

## Information and Reminders—

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing health battles or other trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians whom Satan will certainly attack (Matt. 13:20-23).

The men meet on the first Sunday of the month to discuss our work and duties. There is a sign-up sheet at the back for items needing their attention.

### **Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.**

- Can you post various Scriptures on our signboard during October? Sign up!
- Our fall meeting with Wayne Goff is **September 22-27**.
- Our articles appear in *Arkansas Weekly* August 14, 28 this month. Many past and current articles are available at our website.
- Future gospel meetings: Brett Hogland (Spring 2014), Ron Halbrook (Fall 2014), Donnie Rader (Spring 2015), Jimmy Stevens (Fall 2015).

*We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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[WWW.QVCOC.COM](http://WWW.QVCOC.COM)

## ***HOW MEN ACT WHEN THEY REPENT***

*Steve Klein*

In Matthew 12:41, Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." According to Jesus, the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah.

You remember the story, don't you? God had commanded Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). Now Nineveh was not only a city filled with wickedness, it was also the capital of the Assyrians, hated enemies of the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to go. He fled from God's presence. However, after being given some quality time in the belly of a fish to reflect and pray, Jonah decided to obey God. Jonah walked through the city proclaiming the judgment of the Lord upon these pagan people: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4).

The people of Nineveh repented. They "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5). When word came to the king of Nineveh, "he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." He decreed that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock" were to eat or drink and that "everyone" was to "turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hand" (Jonah 3:7-8).

The text says that, "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them" (Jonah 3:10). God can read men's hearts. He knows more about what is going on in our heads than we do ourselves. But He did not need to read the minds of the Ninevites to know that they had repented. He "saw their works, that they turned away from evil". When the men of Nineveh repented, nobody was left to wonder whether or not their repentance was genuine. Nobody was left guessing about their intention to stop committing evil. Nobody would have doubted they had actually repented of their sins.

We really need to learn this lesson from the men of Nineveh. We need to learn how to act when we repent. Repentance isn't just saying "excuse me," "my bad," or "forgive me," and then going on with our lives as if nothing happened. Repentance should produce real change in our actions. We are to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). I am afraid that too many of us think that our repentance should go unnoticed. We are incognito repenters! And while God hardly asks us to don sackcloth and ashes today, He does ask us to "do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20).

Let's resolve to turn away from sin in our lives, and make sure that we behave in such a way that folks can tell that's what we've done!

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## ***EVIL SUSPICIONS***

*Joe R. Price*

Since love "*thinks no evil*" (keeps no accounts of evil, NKJV footnote), "*rejoices in the truth*" and "*believes all things,*" we rightly conclude the converse is true of hatred (1 Corinthians 13:5-7). Hate thinks evil of others (keeping an account of wrongs suffered), rejoices in the error of others and refuses to believe good things about others. It is no wonder that "*he who does not love his brother abides in death*" and, "*whoever hates his brother is a murderer*" (1 John 3:14-15). Love refuses to hold and express evil suspicions toward others.

Evil suspicions (evil surmisings, KJV) are counted among the sins of the proud, possessed by those obsessed with disputes and arguments (1 Timothy 6:3-4). It is thinking the worst of others (often, deflecting attention away from one's own sins). God will not tolerate such arrogant treatment of others, and neither should we. Therefore, the Holy Spirit instructs Christians to "*withdraw yourself*" from such people (1 Timothy 6:5).

We can get caught up in speculating about others. This typically leads to gossip and a variety of additional sins. Such speculation and ruinous reasoning is forbidden by the word of God. Let us carefully and correctly identify, put away and avoid the sin of evil suspicion.

**1) Evil suspicions draw conclusions on the basis of conjecture and speculation.** Whereas love rejoices in the truth and thinks the best of others, the sin of evil suspicions relies on assumptions and the reckless handling of facts. Because it relies on supposition and imagination to draw its conclusions, evil suspicion produces distrust and disputes. Once a person whose heart is full of evil surmising has made up his mind, it becomes very hard for him to reform and renounce his deeply held

suspicion. Why? The reason is because pride (a companion of evil surmising) will not allow it (Proverbs 16:18). What a dreadfully ugly sin!

**2) Evil suspicions spread contention and division where unity and peace should prevail.** Christians are to "*seek peace and pursue it*" (1 Peter 3:11). The gospel teaches us to "*pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another*", a principle that is not being practiced by one given to evil suspicions (Romans 14:19). Having and acting upon an evil suspicion toward a fellow Christian spreads an atmosphere of mistrust, doubt and reservation, obscuring the unity we share in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-3).

**3) Evil suspicions stifle encouragement. Christians should** "*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*", but evil suspicion prevents this work of encouragement (Hebrews 10:24). It prevents productive communication instead of enhancing it. Barnabas showed himself to be the son of encouragement by not being suspicious toward Saul and his genuine conversion. He stepped forward and stood with his faithful brother in the Lord (Acts 4:36; 9:26-27). His example is one we all should follow.

**4) Evil suspicions wound and ruin rather than soothe and heal.** The person consumed with evil suspicions against another is not a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9). Strife and turmoil is the fruit he bears.

**5) Put away evil suspicions.** Cultivate love by always acting in the best interests of others – regardless of their words and deeds. (This is the true meaning and expression of love, Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10-11.) Judge righteously, not by appearance (John 7:24). Finally, reject baseless suspicions and charges against brethren (cf. 1 Timothy 5:19-20).

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## ***WHO SAID IT?***

"Our youths love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority -- they show disrespect for their elders and love to chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up food, and tyrannize teachers." -Socrates, around 400 B.C.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3)