Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 18
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 1301-P

Okay, tonight we're going to let you ask some questions so it's your time and there is a microphone over there and in the middle and over here and all you need to do is just stand behind a microphone and then I'll just kind of pick you out and you can ask a question, whatever is on your heart. Make them as brief as you can. Can you do that? So that we can get as many people covered as possible and you can just kind of jump up and get in line if you want and we'll go as long as we have. And I hate like everything to leave anybody out but it does happen so we'll do the best we can with folks that are there.

Okay we'll start over here on my right. Give us your name first and that'll help.

TONY: Hi John, my name is Tony Costanzo and first of all I just want to tell you I really thank you for the privilege we've have had of sitting in your ministry for the past several years. It's great. It's really been a blessing to us.

JOHN: Thank you, Tony.

TONY: It's really been a blessing to us. Two brief questions. One in Matthew 12:31-32 it talks about the blasphemy of the spirit, Holy Spirit and in Hebrews 6:4-6 it talks about crucifying again the Son of God. And I was wondering if you could explain the differences and/or similarities in those passages.

JOHN: What he's really asking is how does the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12 and we'll get to that sometime after I get back from my vacation Matthew 12, how does it relate to Hebrews 6? Now we talked about Hebrews 6 a little bit last time where it says those who were once enlightened pace at the heavenly gift. You know that passage? Were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. If they've fallen away, it's impossible to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify the Son of God and put him to an open shame. Essentially those two passages are parallel, Tony, because what happened in 12 of Matthew is identical to what the writer of Hebrews is talking about.

You see the Pharisees, the reason they blasphemed the Holy Spirit was they had seen everything Jesus did, right? All his miracles, all his works, they'd heard all his teaching, every possible exposure to him had been given to them and they rejected it and they concluded that he is of the devil. And so he says with all of that light and all of that information, you have concluded 180 degrees opposite the truth and therefore, in a sense, it's impossible for you to be renewed to repentance because when

you had full light, you concluded the very opposite thing. So in Hebrews 6 he's saying the same thing. Some of you who have had full exposure to the full light and turned your back on Christ at that point can never be renewed again to repentance because you rejected with the full information. All right.

DENNIS: My name is Dennis Palmer. And my brother and sister-in-law just started attending a church where the pastor is a omillienialist and he also believes that you can lose your salvation. Should they feel comfortable and stay there or move on to a dispensational teaching church just a little bit further away?

JOHN: Well yeah. You know sure. I'd say go where the truth is taught. There's no - you see we are responsible for what we know and we're responsible to make the most out of our life. I don't hesitate to tell people, you don't have any obligation to sit in a church where you are not learning the truth, where you're being confused. You have responsibility before God to expose yourself to the truth, so you better find the place where that's being taught. Naturally I think that position is not a biblical position, that you can lose your salvation and that there is no kingdom coming and we've talked about that in other question/answer nights. So yeah. You know it's like some guy was saying to me today you know this guy said well I know our pastor doesn't really teach the word but I've been in this church for 35 years and I'll outlast him. But that isn't the way you look at the church. You know you aren't trying to outlast pastors. You are trying to get somewhere where you can get built up in the faith. So I don't hesitate to encourage people to make that kind of a transition.

Gordon?

GORDON: I'm Gordy Carlson. And I had a question here. I've been talking to several people and they've pushed me about reincarnation and I've been trying to research and find some point where reincarnation got mixed in with the scriptural teachings of the Old Testament and all the other writings that have been around, like the Kaballah and the Talmah and all this other exo-scriptural writings. Do they contain references to reincarnation that were eliminated?

JOHN: Basically the Kaballah, the Koran, the Bagavagida, all of those have references to reincarnation. Now all world religions stem from Babel but for us it's clear to understand because when the people were scattered, they were scattered from the Tower of Babel. But in a more contemporary mode, all the world religions basically have been born out of Hinduism. And Hinduism is built on a reincarnation system. And the whole idea is that you just keep reincarnating and reincarnating. That's why they won't kill cows and won't step on bugs and won't kill flies and I pointed that out remember when we were doing the series on the disciples' prayer about the food thing. The reason people in India are starving is not because there is not enough food. And Dera Ghandi herself says they can feed the nation three times over and export more than eat but 30% of it is eaten up by rats and mice, which they will not kill because they don't want to mess up somebody's karma who is living in the rat.

So it is their pagan religion that binds them in this kind of thing. But reincarnation answers the major problem that the pagan world faces. Romans 1:18, "the wrath of God is revealed" right? And that is the heart and soul of the gospel - that God is going to pour out wrath on sinful man. Now how can man deny that? So that's his dilemma. He doesn't want to accept God. He doesn't want to accept the truth. He doesn't want to accept the gospel. So somehow he's got to replace this concept of judgment. The Bible says Hebrews 9:22 "is appointed unto men once to die, and after that, the judgment". So the Bible denies reincarnation in that one verse.

Now let me just go a little step further. But at that point the system of man says we deny judgment. In 2Peter it says, "where is the promise of his coming, all things continuing as they were from the beginning" so forth and so forth. They don't want to admit judgment. Now the way they get out of judgment is by this constant cycle of reincarnation. You are never judged. You just keep cycling through human existence again and again. There's no consequences to what you do except the lowering or raising of your karma in life. And it is a calculated design to evade the reality of judgment.

