

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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 40

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 70-12

Before we have a little time for question and answer, I want to give you a little bit of a brief report on my meeting with those Russian gentlemen that were with us over last weekend. As you know, on Sunday night at our seminary graduation we had the privilege of giving an honorary doctorate to Duken Chanko(??) and on Saturday, the Saturday before at the college graduation to the man known as commandant. And I spent a portion of Monday with them and found it a very, very interesting time and I just wanted to give you a brief follow up.

From my time with them it's apparent that not only do they...do they understand what it is to know the Lord, but they understand sound doctrine. I was quite amazed at what they said to me. Their particular church, The Baptist Union of the Soviet Union, was required by the government to belong to the World Council of Churches. The World Council of Churches, of course, is anything but Christian, but nonetheless they were required to belong. And when commandant was elected to power the first thing he did was take the churches, all of them, immediately out of the World Council of Churches to dispossess themselves of the liberal element. And they had...they told us that on previous occasions of visiting the United States the only people they were allowed to interact with were people in the World Council of Churches. Consequently they never really met evangelicals and they really didn't know whether any existed. So this was their first real exposure to Bible-believing evangelicals. In fact, one time they said to me, "We thought everybody in America who claimed to be a Christian was crazy until we read your book on The Charismatics and said, "This man believes what we believe."

So it was a discovery time for them that there are Christians who believe as they believe. And the second thing they did was quite an interesting thing. For about 44 years their church has had to contain those people who take a sort of Pentecostal/Charismatic view of the Holy Spirit. And recently they have taken all of those people out of their movement and asked them to go and start their own movement. So they've done some amazing things. They want to be true to the Word of God and so they felt they needed to sort of set aside the liberal element and set aside the experiential element and remain with the people who are committed to the Word of God. And so they've taken some strong stands.

I said to them...they really have given an invitation, of course, for me to come to the Soviet Union, and they have planned for October 22 through November 3, a period of two weeks, for me to minister in Moscow, Kiev, and then down in the Black Sea in Odessa. And the goal is to spend time with pastors. Duken Chanko said that in Kiev they would estimate between 500 and 700 pastors would be

there. That's quite a number since there are only 1500 churches in the Ukraine. So that's...that's amazing.

There are not a lot of books so when you've written a book that they've read, you're somebody special because they don't have a lot of books. And there's a real camaraderie with us because of the material that they have seen and so I said to them...and then we go to Moscow and then down to the Black Sea in Odessa, I said, "Well what do you want me to teach? What do you want me to speak on? What do you want me to say to these pastors?"

I mean, obviously in my mind I knew they didn't want a seminar on how to build a church because they can't even get the people in their churches. They don't have a problem getting a crowd, they have a problem getting a crowd in the building. There are as many outside as there are inside. But this is what they said, they said, "Well the first thing we want you to speak on is what is the character of the true gospel."

And I said, "That pushes my buttons pretty directly."

They said, "Because our people have recently been exposed to an American evangelist who confused them about what it means to respond to Christ...he had everybody raising their hands and then he was telling them that if they raised their hands they were Christians. We've never heard anything like that. A Christian is not known to us by whether he raises his hand or not but by how he lives his life. So our people are very confused and they want to know, how do you really present the gospel to someone to draw out a true response, and then how do you follow up to be sure someone is genuinely born again."

The second thing they said is, "We need some teaching on the Holy Spirit because we have been exposed to people from America also who have come with signs and wonders and healings and supernatural gifts and miracles and all of that and we need the true teaching of the Word of God on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. And having read your book we know you believe what we believe and we must teach our pastors this."

Thirdly he said, "We need a lot of help with teaching out of the Bible on the family. What is God's requirement for the family?" It has been the tradition in Russia in the churches to have some very strange teachings. One of them is that you're to have children and no birth control, that it's not biblical to have birth control. In fact, it's likely that if you were candidating as a pastor if you didn't have at least five children you wouldn't even be considered. They go into this quiver and you're supposed to have your quiver full and they say you wouldn't even have a quiver if you didn't have five at least, and you go from there. Plus, how to manage your family, lead your family in a godly way. And so, they're very concerned about that.

