group—it is a clique. This image is still seen in its modern French usage in the fact that a drum or bugle band can be called a clique.

The reason the charge of cliquishness is leveled at churches has less to



do with the sound the group makes than it does its treatment of others. Those outside of a clique can feel as if they are excluded or unwelcomed into a group that isolates itself. When there are a number of cliques, competition may develop among people who don’t get along with each other to secure the loyalty of others to their clique before another group “gets them.” This kind of social tug-of-war happens regularly among school children, but sadly far too many of God’s people have fallen victim to the same pettiness demonstrated on a school playground.

Scripture doesn’t use any equivalent of the word clique, but it does address the problem of cliquishness. In rebuking the Corinthians for their divisiveness (when one group among them would

say, “I am of Paul,” while another smugly said, “I am of Apollos,” and another boasted, “I am of Christ,” 1 Cor 1:12), Paul asked “Is Christ divided?” 1 Cor 1:13. The relationship of those in Christ is to be a unique bond. Age, race, social class, nationality, or any of the other things that normally divide people should disappear in the Lord’s church. In Christ, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” Gal 3:28. The Holy Spirit commands Christians not to show “partiality” (NKJV), “personal favoritism” (NASB), or “respect of persons” (KJV), Jas 2:1, even offering an example of how this evil could be committed toward someone who visits an assembly, Jas 2:2-3. To act with favoritism is to act as “judges with evil thoughts,” Jas 2:4, and to “commit sin,” Jas 2:9. Instead, “there should be no schism in the body,” and “the members should have the same care for one another,” 1 Cor 12:25. Paul said that we are to “note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them,” Rm 16:17. We should “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,” 1 Cor 1:10. Divisions lead to envy and strife; when we have cliques, we are “carnal and behaving like mere men,” 1 Cor 3:3. Jude goes further and says that those who cause divisions are “sensual,” “not having the Spirit,” Jude 19.

How can brethren avoid the perception of cliquishness?

1. Reach Out to Others. All of us are naturally drawn to those with whom it is easy for us to talk or to those who share our interests and personalities. In the church, however, our bond must transcend these mere material concerns. Are there those who don’t seem to fit in? Have we spoken to a guest or new member? What about older people? What about the young? Break generational barriers and go talk to them! Are there those who don’t have someone talking to them? Don’t take the easy course and talk to the same people—reach out and let someone know you are interested in them. Find things you

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Psalm 133:1

God's harvest we'll glean in 2016 "Please let me go to the field and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." —Ruth 2:2

Cliques and Divisions, from p. 2 have in common. And understand that there are some people who have difficulty talking—so take the initiative. **2. Don't Exclude Others.** I know of a church where some requested that the elders offer a particular class. The elders presented the class, but taught it a little differently from what had been requested. Dissatisfied with this, some chose to host their own exclusive study (by invitation only) and did not invite any of the elders or their families. This not only showed a lack of respect for the elders, but it contributed to the perception that the church was cliquish. Certainly, few members have houses large enough to host the entire church, but parties, social functions, or even Bible studies that involve a few and exclude others are naturally prone to make some people feel isolated and unwelcomed. **3. Pray and study together.** God designed prayer and study to bring us together. When we pray together and for one another, we learn more about one another than we ever could through mere conversation. James wrote, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, so you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," Jas 5:16. Our love grows exponentially when we are involved in others' lives through prayer and Bible study. **4. Be Friendly.** Solomon admonished, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly," Pr 18:24, and "a friend loves at all times," Pr 17:17. Loyalty and love are hallmarks of a friend. As brothers in Christ, we are more than friends—we are fellow laborers in God's vineyard, cf. Phil 1-2, 23; Rm 16:1-16, 21-23; 2 Cor

Discipleship Here At Home

8:23; Phil 2:19-30; 4:1-3; Col 1:7-8; 4:7-15. Our greetings are more than mere courtesy; the Greek word for "greet" is *aspazomai*, which means "to enfold in the arms, i.e. (by implication), to salute, (figuratively) to welcome:--greet, embrace, salute." As brothers in Christ and fellow-workers, we have a special relationship, and we are commanded to express the closeness we have in Christ.

When people feel isolated it may be because others have been cliquish, or it may be because they have been unwilling to be friendly to others. If we act unwilling to talk to others, if we leave the building as soon as the closing prayer is over, if we show no interest in the lives of others, we might well isolate ourselves.