GORDY: Has anybody done any research on how it got from eastern religions into Judaism and Christianity?

JOHN: Well there really is no reincarnation in true Judaism and there is no reincarnation in Christianity.

GORDY: None of the Old Testament writings that were around at the same time had reincarnation in them?

JOHN: Well sure. Reincarnation has been around for a long time but the Bible never picks it up. In fact the Bible doesn't even comment on it. I mean if you are looking for a verse, it doesn't even comment. I have a friend named John Weldon who has done a lot of research on reincarnation. He has a new book out on the occult. You might check in there. There might be a section on it. Also International Standard Bible Encyclopedia or Zonervan's Encyclopedia or Baker's Dictionary of Theology might have a section on reincarnation, give you some historical background.

GORDON: Okay. Thank you.

PHILLIP: John, my name is Phillip. I was talking to a friend today and his church up in Oxnard is having a little controversy within the congregation about faith. Apparently some people are getting involved in a very charismatic type of thinking and specifically I guess it comes from Ken Copeland. He's talking about well it's kind of like let God, let go thinking. And human responsibility has little to do to exercise your faith. You just trust God. Now I explained to him to look at what biblical faith was in Hebrews 11 and the fact that the patriarchs for example did things that their faith changed their

behavior. I was wondering what you might suggest to tell him to help him along.

JOHN: The reason basically, Phillip, that people get involved in that Kenneth Hagen, Kenneth Copeland, Frederick Price and a lot of lesser lights stuff, the reason people get involved in that is because they do not understand the nature of God. And God for them is nothing more than a utilitarian genie. You rub the bottle; he jumps out and does what you demand. It is a man-centered theology. It is based on health, wealth and happiness. I can say it to you simply this way. Those guys say you can - they call it affirmation faith. They use a lot of different terms but ever increasing faith, affirmation faith and you know they are like the clock that doesn't run. They are right twice a day and that's what confuses people.

See I mean they just intersect with the truth a couple of times and so people - and they are clever. But basically what they are saying is you can demand healing. Hagen and Copeland say they never have been sick. Never been sick. But they are going to die but they are never sick, they never have problems, they are always successful, always enough money and so forth. So that's what they are promising. Now I would just say that the problem basically is of a man-centered theology, you get into for what you can get out of it. You demand healing. You demand prosperity. You demand a new job. You demand a new car. And they call it faith and it isn't faith at all. It is indulgence under the guise of faith.

They just absolutely murder the Scripture by misinterpretation. They just adulterate it all over the place, twisting it to make their own goals and there is always a sort of a major ego thing that you see just as big as a spotlight in the middle of the whole deal. Just another step I would add. Any system that comes along and promises health and prosperity and all of that stuff is the utter antithesis to what the gospel offers men. Jesus said, "If you do not want to take up the cross and follow me, you are not willing to be my disciple." Jesus said to the young guy who came along and said I got to go home and bury my father, which means collect my inheritance, forget it. Another guy came along and said I'll follow you wherever you go. He said the foxes have holes; the birds of the air have nests. The son of man has nowhere to lay his head and the guy split. In other words, he said I don't want you on the terms that you are looking for comfort. I want you on the terms that you are going to abandon comfort.

But these guys are coming around and the very things that Jesus rejected in followers, they are giving to followers and saying this is the gospel and this is the very opposite gospel to what Jesus offered. So you see they don't understand that the character and nature of God. He is holy. He is sovereign. He is Lord. They have made man the Lord who will tell God what to do. And I think as I've said before that is one of the most insidious things happening in America today because it sounds so good and so flowery and warm and they're almost like - Copeland is almost like a standup comic. You know he's funny. He's really funny and he sort of draws people in with his humor. Fred Price is a clever speaker.

But you know I'm more and more convinced and that's why I don't hesitate to talk about these things that I am called by God to preserve the sacredness of sound doctrine. Just for an illustration of that, be with you in a minute Pat. I got to preach here a minute. But in 1 Timothy, just to give you the perspective and when I get done with Romans or Matthew, I'm going to teach 1 Timothy. But it says, "If a man desires the opposite of a bishop or an elder or a pastor, he desires the good work." All right. Then it gives all of the qualifications. 1 Timothy 3, he has to be a one woman man, blameless, he has to temperate, sober minded and it gives all these things and they are one phrase. Blip. Blip. Blip. That's all there is to it. And all of sudden, it comes down to the fact that he must have - let's see if I can find the exact verse.

Well it goes all the way through the deacons and all the way down to the end of the chapter and then into Chapter 4 it talks about the deacon and the deacon's wife and so forth and so on. Then you come into Chapter 4 and the spirit speaks expressly. When the latter time comes, false doctrines and so forth and so forth, then you come to Verse 6 in Chapter 4. "If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you'll be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine." Then he goes on, "refuse profane and old wives fables" and it goes on to say, "these things command and teach". Read the text. Verse 13, "exhort and teach doctrine and don't neglect the gift." Verse 16 "take heed under the doctrine." In other words, you've got all these little short deals and then when it gets into doctrine, it goes on for half a chapter because that is the major ministry of an elder or a pastor is to keep the church from error.