Well, they kept talking about these issues which are basically biblical, exegetical, theological, doctrinal issues. And I said, "What you want me to do is come and teach doctrine." And they said that's exactly right. And I felt better about that because what am I going to say to them about living the Christian life? I mean, these people have lived it. But to help them see what the Bible teaches about doctrine...really exciting. When I told them I had a book on the things of the Holy Spirit they said we want to translate that into Russian. And they've already translated the book on the family and they've just finished the book on Shepherdology which is the biblical pattern for the church. And they said, "We want to do more books and get them into the hands of our pastors." So it was really an amazing camaraderie. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know whether we would pass like ships in the night and they would be coming at things completely in a different perspective but the truth of the matter is we both agreed that it appeared as if we were in the position of Esther who was brought to the kingdom just for such a time as this. So it was absolutely astounding that everything that is dear to my heart was exactly what they wanted me to teach their pastors. So you might even now be praying as the preparations begin for that. I'll make a short stop in July in Leningrad for a couple of days and then back again in October and November for some most fascinating opportunities to teach there.

They're already trying to persuade me to stay longer or to come sooner. I said to them, I said, "Well how many night meetings will I plan on? How many times to preach?" They said, "Oh we'll have a meeting every night and all day." So it will be...it will be a nonstop adventure to put it mildly. And they said, "Would you like to preach to some unbelievers?" I said, "Yes, of course." And they said, "Well then we'll have unbelievers only nights because so many unbelievers will come because there's such an appetite for the gospel because they've been deprived of it and they want to know what it is. And their lives are so empty. But if we announce that we're going to have unbelievers night, we will pack the place out and we have to do everything possible to keep the Christians from coming. Now even when we've done everything we can to keep the Christians from coming so we'll have room to pack in the unbelievers, the Christians will still all come. So it's sort of fruitless, but we're going to try our best to have some unbelievers only nights."

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine putting an ad in the paper saying we're having an unbelievers only night? And imagine whether anyone would show up? So I said, "That would be an amazing experience to have an entire church packed with unbelievers and just preach the gospel at them." Boy, what a thrill. So you pray for us as we plan and prepare to be there in those months and also as the translation of Shepherdology is finalized, put into print, put in their hands. We're very, very excited about that, so we encourage you to pray.

All right, it's time for you, if you have some questions, and we have about half an hour to just respond to what might be on your heart tonight. Try to keep them very brief, don't make long introductions and long questions. So pop right up to the mike and please keep it brief and one question per person so

we can get through the group. All right?

JOEL: Yes, I'm Joel Norris and it's my understanding that those who live by the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God, but those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and mocked by the Holy Spirit are God's own. But before the day of Pentecost God gave His Spirit only to certain select individuals and so I was wondering about the rest of the Old Testament saints, if they were regenerated or how without the Holy Spirit and if they weren't regenerated, were they living in the flesh? And if they're living in the flesh how were they saved?

JOHN: That's a very good question. There seems to be an awful lot of confusion about that issue because we make too much of a point of the New Testament saints' relationship to the Holy Spirit. I don't believe that it is possible for any person anytime to experience a relationship with God apart from the Holy Spirit. I don't care what dispensation you're talking about or what era. The Spirit of God is the agent by which God moves into the heart of man. So I believe that Old Testament saints were given new life by the Spirit, that the Spirit of God did come upon them. I believe also that the Spirit of God sustained that new life. It isn't...when Jesus says He has been with you, He shall be in you, He is not saying that you prior to this point didn't have the Holy Spirit, you did. He was with you. That's the only way anyone could have a relationship with God.