We must try to avoid any perception that we are cliquish. Speak with everyone a little bit, and avoid talking exclusively for long periods of time with any one person or group. But don't be so superficial as to leave the unintended impression that we are distant or unapproachable. That's not what we want to communicate either! Perhaps we can solve this by making phone calls and conversation at times other than at assemblies and Bible classes—using time outside assemblies for more intense and intimate conversations. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we must "be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another," Rm 12:10. If there are ways we have failed to do this in the past, let's commit ourselves to demonstrate this loving spirit from this day on.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Christian Harrod; Addison Tope; Rocco Jr.; Ann Cox; Logan Corray; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Orchid Cox—chronic blood clot condition
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Kirk Johnson—MS; **Amanda Mailloux**—IBS
Virginia Menard—macular degeneration
Sandra Perry—diabetes complications; oxygen
Eric Perry—recent pre-diabetes diagnosis
Cheryl Reames—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
Judy Sartin—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis treatment
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness
Travel Forest and River Cox travel to Costa Rica with grandparents this week. **Howells and Witheringtons** are in OK visiting Caleb.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Gary Boyd**—injured in T-bone car accident Tues; taken to hospital and released; neck, shoulder pain
- **Mike Menard, Virginia's son**—abdominal pain, in oncology at St. Joseph's hospital, tests on mass; **Virginia** wrenched leg and is using a cane
- the **Boyd's** extended families are undergoing hardships: **Wendy's** father, **Dan Gutierrez**, in ICU at Lutheran with seizures, brain bleeding—filter inserted in leg to stop clots; pray for **Eileen and Dan**; **Kenny's** sister and brother-in-law are divorcing, some cult activity, **Kevin** buried his father recently; pray for **Jennifer, Kevin, Chloe, & Elijah Whittemore**
- **Samantha Harrod**—benign cyst removed from her back recently; 2-month recovery
- **Linda Szymanski**—broken arm & wrist
- the **Addys** ask our prayers for **Levi's** former boss in Odessa—**MacDonald** family: 17-year-old son murdered his parents; his 19-year-old sister survives
- **Sarah McMurray's** mentee **Lakeisha Griffin**—age 12; moved to Sarah's house recently
- **Judy Strand**—finished with chemo for liver transplant; testing in prep for transplant in April or May
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Berney Charo's** brother **Eliud**—prostate cancer
- **Ernesto Gonzalez's** father **Fidencio**—stage IV lymphoma; to rehab center to gain strength
- **Ian Anderson, Mina Gonzalez's** nephew—rehab
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Bill Dennis**—improving; recurrent cold
- **Brittany Tope's** mother **Gayle**—biopsy of spot on liver shows breast cancer has spread; **Brittany's** grandmother—on dialysis
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's** grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Connie Doss**—cancer returned
- **River and Forest Cox's** great grandmother **Martha Rowe**—in rehab for knee strengthening
- **Judy Sartin's** friend **George Vernon**—stage 4 esophageal cancer
- **Judy Strand's** daughter **Shawntiel** and **Kory Tope's** uncle **Skeeter Schulz**—broken leg, hip
- **Kim Howell's** coworker **Rachel Daniels**—recently had baby, **Titus**, with genetic disease
- **Jordan Corray's** colleague and mentor **Craig Smith** and friend **Kylie Cabalka**—recovering
- **Andrea Songer Greer**, daughter of **Bill and Debbie S.**—chemo for stage I breast cancer
- **Connor Boyd's** friend **Christian Lyons**, high school freshman—leukemia
- **Kay Ransom**, former member—mother has terminal COPD, in hospital weekly; father had malignant melanomas removed from face

Rejoice The **Shreves** are expecting their first baby, a girl, in April. The **Addys** are expecting their third child, a boy, in May. The **Witheringtons** are expecting their first child in October. **Mekiah Fink** undergoing persecution at school for her faith; nominated for the Mayors' & Commissioners' Award, Clear Creek County.



Exposing current trends *abortion*

Pain-Capable in the Womb, by *Tony Perkins*

Some 84% of Americans want significant restrictions on abortion. The other 16% must be serving as Democrats in Congress. Last Tuesday, the Left's extremism was on full display in a Senate Judiciary hearing about protecting unborn children from the excruciating pain of abortion. For the last few years, House and Senate Republicans have desperately tried to stop the barbaric practice of dismembering babies in the womb who are literally tortured by a mother's "choice."

Of course, the President's party likes to argue that the bill is extreme—but what's actually extreme is our current law. Believe it or not, America is one of just seven countries that allow abortion past 20 weeks—a barbarous club that includes China and North Korea. For a country blessed with such wonderful prenatal technology, it's abominable that we haven't changed our laws to reflect the basic personhood of tiny humans. Science has expanded our knowledge of the pain of unborn children, and it's time for the law to catch up. As witnesses pointed out repeatedly during Tuesday's testimony, it's common practice for doctors to use anesthesia on babies by 20 weeks along for in-utero surgeries because they can feel pain—pain, Dr. Maureen Condic confirmed, that can be felt as early as 8-10 weeks. What kind of inhumane culture gives "wanted" babies anesthesia but tortures others? Sadly, our US culture does.

Melissa Ohden, who miraculously survived a painful saline abortion, told her powerful story, saying, "I know where children like me were left to die—a utility closet." Dr. Colleen Malloy testified that by 22 weeks babies have a full complement of neurons and can feel pain. She takes care of babies born prematurely and explained the wonder of seeing them "kicking, moving, reacting, and developing right before our eyes." There should be no difference in care, she argued, for babies inside the womb at five months than outside it. But later, in plain defiance of the science, Physicians for Reproductive Health claimed that there's no evidence that fetal pain exists until the third trimester, a falsehood that flies in the face of countless studies proving otherwise. "We protect animals and death row inmates from suffering," Angelina Baglini Nguyen of the Charlotte Lozier Institute said. "Why not unborn children?" While liberals yammer on about "turn[ing] back the clock on women's health care," it's plain to see who has turned back the clock—on science. For a party that claims to be pro-woman, how is it that Democrats can lobby for a woman to be subjected to abortions at 21 weeks or more—when she's 91 times more likely to die from abortion than in the first trimester?

There's a war on women, all right. But it's the pro-choice lobby who are waging it. Contact Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and urge him to "protect those who can't protect themselves," as Dr. Kathi Aultman urged. That starts by passing the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (S. 1553).



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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, studies on the attributes of God: "Show Me Your Glory," Jim Reingrover
- **sermon**, *Preaching Through First Corinthians: PTFC: chapter 7, "Divorce, Separation, and Mixed Marriages,"* Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **questions answered**, "Can We Forgive Someone Who Never Asks for Forgiveness?" Jim Reingrover

Wednesday night study:

The Thessalonian Letters