Now if you back up into 1 Timothy, I'll show you the same thing. 1 Timothy 1 and in Verse 18 he says, "this charge (or this body) of truth I commit unto you, son Timothy, according to the prophesies which pointed to thee that thou by them mightiest were a good warfare." In other words, you're a soldier, Timothy, by virtue of the declaration of the elders who affirmed your calling and you are to hold the faith with a good conscious and not be like those put away the faith and made a shipwreck like Hymeneus and Alexander who I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. In other words, you make sure you hold the faith and you make sure you keep a pure light and don't fall by the wayside as those who have literally made shipwreck.

And what it means is that these false teachers had a boatload of people and they wrecked them on the shoals of false doctrine and the people are floundering in the water. So that the primary responsibility of the servant of God is to keep sound doctrine before the people and one of the things you have to do to do that in Acts 20 is to warn people about false teachers. And so I don't hesitate to do that because I think those things are so insidious. Christians across this country are literally confused beyond hope. You know you are fortunate. You are in a church where there is a firm commitment to sound teaching and it's consistent and it's systematic and you can depend on it and you can learn from it. Most people sit in a church; they don't even know what sound doctrine is. There are a lot of places where I can go in and speak and give a message and it goes right on by people

like I was talking another language because they don't even have ears to hear, let alone understanding. So it's critical that we you know warn the people. It's amazing to me how many people support these ministries thinking they are really supporting something the Lord is in and it's just chaotic.

FEMALE: I have a question about Proverbs 25:2.

JOHN: Okay.

FEMALE: The first part.

JOHN: Proverbs 25:2?

FEMALE: Yeah.

JOHN: Okay. Is this a question some radio listener wrote in?

FEMALE: No.

JOHN: Oh okay.

FEMALE: I am confused about the first part of the verse. It talks about it is the glory of God to conceal a matter.

JOHN: Well basically the glory of God is his nature. Right? His attributes, his character, his person, all that he is and one of the aspects, one of the elements of the nature of God is that he does not reveal everything. Deuteronomy 29:29 say "the secret things belong to the Lord." It is the very nature of God to conceal certain things. It is the glory of God to hide things from us and particularly in the Old Testament, isn't that true? The whole mystery of the new covenant, the New Testament, was hidden from ages past and is now revealed. So it is in the nature of God to conceal things.

I'll put it another way; the supreme revelation of the nature of God is that he has concealed things. Do you know what I mean by that?

FEMALE: Go on.

JOHN: Okay. If we could understand everything in the mind of God then God would be at our level, right? So the fact that God has concealed from us those things that are beyond us is his supreme glory. That is what sets him beyond us. Do you understand that? The difference between you as an adult and your little baby is that in maturity, you have a perception level and an intellect that is way beyond the perception of that child. So your very glory over your little infant child is that you can know

so much more and that is God's. Whereas the honor of a king is not that he is able to know more than other men but that he is better able to search out wisdom than other men that is how he rises to the place of leadership. So it's a contrast. The best of men, the greatest leaders of men are the wisest who can seek the truth. But God in his greatest glory is one whose truth is so far beyond us it is not even searchable.

FEMALE: Okay. Thanks.

BOB: Hello, John. I'm Bob Abrams.

JOHN: Hi, Bob.

BOB: My Jewish background kind of prompts this question. In the first chapter of - excuse me. In 1 Corinthians 11, starting from Verse 3 onto oh about 16, we talked about a man not covering his head in church and a woman covering her head. Now I don't know whether this is Jewish tradition. In the context it just doesn't appear that that is the case here.

JOHN: No. It's not Jewish tradition, Bob, because it's a context of a gentile church congregation. It's more likely in a gentile context. This is an interesting passage and people always ask questions about this passage. I suppose that I have recommended the tape on this passage more times than any tape I can think of because everyone asks about it. Basically Verse 3 gives a principal. I can't remember everything I said in that but Verse 3 gives a principal that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man, the head of Christ. Now that is the principal. Paul wants the Corinthians to learn that Christ is head of the church and the man is the head of the woman. So there's a chain of command there. Now this should be demonstrated in the church that man is head over woman. Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors his head because covering is a sign of what? Of what? Humility, meekness. You know you go into the east today and women have a bunch of stuff over their face and veils and they run around like in Arab countries and they've got veils and things down their head and down the back and all. So in this culture it was so that a woman had a demonstrable sign of submission. Now if a man stood up with a veil on, I mean you know. Yeah. He would be denying his God ordained role as a head because within that framework of society, he should demonstrate that.

And every woman that comes up and pulls off her veil is a libber. See she's going to play the man's role. She's going to do her thing and it flows the rest of the text that way and he argues from the standpoint of the culture and he even argues from the standpoint of nature. Verse 14 "doesn't even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it's a shame unto him." Now don't get all upset. People say oh you see, that proves it; women should never have long hair. That's relative. I mean if a woman had her hair back to the back of her knees like some did in those days and a man had his to his shoulders, that's not long hair. Jesus may have had it to his shoulders. In fact the only description

we have of him indicates he had it to his shoulders. But the point is this and I've checked this out several times. That a woman's hair tends to grow faster than a man's hair so that God has designed that a woman's hair would be longer than a man's by the very nature of that growth pattern.