You remember back in Genesis 6, way back then God sent the flood...the flood to destroy the world and He said this, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." Even then the Spirit of God was striving with the unconverted and the unbelieving to bring them to the knowledge of the true God and they were rejecting the strivings of the Holy Spirit.

You also will be reminded that John the Baptist who really was an Old Testament prophet was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. So it is evident that the Spirit of God led the believers, and you can show a number of places in the Old Testament where that was true. There were also special anointings of the Spirit for prophetic work and leadership. But I believe there was regeneration in the Old Testament, there was new life. I believe that new life was dispensed and imparted by the Spirit and sustained by the Spirit.

JOEL: Then what was the difference when the Spirit came at the day of Pentecost for us now?

JOHN: Well again, now you're back to what Jesus said in John's gospel when He said He has been with you, He shall be in you. One difference was the gifts of the Spirit, a very unique manifestation of ministry. But you don't want to make too much out of that and say by it that, for example, the Spirit came and before that He wasn't here. You have the same problem at the other end of the line. People say, "Well after the Rapture the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the world." No, it never says that. All it says is the one who restrains will no longer restrain, which means that whatever restraining

work the Spirit of God does on sin and society He will stop doing. Still people will be converted and the only way they can be converted is by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit functions in bringing God into relationship with man through all of human history. Now what unique nuances occur within the church you can find out by starting in Acts chapter 2 and just following the pattern. Okay?

JOEL: Thank you.

JOHN: Uh huh. Yes?

QUESTIONER: In Hebrews 1:14 it says, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" Does this mean that the elect who have not yet come to know the Lord are being ministered by angels? And if so, how do they minister to them since the Holy Spirit does not dwell in them? Is this ministry to prepare their hearts and mind for the day they surrender to the Lord?

JOHN: Well, let me answer the question, first of all, by saying go back to the word "will" here and let's clear that up. When it says they are sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation, it's not talking about unconverted but elect people. It's talking about saved people who have not yet entered into their inheritance. You see the difference?

QUESTIONER: Yes.

JOHN: In other words, in Romans 13 it says, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed." What that means is that the full final inheritance which is, you know where it says in Peter, laid up for us? We are the ones who will inherit that. It's not talking about elect but unsaved people, it's talking about saved people who have not yet received the fullness of their salvation. See, salvation comes in three tenses, right? Past, we were saved from our sins, we are being saved in the fact that we're being preserved and kept, and we will be saved in the fullest and final and ultimate sense when we leave this world and enter into the fullness of glory.

QUESTIONER: So how do the angels minister to us?

JOHN: Well obviously they do, right? The fact that they are invisible makes it difficult for us to know how they do that. And furthermore Hebrews 13 says we could even entertain angels...what?...unaware. Now the only thing I can say it doesn't tell us how they minister and it's such a secret that they could be doing it and we wouldn't even be aware of it.

Now I can give you some illustrations that I read about. The one that's a classic is the illustration of John Peyton. John Peyton was a young man growing up in England and felt called of God to the

New Hebrides which are inhabited by man-eating cannibals. He was married and he put his little wife on this ship, steamer ship, and they went by the New Hebrides and dropped them off in a little rowboat and they rowed ashore and that's how they started their ministry, just rowing ashore, didn't know the language and it's an island full of natives. People had gone there in the past but they were invited to lunch and never came back. You know how that goes.

So, so when Peyton and his wife got off this little boat they built a little lean-to in the beach. And John writes in the biography that at night he could see the natives peering at him from out of the jungle. He tells stories about how that sometimes when he felt they were coming after him he would be in the river breathing through a reed. There were other times when he was completely exposed and they never bothered him.

After a period of time God began to do some incredible things. First his wife gave birth to a baby, then she died, then the baby died and he slept on their graves for three straight nights to keep the natives from digging up their bodies and eating them. He still hadn't contacted anybody. It wasn't long after that that there was a native thrown out of the tribe and they made contact and he began to use that native to learn the language. Led that native to Christ. Finally had the privilege of leading the chief to Christ, along with all of them. In fact, it says there were something like 35 churches on those islands by the time he left.

But toward the end, and you find this in that book written by Billy Graham called Angels, toward the end when these people started coming to Christ the chief came to him one time and asked him, "Who were those soldiers that guarded your lean-to on the beach every night?" And he said, "What soldiers?" And then he realized that what he didn't see, God allowed them to see. That's a very unique situation. We don't see them. They're in a different dimension but they are nonetheless there, active.

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

JOHN: You remember in Daniel...Daniel (laughter)...no, I've got to finish this. In Daniel...this is helpful, isn't it?

QUESTIONER: Yes.

JOHN: Say yes. In Daniel when God...when Daniel prayed and God sent an angel to answer his prayer. And that angel got held up by a demon for many, many days and God sent Michael to knock that demon out and then that angel went on and finished God's answer. Now what that tells me is sometimes when we pray God uses angels to answer those prayers, maybe to protect somebody, maybe to cause some circumstances to happen, but unquestionably to the saved there is the promise that angels are ministering spirits. Okay?

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

QUESTIONER: What signs or circumstances does one need to be alerted to that God would use to confirm the gift of celibacy?

JOHN: Well that's a good question. What do you need to confirm to you that you have the gift of celibacy? I'm sure there are many people who are wondering about that question, and that's a pretty subjective thing. But I would say this basically...by the way, I did a series of tapes on 1 Corinthians 7 on the gift of singleness, you might want to get those out of the book shack. Have you listened to those? Then go over there and tell them to put them on my account and pick them up, cause they'll give you a more detailed answer.

But I believe this. I believe the gift of celibacy equals being totally content to be single. Okay? Totally content, totally fulfilled. And furthermore, for the purpose of spiritual ministry. The gift of celibacy is not something that comes upon you by default. Well, I've tried 13 of them and they all said no, I must have the gift...no. That's not the gift. That's not the gift. The gift of celibacy is complete contentment to be single for the purpose of ministry because you...you are drawn to a ministry.

Now at some point in time that celibacy might be tested. You might say, "Well I wonder if I..." You know who usually tries to test your gift of celibacy? Your mother...your mother. By the time you're 30 and you're not married she's asking all kinds of silly questions. Something wrong with you? What's wrong with you? You don't like girls? You know how that whole conversation goes.

The gift of celibacy is not a gift that operates independent of a life committed to ministry. Now it might not be professional ministry, but there's just a freedom and a liberty to totally serve God with that gift. That's what that gift is for.

Now, celibacy itself is something else. I mean, a person may be celibate simply because God wanted them to be because maybe they miss the perfect purpose of God and, you know, their life wasn't what it ought to be so...and since they weren't the right guy, the right girl didn't know that, know that they were the guy. There's a lot of factors that could leave you single that would be different than the gift of celibacy. That's a unique facility whereby God provides you with singleness with the specific purpose of ministry. Okay?

JACK: Good evening, John, I am Jack. There are several places in Scripture where it says it repented God that He made man, it repented Him that He made Saul king.

JOHN: Right.

JACK: And in fact if I can squeeze in another one that's related to Saul, God sent on several occasions an evil spirit to Saul. Can you comment on all that?

JOHN: Sure. That's what we call anthropomorphisms.

JACK: Oh, now I know.

JOHN: Yeah, now you know, Jack.

JACK: I'll look that up as soon as I get home.

JOHN: The next question?

JACK: No, no, no, no.

JOHN: Okay, let me see if I can help you with that. The reason I use that word...the reason I use that word is not to give you a long word but to give you a word to explain. Anthropomorphism is two Greek words, anthroposmorphē. Anthropos is the word for man, anthropology. Morphē is the word for body, talk about an endomorph, an ectomorph, a mesomorph, different shapes of the human body. So anthropomorphic means that you refer to God in terms of a man's body, or a human body. It is simply a device by which to say something about God who is otherwise indescribable, inexplicable.