So you have both the culture and the creation to demonstrate that a woman is to manifest the role of meekness or humility, which is the role of submission. That's essentially what the passage is saying.

BOB: John, since Jesus was a rabbi and was there not a custom where rabbi's would have their exceedingly short, if not very little hair at times?

JOHN: Well that's hard to know. Exceedingly short - I mean how often did they get a haircut you know? My hair is right where I want it the day I get it cut. Two weeks later and a month later it's like this but I don't have time to go down there and get it cut again. So that's hard to know but I don't think that the whole idea of the text is that women are to have hair down to the middle of their back and men are to have hair above their ears with a white link across their ear. I think that what it's saying is that women ought to demonstrate their meekness as the culture indicates because God has so ordained their very creation. And men ought to demonstrate their headship as the culture indicates. Now I have some problems with the unisex kind of things where that is being mixed up. I mean I see women on television, I have to look a couple of times to see if they are women. You know that bothers me to get on American Airlines and go across the country and all the women have vested suits with collars and ties. This is the uniform. That is you say well you are being picky. Sure but that's what a man normally wears. Why doesn't she look like a woman looks? You know?

And then the other night I saw some lady on there who was acting silly, banging a drum for one of these things and she was dressed - she had absolutely no demonstration of submissive or meekness or femininity or grace. Whatever. I just don't think that women are inferior. My goodness I think if anything they are superior. I married one. What can I say? You know? It's obvious women, there's nothing like a woman. I mean what is she inferior to? You can't compare a woman to a man because a woman is a woman is a woman. There's nothing to compare her too. So the idea that we're chauvinistic is silly. I remember when the newsreel people come out here. They kept asking the women in our church on the patio, well why do you go to this chauvinistic place? You know and they would give these basic - well we believe the Bible. And one of the reporters said they seem like normal women. That's what they said. They seem like normal women. They expected a bunch of dowdy people's with buns on the tops of their hair going around with whip marks on the back of their necks.

So all we're trying to do is preserve the thing the way God designed it and there is nothing like a woman. She is supreme in the place that God has her. And even in Paul's time they had a women's lib movement and women were going around bare breasted, wearing armor and carrying swords. They've always fought against that. That's because of Genesis 3. They've always fought for

supremacy. Okay. My right over here.

MICHAEL: Hi, John. My name is Michael Sacks and I have - can I ask two questions?

JOHN: Sure.

MICHAEL: Okay.

JOHN: Why don't you turn that mic up? Just pull it up a little. Everybody's bending. That's good. Thank you, Mike.

MICHAEL: It's all right now. Thank you. The first one is in Mark 1:5 and it's where John the Baptist was baptizing the people in Jordan River. I was wondering before Christ's death, how would they relate to baptism and did the Jews have a baptism in their rituals at that time.

JOHN: Yeah. There are several baptisms in the Scripture that are of importance. There is the baptism of John. There is the baptism of John baptizing Jesus and there is the baptism in the name of Christ in the church after his death and resurrection. They are distinct. The Christian baptism is an identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism of John was a Jewish washing. Throughout the Jewish history it had been traditional for Jews to demonstrate outwardly and inward repentance. And they would do that through washing ceremonies. And what was happening was John was preaching repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and that was a very clear message. The messiah is coming.

And the people who accepted that message and desired to repent came to John repented and demonstrated their repentance in the baptism. They were a people being made ready for the coming of the messiah. So it was a Jewish washing as they were preparing themselves internally in their heart and demonstrating it externally in their baptism for the arrival of Messiah. It was a baptism of repentance. So it was a Jewish baptism. That is correct. Now the baptism of Jesus by John, Jesus didn't need to repent right? So why was he baptized? He was baptized, I believe, to identify himself with that repentant remnant. And then Christian baptism is unique unto itself.

MICHAEL: Thank you. The second question is Matthew 12:27.

JOHN: We're back there again. All right.

MICHAEL: And it says they were accusing him, like you said, of having the power of Satan. It says, "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out. Consequently they shall be your judges." I was wondering how they shall be the judges.

JOHN: What he is basically saying is there were Jewish exorcists who went around supposedly casting out demons. And what Jesus I think is saying here is why do you accuse me of casting demons out by Beelzebub, which means the lord of the flies or the lord of dung or the lord of the dwelling place, one of those three things. It has to do with Satan. And the root may even be in Bale. Why do you accuse me of Satanic casting out? If I cast demons by Satan, who do your exorcists cast them out by? And the implication is I am a perfect person. You have found no flaw in me. You have seen no sin in me. You have heard no word other than truth from me and you know these men of your own kind are not like that and if I as a perfect person and as an absolutely holy person am doing this by Satan, who are your unholy people doing it by? In other words, if I'm not doing it by God, who are they doing it by? And the implication then is that those people are going to be judged. I mean if they are going to so judge me, then those people are going to have to be judged as well.

MICHAEL: But I don't understand how the sons are going to be the judges.

JOHN: How what?

MICHAEL: He says by whom to your sons cast them out and he says they shall be your judges.