For example, in the Scripture it says the arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot heal. Does God have an arm? No. It says the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth? Does God have eyes? No, He's a spirit. Spirit has not flesh and bones.

It talks about His...His feet. It talks about even His appearance as if He were a man. Sometimes it talks about God as if He were a bird. It talks about the everlasting wings and He covers you with His feathers. God is not a man. God is not a chicken. God is not an eagle. God is not a pigeon. God is not a bird. But in order for us to comprehend in our minds something true about God which is otherwise indescribable to us, the Bible writer chooses to speak to us in terms which we understand. So very often when you read in the Scripture, for example, that it repented God that He made man, all that is saying to us is from our vantage point we understand that that means God felt bad, so bad about the condition that if He were a man He would say to Himself, "I wish I'd never made them." But obviously that is not ipso facto how God feels because if that's how God felt He'd know He'd feel that way because He knows everything and if that's how He really felt He never would have made them in the first place. So you're simply dealing with an anthropomorphic concept. We from our viewpoint understand when God says I'm sorry I ever made them, we understand that emotional expression because what that means is they are a major disappointment to me. And so we don't want to make

more of that.

Now in the case of Saul God permitted an evil spirit into Saul's situation, but that shouldn't surprise us. God permits the devil and evil spirits all the time. Remember our discussion of that not long ago, how that in the case of Job Satan goes to God and says, "Let me after Job and I'll destroy his faith." God says, "Have at him." Satan goes to the Lord and says, "Let me get after Peter and I'll sift him like wheat." And the Lord says, "Have at him." And Satan goes to God and says, "Give me Paul and I'll tear him up." And Paul starts to be hindered and hindered and hindered by Satan.

Sure, God will for His own eternal purposes and His own glory and the advancement of His kingdom permit those evil spirits, including Satan himself, to function within the framework of God's confining sovereignty. Okay?

JACK: Thank you

QUESTIONER: Okay, on the news yesterday they were reporting about the Pope being in Mexico not for the purpose of religious but for political.

JOHN: Right.

QUESTIONER: Okay, where does he tie in Revelation 17? There's the beast, there's the Antichrist and the false prophet.

JOHN: Well...

QUESTIONER: Does he tie in with one of those?

JOHN: Yes...the answer to your question is yes, he will tie in with one of those. The next question is which one and how, and I'm not sure that we can be dogmatic about that. I believe that the Roman system definitely appears in Revelation 17. I mean, you can literally see the Catholic Church in Revelation 17. But, by the way, you can also see the liberal Protestant church sucked up, so Protestants aren't exempt from that. But it tells you it's going to be headed up, mystery Babylon is going to be headed up in a city with seven hills. It says that. And it even talks about some other details that would lead us to point in that direction...the Antichrist rising out of Europe, out of the confederacy of Europe and certainly Rome would be a part of that. That's the very heart of the old Roman Empire.

So I would think that in the final world church of Revelation 17 it is wrapped around a Romish core. Now as to the Pope, some would say he might be the false prophet. Some would say he might be the Antichrist. I know Dick and I have talked about this, Dick Mayhue, a few months ago said in one of

his messages, I don't want to put words in your mouth, Dick, wherever you are, but you said that it's probably a good educated guess to see the possibility of a Pope, some Pope, fitting the role of Antichrist. That's what you said. And I think that...I think that is accurate. We don't know and we will not be dogmatic about that, but there is reason to believe in the text that that would make sense.

QUESTIONER: Okay.

JOHN: Because...now you're asking the question based upon the fact that the Pope is operating in a non-religious, political way, and that fits that scenario.

QUESTIONER: Okay.

LEE: Good evening, Pastor, my name is Lee Baron.

JOHN: Hi, Lee.

LEE: I'm not used to speaking in a microphone that comes out this loud.

JOHN: That's all right.

LEE: Being a Jewish believer that I am, I understand the last question that the false prophet has to be a Jew in order to lead and deceive the Jews, that is my opinion. I do believe that the Antichrist could be the Pope. My question, if I may read two verses, has to do with repetitive prayer for salvation, for loved ones and it's in 1 John chapter 5 verses 14 and 15. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us and if we know that He hears us whatever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him."

On prayer lists that we all have that we pray for, people, loved ones, friends, do we just have to pray once or do we have to pray over and over again like the example, the young man said that he had a sister pray for him for five years? I believe in repetitive praying, but that's because it's the way I've been brought up through the church.

JOHN: I think that is the proper way to pray. I think...I think, there's one sense in which you can't stop praying that way, right? You can't restrain that because if you care deeply you pray passionately. If you were to say, "Well look, Aunt Alice, I prayed once, don't push me." You know, I mean no way because you care deeply, you pray repetitively. I also believe that the principle of impassioned prayer is laid out throughout the Scripture. Even in the Old Testament there are passionate prayers by spiritual leaders for the people Israel.

In the New Testament you have Jesus saying that because of someone's much praying God responds, that's called importunity, prayers of importunity, with much praying. You have even Jesus

Himself agonizing in prayer before the Father in the garden, and not only in the garden on the night of His capture but apparently night after night after night after night praying. He says to Peter, "I have prayed for you." I don't think that means that He prayed one time for Peter. I think John 17, again, expresses the prolonged heart of Christ for His own and those that would come after them which He poured out to the Father again and again and again. So I think James 5 talks about that general principle, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

What the Bible forbids is vain repetition, empty repetition of formulas rather than the pleadings of the impassioned heart.

LEE: I know. Coming from the synagogue I know.

JOHN: Right. That's the difference. And I think we are to pray continually. I was thinking of 1 Timothy, a good place to look and then kind of get a passage and I covered this in a message I gave on this text called "Evangelistic Praying." "First of all, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men." What for? Well, certainly in part for their salvation. "For kings and all who are in authority and in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all men to be saved." So what are we praying? He says in verse 1 pray for all men. He says why in verse 4, because desire...God desires all men to be saved.

LEE: Yeah.

JOHN: Prayers, entreaties, petitions, I mean that's just a part of our life. So I think it's right, I think we are to pray continually.

LEE: Okay, thanks.

BRIAN: Hi, my name is Brian Sayers. This question is concerning elders' authority, or pastors' authority over the flock of God. I'm a visitor here and I'm looking to get some biblical and spiritual training and in making a big decision where I might want to go to get this training I feel it's important to seek good godly counsel, and an elder and a pastor is certainly an appropriate person to go to. My question then is how much liberty does a pastor or elder have in advising us when or where we should go to get this training?

JOHN: I believe that as far as authority, Brian, the only authority any pastor or elder has is the Word of God. When you step beyond the Word of God you've overstepped the bounds of your authority. I have no authority if you're in my congregation to say to you...Go here and get this training, go there, I command you...I have no authority to do that. That is overstepping my bounds. I am nothing more

and nothing less than an instrument by which God makes known to you His revelation. That's my role.

Now, I may say to you, given the circumstances I would recommend this because it appears from what I know about that and what I know about you that this would be a good choice, but that is not authority that is counsel. My authority stops when I close the page of this book. And then all I'm doing is giving you counsel and you can consider that counsel as to its inherent value and make your own decision, but I have no authority to command you beyond the pages of the Word of God. That very point is where pastors and elders, leadership becomes out of bounds and abusive and overbearing. God never intended that. The best we can do is give wise counsel. That's why the Old Testament says in much counsel there is wisdom. The point is there if God wanted us to just listen to one guy He would say...If you want to know what to do go ask the elder...but He says get much counsel and you get wisdom. So I believe our authority stops where Scripture ends and then the best we can do is try to give wise counsel based upon our best understanding of the facts. Okay?

BRIAN: Thanks.

JOHN: You're welcome.