JOHN: Well they become - in a sense the sons then become the standard. They are the ones that are going to render judgment. In other words, in order to make judgment on the case, all you have to do is look at them and they become your judges. I mean they show how stupid this is. They condemn you themselves because in their sinfulness they are doing this. In my holiness, I'm doing this. You are accusing me of doing it by the power of Satan. What must they be doing it by? They themselves are judging your stupidity. Okay.

MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

ROSE: My name is Rose Naquin. This is my first visit here at your church.

JOHN: Well, hi, Rose.

ROSE: But I've been listening to your radio program. And I have a lot of questions and this one may be simple but is it necessary to be baptized as an adult if you were baptized as a baby?

JOHN: I think so. Sure. I think the Bible says in Acts 2:38, "repent and be baptized." And so that baptism follows repentance and you can't have conscious repentance unless you are old enough to make that commitment to Christ and then it should be followed by baptism. You have the illustration of Philip and the eunuch and the eunuch goes along and he teaches him Isaiah and he teaches him about Christ and as soon as he responds to Christ, he says what does hinder me from being baptized? Instantly he knew he should be baptized. On the day of Pentecost 3000 people believed

and were baptized. So I think that infant baptism doesn't mean anything. You can't find it in the Scripture. It is a tradition that sort of has been in the church that some of you were baptized as infants as Catholics were you not. I was. Did you know that? I was born in where I was born? I was born in St. Vincent's Hospital. And they did their thing to me when I was little. That's ridiculous, that's silly to assume that there is any efficacy in that. Some of you were baptized as children in the Presbyterian church or the Episcopalian church or the Lutheran church or I don't know some other church maybe that did that. But basically the New Testament teaches that baptism follows conscious repentance. So I believe that if you have committed yourself to Christ in your adult life, you should be baptized.

ROSE: And I have another question about -

JOHN: We're having a baptism next Wednesday night.

ROSE: My other question is about say you have older relatives that were illiterate and were raised in a church where they didn't really encourage people to read the Bible, just like what they said, the gospel that they may read for about 15 minutes and if they were illiterate and they just followed the teachings of the church they went to, is it possible for them to be saved?

JOHN: I think there is no salvation in any other name than in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they've got to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's our responsibility. You know when Jesus had gone into all the world and preached the gospel to every creature that was based on the assumption that every creature would be lost if it didn't hear the gospel. Otherwise that command is meaningless. In other words if people could be saved without hearing the gospel than the best thing to do is not tell them, right because then they don't have the choice. You understand what I'm saying? So no, I think that even in a situation where you have a pagan person, I believe they live up to the light God gives them and they desire to know the truth that God will bring into their life the truth of Christ. Now maybe in that church the truth of Christ came through, I don't know. But they would have to believe I think in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 14 Paul says, "In the time of this ignorance, God overlooked but now commands all men everywhere to repent because he has sent Christ to judge the world."

ROSE: Well like if they believed that being baptized as a baby and making their first communion and going to confession and receiving communion is receiving Christ and they believe this, but they were illiterate and they lived out like away from a large town or something.

JOHN: Only the Lord knows the answer to that. Because if they were trusting in their baptism for salvation, if they were trusting in their communion for salvation, if they were trusting in the church for salvation, there's no salvation there. But if through that they saw that Christ was salvation, then they are saved but only God knows that perhaps.

ROSE: Thank you.

JOHN: That's a hard one isn't it? Everybody has that problem. We all have relatives that we would deeply want to believe are with the Lord in heaven and not in eternal hell but we cannot alter the doctrines of the word of God to accommodate our feeling and that is why and I said this on Sunday night, doctrines like soul sleep and universalism, which says everybody ultimately gets saved are so popular because they appeal to the emotions. But we can't build our theology on emotion and if you understand the significance of Romans 1 you know that if any man goes into eternity without Christ, he is without what? He is without excuse because he had that opportunity. And that is why it is such an important section of Scripture.

Let's see. We'll go back over here again.

TIM: My name is Tim Carter. My question is is there a place in the ministry, to the flock, for husbands who are godly though separated from their wives, they are seeking reconciliation, they (excuse me), everything is really up and up and they are doing everything they can? It's through no wish of their own they are separated and the same for the wife who might be in that situation?

JOHN: Tim, there is always a ministry for a righteous man. Always. Through the spiritual gifts God has given you, I just think that there is a visibility factor involved and exemplary factor that limits some of that ministry. I mean obviously if my wife left me, my credibility would be shot no matter how innocent I might be. And people would be - they couldn't hear me preach because they'd be wondering what I was really like. What did she leave me? What quirks in my - by the way, she's not going to leave me. But I'm just saying. You can understand how that would affect. You know if I came and announced some Sunday morning that my wife had left me, it would totally change my entire ministry. I mean everybody would just - all the thoughts and all the problems would arise and so forth and so. It doesn't mean that there aren't problems when you stay married because some people you know hide those kinds of problems too but basically if you are a righteous man and a godly man, you are a channel through which the spirit of God will operate and he will operate through your spiritual gifts and use you in the body of Christ but obviously you are in a situation where you can't rise to a position of exemplary leadership because of the tension in your own life and because you make yourself vulnerable for criticism. And the body I think wants to protect you.