YOST: Hi, John, my name is Yost. My question is about being unequally yoked. Some people have told me that this is talking exclusively about marriage, others have said that it applies to business partnerships and other situations. Could you please expand on this? What does it mean to be unequally yoked and what type of a guideline should I have if it is okay for me to have a business partnership with a non-believer?

JOHN: Well, this is a very, very important question. Second Corinthians chapter 6 is what you're asking about. The concept of yoke gives you the key, I think, and you have to apply it yourself. I mean, there's no hard and fast rule. But a yoke was something that was put over two animals in a common enterprise, okay? Now what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:14 is, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? What fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony has Christ with Belial? What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?"

Now what it's saying is if you are in the same yoke, pulling the same plow down the same furrow, that is you're working side by side in the same enterprise and you're yoked together with an unbeliever, you've got problems. Truly that would refer to marriage cause there's no firmer, stronger, more binding yoke than marriage, right?

YOST: Right.

JOHN: If you go beyond that, you say, "What about a business partnership?" It would depend upon the nature of that partnership. I mean, if for example there's a limited partnership in buying a motel and there's ten guys buying into this deal and I'm one of ten, that's one thing, right, I'm investing. I might put my money in a bank, that's a form of partnership too with other people. I don't think that's the issue here. What is the issue here is linking up side by side under the same yoke, pulling the same furrow in the same direction. Now that might mean a partnership in a common business where you're working side by side because you're going to have problems.

The obvious meaning here, the most obvious meaning would be in some spiritual enterprise. I think that's the primary thing. The primary thing is don't ever link up with an unbeliever in a spiritual enterprise. Does that make sense? People do it all the time, by the way, strange enough, by taking money and involvement with unbelievers.

But I also think the spill over. So the obvious thing, first of all, the obvious thing--no in marriage because that's a believer and an unbeliever yoked. No in any common spiritual enterprise. And then secondarily, be very careful if you're pulling the same yoke down the same furrow in front of the same plow with an unbeliever because it's inherent that there will be conflict because the standard by which you operate is different and you have to make that judgment as to what the partnership involves. Okay?

YOST: Thank you.

JOHN: The Spirit of God will lead you with that. Yes?

LINDA: Good evening, John.

JOHN: And we'll just...we won't take any more folks, we'll try to finish these.

LINDA: My name is Linda.

JOHN: Hi, Linda.

LINDA: And in a recent conversation with a coworker who is an orthodox Jewess she and I were discussing theology and we were fine on the Old Testament to a point, and then she turned around and said, "Christians are polytheistic." And I had never thought of us as being polytheistic.

JOHN: Right.

LINDA: And I didn't know how to answer her. Is this...

JOHN: Well the reason they say we're polytheistic is because we teach the trinity. See, that's simply saying if you believe God is God and Jesus is God, then you've got two Gods. That's what they're saying.

LINDA: But how do you answer her and prove to her from the Old Testament that Christians are not polytheistic because she won't acknowledge the New Testament?

JOHN: Well yeah, what you...all you want to do is prove the trinity from the Old Testament. Go to the bookstore, there's a marvelous little book that, I hope it's still in there, a little paperback book on the trinity in the Bible and it will give you all the verses...all the verses. And you can go through the Old Testament and show the trinity there. The first place to start would be in Genesis and God said...what?... "Let US?" Who's that? And then you start and you show the trinity through the whole Old Testament.

LINDA: Is this is a widespread...

JOHN: Right.

LINDA: ...Notion?

JOHN: Right, among Jewish people, sure. That's one of the accusations against Christianity is that we're polytheistic because we have God and we say Christ is God and we have two Gods. You see, the one most fundamental foundational truth about Judaism is the belief in one God. See, that's what set them apart. That's the shemah(?), that's Deuteronomy 6, "The Lord our God is one." And that's what they put on the...that's what they wrapped on the phylacteries on their arm, that's what they wrapped on the phylacteries on their head, that's what they put on the mezuzah of the wall of their house. Deuteronomy 6 was everything. Why? Because they were a monotheistic people in a polytheistic world and God called them out of the other nations with their many gods and He said to them, "The Lord our God is one, teach this to your children, talk about it when you stand up, sit down, lie down and walk in the way." And that is the monogram of traditional Judaism.