In other words, it's like a wound that comes to the physical body. The rest of the body moves to that area doesn't it to fight that infection. And in a real sense, the body wants to protect you, not stick you in a position to be more vulnerable.

TIM: I can say that I went through this situation. Last Friday the divorce was final. My life has been pure toward my wife and that I knew that through that situation the best times were when I was

helping others. It wasn't - when I was taken - when my ministry of singing for children on Sunday mornings and in that time it was really dry. It was dry as my throat right now.

JOHN: The Lord is in the business of restoration and if you are the innocent party, the Lord will restore you and use you. I just think that there has to be a time when you build back the integrity and credibility that people have to have to trust your ministry. But I think you can work on an individual basis until God restores that in your life. Sure. I mean all of us are restored sinners, right? Somewhere along the line if the truth were known, we all come back from something or are in the process of coming back.

TIM: As far as evangelism, I go out to USC Hospital and do that. I mean a person in that situation could and they wouldn't know who they were anyway. They'd be telling the truth, the gospel. There'd be nothing wrong with that? He could go as far as he could with that, right?

JOHN: The Bible doesn't say go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature unless you've got sin in your life. It just says go. And if you are dealing with that in a righteous life, I don't think God pulling the blinds on you saying that's it for you forever. I mean he took care of David after all the problems that he had and he still used him and called him his personal friend. So I think there are still things. Although I think that in terms of the far reaching and the highest levels of visibility there are problems because of your vulnerability at that point and the body wants to protect you from that but not in the elimination of your ministry.

TIM: Thank you.

JOHN: Ken.

KEN: Of course my name is Ken Sobiach and the question that I have has to do with John 14:2 where he is talking about in the New American Standard he is talking in my father's house there are many dwelling places. In the King James' Version it says mansions and I was just wondering, is it mansions or dwelling places or?

JOHN: Well it's dwelling places but I'll promise you this. They are going to be a whole lot like mansions. The actual Greek word is dwelling place and even go further than that, the real Greek word is room. How can you say in my father's house are many mansions? Have you ever seen a house with many mansions in it? Well how could you say? You could say in my father's house are many dwelling places but that doesn't even make sense. What the Greeks says is in my father's house there are many rooms. When I was a little kid, I used to imagine heaven as a big, big place sort of like London because somebody told me basically the square, 15 x 15 x 15, you know 1500 cubic by 1500 cubic by 1500 cubic is supposed to be the city of you know, the eternal city, heaven's city, the New Jerusalem. And if you figured 1500 cubed, it's so huge it would be the square area of London only

cubed. I mean which is just a tremendous. You can hold everybody who ever lived in the world and still have room.

And so I imagined heaven as this big place and all these gold roads and everywhere and we'd be eight blocks down and 16 blocks to the left and there would be our big mansion and somebody would be down the street and all of this. And that's the way I grew up thinking. Then when I got into studying that text when I went through John's gospel, it became apparent that what it's saying is in my father's house are many rooms. I'm not going to be 18 blocks and 16 to the left. I'm going to be in the father's house. So we're not going to be separated. We're going to be together. And that's the essence of it. In my father's house are many rooms. They are not going just be in the same city. You are going to be in the same house.

Okay.

ROGER: Hi, John. I'm Roger and I'd like to first of all make a comment about the ministry of this church that I have thoroughly enjoyed. I have three children ages 8 down to 5 and the education that they have gotten scripturally in this church, I wish I had gotten when I was kid. I was raised in a liberal Presbyterian church and when I was baptized as a child, the pastor said I'm going to ask you certain questions, you're to say yes to each of these questions and after I got saved, he wanted to know what was happening because I had already told him yes to all those same questions that I had said yes to when I accepted Christ as my savior. And it's a real thrill to see kids who are really learning the truth of the word of God.

JOHN: Amen. Thank you.

ROGER: Now, I have a question that might be a little complicated answering and I'm having trouble answering it myself. I have a next-door neighbor who has a guy that's been coming over and working on his cars with him and the guy is a real weirdo. I mean he is about as far out in left field as you can possibly get without getting back into right field.

JOHN: We used to say he's so far into left field; he's in the bullpen.

ROGER: Right. The problem is that the guy has the idea that he is God, which we obviously know is false. My question is -

JOHN: _____

ROGER: Is there a procedure that you would recommend for me, for my family in either trying to witness to this guy or would you recommend complete severance of any contact with him.

JOHN: Well I would say from your standpoint you are well enough trained to be able to do it. The only thing I know to do with that and you know you get all kinds of people like that. And it's amazing to me that people who have mental problems somehow get God in the midst of their mental problems, even if they are not very religious people, which shows that sort of residual knowledge of God that they know they have rejected and the guilt and the sin of their life, which they have never dealt with is piled up this guilt complex that makes them act aberrational and I really believe that most people act weird so that you'll think they're nuts because they want to explain away their behavior as mental derangement rather than sinful.

And the best way to deal with those people is to confront them. Now I had a guy come up to me two Sundays ago. And he says to me, hi I miss seeing you. And I said I miss seeing you too. Haven't been here in a while. No I've been in jail. I said what have you been doing in jail? He says I tried to kill myself so they put me in a jail to protect me. I said well why did you do that? He said I just wanted to die. I say well how did you try to kill yourself. He said well I jumped in front of three cars - one for the Father, one for the Son and one for the Holy Ghost. So I said that is ridiculous. One for the Father? He said by the way here's my registration card. I put my other name on the other card but I want to give you this as my other name. I have two names. I said you don't have two names. I said I know your name. Your name is so and so and those cars are the not the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and there is no sense in you committing suicide and you better get your life - and I just nailed it as hard as I could straightforward. That's the only thing I know to do.

I just can't stand there and so oh well that's wonderful. I get spaced out too. I don't know how to handle that kind of a thing except to say don't play that game with me. And if I come across a person you know who thinks they are God and there have been people like that. I mean Charles Manson thought he was Jesus Christ and sometimes he thought he was Satan. So the only thing you can do is say stop that foolishness. But sometimes they are so blown on drugs, they are so far out there in their mental trip that they can't come back to reality. But the only thing you can do is give it a shot.

ROGER: Yeah.

JOHN: Now I would just confront them and say you're not God. That is not true. That's a lie. You know who you are. And if you are going to get anything going together in your life, you better face who you are. We had a situation here where a guy was in and out of the mental deal and one day one of our counselors said to him, I'm so tired of this thing. What game are you playing? And the guy said oh you found me out huh? And explained the whole thing. Why he did it. So the only thing that I know to do with people like that is to confront those people and you know sometimes people will even threaten my life and do things like that and the only thing I know to do when I see those people is to tell them look, stay away. Be firm with those people in a loving but firm way.

ROGER: This is the thing I've been concerned about because he has tried to confuse my children and I've instructed my children to stay away from him.

JOHN: Yeah, that's the right thing to do. Don't expose your children to him.

ROGER: And I appreciate one thing as I said I love the ministry and the way the kids have been taught here. The other day he came over and I wasn't there and he began to spout at my wife and tell my wife he was God and my little eight year old, Ruthie, looked up and he says you're not God. Jesus is.

JOHN: Amen. Amen. We have a guy who comes here dressed like a lady all the time and wants to be counseled and what you do you tell the guy. I baptized a woman one night. I mean she came in from the ladies side. I found out later it was a man. I baptized it or him. It was a him and he'd said he'd had surgery. I don't care if you've had surgery. You were made a man. You are still a man. He said well I'm going to live as a woman and I said leave this church. God made you a man. If you have to go through life as a castrated man, you're a man. You're not a woman. But I was a woman in a man's body. I said you are a man and whatever you did to yourself, you're a man. I got - when he came into be baptized you know and I hadn't talked to him and he went up and said my name is Alice. I just - I mean that was the end for me. I thought whoa. Whoa.

And that's really true isn't it. Some of you guys remember that and I was dumbfounded you know. I came to the Lord and I was just dying back then. Later I found out what was going on and so you know those things happen in a church and you just, I think, you just have to confront that thing. It's a hard problem though. Bless your hearts. Your heart reaches out to them. You love them. They're just - you know the first day I was at Grace Church, this is the first day I ever got here, my first day as a pastor, right, I'm sitting in the office over there and I'm asking the Lord and all of sudden, to help me get started, this knock on the door and this guy walks in all in white. My first day. He's all in white, everything. White shirt, white pants, white shoes, white coat, white everything. And you know that's a dead giveaway that the guy's got sin in his life and he's trying to look pure you know. He's playing a game with his mind. That's right. So he comes in and he walks over with his wallet and he goes like this - FBI. He didn't even knock. He just walked right in. I'm sitting there you know studying and he comes in FBI. And I looked up and I thought what is going on. Am I under arrest or? And he looked around the room and he said is this room bugged?

I said I just got here, man, you don't have to tell me, I don't know. And he flips out that thing again and shuts it real fast. I don't even know what was in his wallet. It was a game he was playing and then he says, if you've got a minute I'll show you the map. And so he reaches in his pocket and he pulls out a map and he goes, he says you see they're over here and we're over here. And I don't even know what's going on. I don't know if this guy is the chairman of the elders. I don't know what he is. Well we

tried everyway we could to love him and to care for him and we believed he committed his life to Christ and he was a brilliant guy. Graduated from UCLA and time went on but that was my first introduction to the pastorate. And all through my years here, there have been those kinds of people in my life.

Always. And you work hard and that young man took his own life but that's something that you just have to struggle with. And those people are around and you know how to deal with them I'm sometimes at the end of my rope in trying but God gives us grace and if we extend love to those people but firm love. Firm, we need to affirm to them the truth about themselves even though they are denying that.

Okay, quickly we have time. We'll just take these and then we'll be done.

MICHAEL: I'm Michael Taffey. And the last few days I've been in Northrop, working for Northrop Aviation. Just got a job down there and I joined the Credit Union and they are trying to get me to have my check deposited directly and I've always been under the impression that that is a form of the coming antichrist, in preparation for it.

JOHN: Well I wouldn't say that the credit union at Northrop is really a form of the antichrist.

MICHAEL: No I mean direct -.

JOHN: What are you going to live on if you give them all your check? Oh you mean they want to draw out automatically a certain amount every month? Oh that's no problem. I think that's just - if you've enforced yourself to save that way that's not a problem.

MICHAEL: And then the other one too is this morning on my way to work I was listening to this KPRZ youth show at 5:30 and they were talking this past year the Internal Revenue Service has mailed out some checks on accident that said on the back do not cash this money to the person unless they have a card with the specific code. They called the Internal Revenue Service and they said oops, we weren't supposed to mail those out until 84.

JOHN: That's really not true. The IRS has squashed that rumor half a dozen times. Nobody knows where that came from but the IRS denies ever doing that and they could never - no one could ever bring up one of those and demonstrate that it did happen. At this point, I would say it's probably not true. Okay.

DAVE: Hi, John. My name is Dave. I took a Bible course a couple of years ago where the teacher said that because God is sovereign and he chooses certain people to come to him in salvation and two because the Bible doesn't say anything to the contrary that it's basically unbiblical to pray for the

salvation of a non-believer. I'd like to hear what you had to say about that and straighten me out.

JOHN: Well I just think that's silly. You know, it's never unbiblical to pray. And praying for the salvation of an unbeliever is pretty standard fair. You know? Jesus asked his disciples to pray that the Lord would send forth laborers into the harvest and that is an assumption that he was praying someone would go and tell those people about Christ. Paul over and over and over prayed for the church and certainly prayed for their growth and their building up and implied that that is their evangelism. There is no commandment specifically in the New Testament that says to pray for the unsaved. But there is no commandment in the New Testament that says pray for your mother in law either. There are some things that are obvious. I'm not picking out mother in laws as the most obvious of all to pray for. But all I'm saying is that there is a lot of things that aren't touched. We go to God in a very normal way about every need and about everything. You should read this book called Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. It's a paperback by J.I. Packard in which he shows how the sovereignty of God and his elective purpose does not eliminate prayer for the unsaved. Whenever - just to give you an illustration. The spirit of God is operative in your life when you want someone to come to Christ, what is the first thing you do? You pray for them and that is the prompting of the spirit of God in your heart. And God not only chooses them but he chooses the process by which that comes about and that is through human instrumentation in prayer and in witnessing.

If we don't need to pray then we don't need to witness either. We don't need to do anything. We'll just let God come down and do his number on them. You know. Okay. Back over here and we'll finish up.

MALE: What do you believe in how people die and then they come back to life?

JOHN: What do I think about people dying and coming back to life?

MALE: Yeah, saying they did.

JOHN: I think they didn't die. Hebrews 9:22 "it is appointed unto men once to die" and after that you don't come back. It's judgment. There have been few exceptions in history and those are indicated to us in the Scripture. But I was on a debate on TBS some years ago with a London psychiatrist, a medical doctor, a weird guy who came back from the dead who was just a really far out guy. And a lot of people are doing that now. That's the new thing. In fact, this guy, I wrote in my charismatic book, Dr. Ebie who died, went to heaven and came back in order to balance it off. He said that when he went to heaven and came back heaven was so wonderful he lost all fear of hell and since he's Armenian and believes you can lose your salvation, God had to send him to hell to put the fear back in him so he'd stay saved. So he had a second deal. He died and went to hell and came back. Well you know, it's just like flying saucers. If one guy said he died and went to heaven and came back then everybody who goes into some kind of an operation and wants to get on some kind of a deal and talk about it or write a book, says they died and came back. They all talk about this flashing light. This

London doctor who was very, very brilliant guy said that that can be explained as some of the reaction, some of the nerve reaction at the brain that causes a sparking.

There maybe also that very satanic involvement where when a person goes into that they always come back feeling everything was peaceful and everything was good and everything was fine and that's exactly what the devil would like people to believe and would like people to propagate right? That everything is fine. I don't think they died. And if you want to get technical about it, this doctor said there is no case on record ever of someone dying that he knew of and coming back. They may lapse into something where they have a flat EKG, that is an electrocardiogram but what they are starting to do now I think. I was just reading this the other day is that they are defining death and this came out of Houston recently. They are defining death now as the absence of a brainwave movement. In other words, electroencephalogram, when you have a flat brain wave deal, you don't come back. You can come back from a hear that stops and most of these people don't even get to that level. They just go into surgery and so forth and then they by having so much exposure to out of body talk and all of this, they sort of dream that those things are happening and things like that. I think it's fantasy and it's prompted by the desire to - just like seeing little green men. Thousands of people have talked to little green men. You know? And told us about it. Okay.

Well thank you. Those are good questions. Great. Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for our fellowship tonight. It was so good to be together, so important to sing your praise together and to share. Thank you for the honesty of some of these folks who shared. Think of Tim who shared about the divorce being final on Friday and what a heartache and a deep pain that is and how he fears he would lose his ministry and Lord, we pray that as you rebuild and restore as you always do that you will give him a greater ministry because of this as he has found a righteousness in his life and seeks to please you. We pray, Lord, that you use him in ways that he never could have been used if he hadn't gone through this painful, painful time. And we pray too for all the rest who have questions related to anxieties and burdens and people they are talking to. Help us all, Lord, to seek answers out of your word and to give an answer to every man that asks of the hope that is within us with meekness and fear. We thank you for what you'll do through and in us. For the Lord's sake, Amen.

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