So, they look at Christianity and one of the major points of rejection is to say...See, they have more than one God. And they try to make a case for that. But that case doesn't hold water even in the Old Testament. Ask them how to explain the Psalms where it says, "My Lord, said...The Lord said unto My Lord." That's a trinitarian conversation. There are a number of texts that will help you with that.

LINDA: Thank you.

JOHN: Okay.

VIVIAN: Hi, Pastor John, my name is Vivian.

JOHN: Hi, Vivian.

VIVIAN: Hi. My question is there are a lot of references in Proverbs 31, Titus 2, 1 Peter 3 about what a godly woman, like a married woman, what is your definition of femininity to the single woman?

JOHN: Well...

VIVIAN: And secondly, what were your thoughts and feelings when you were walking Marcy down the aisle as she was getting married?

JOHN: Well...first of all, the standard for a godly single woman is the same for a godly married woman. Proverbs 31 would be the same thing only without the household environment. She would be gracious and submissive and yet enterprising, virtuous, all of those principles would be the same for a single woman as for a married woman. And, of course, in the scriptural sense while she was single she would be still under the protection of her father, so she would have a responsive relationship to his leadership in her life. So I believe that there's no real difference in the quality and the character. In fact I believe unless you're that kind of single woman, the chances are you're not going to be that kind of married woman. One just grows into the other.

And what was I thinking when I walked Marcy down the aisle? Well, my thoughts, of course I was standing in the back and I was thinking about an awful lot of things, I was thinking about letting her go. We love Mark and he's a wonderful Christian guy and he fits into our family so well, he's just like one of our kids, so I wasn't at all concerned about that and we know...I knew they were going up to serve the Lord together. And they do. They...he is director of Island Lake Christian Camp on the Puget Sound in Seattle, and so they minister to people all week long in that camping setting. I wasn't concerned about that. But I was just thinking about giving my daughter away, losing my daughter. And I admittedly, I thought, you know, here you spend your entire life protecting the purity of your daughter and in one day you say, "Here, take her." (Laughter) You know, that's a traumatic thing for a father. But I had those thoughts.

And to say what I was thinking about coming down the aisle, they gave us a cue when we were supposed to start. Well Marcy was standing back at the door and I was standing there with her and all of a sudden she realized that she didn't have her bouquet, her bridal bouquet. And so she just said, "Oh, I don't have my flowers." Well as soon as she said the music started for us to go and so...there was...the wedding hostess, Debbie Woodward, took off like a rocket clear across the patio

to get to the bridal room to scoop the flowers up, and Marcy was saying..."Oh, hurry, hurry..." So we were in a rather of a, you know, confused state. And they had told us how long it would take to walk and how fast to walk. And so...by the time Debbie came racing back to the door, panting with these flowers and threw them into Marcy's arm and...she took my arm and all of a sudden turned around and smiled like nothing had happened...I didn't know where I was in the music. And that's the truth. So I just said to her, "I don't know how long we have so let's hurry." (Laughter) So all I was thinking of was getting down there as fast as I could and I got down here too soon. And so everybody thought..."What kind of an idiot is this guy? We went over this again and again and again." (Laughter) And nobody knew what was going on in the back. "Why is he here now?"

And I just grinned, you know. Marcy and I knew, we were the only ones along with Debbie. But...you know, I'll tell you, it's a great satisfaction when...when you know your daughter goes into a marriage pure, when she marries a young man who loves the Lord Jesus Christ. That's sort of the culmination of the parenting process, in a way, isn't it? In fact, I remember when Matt married Kelly, we had this sense of rejoicing how wonderful it was, you know, you sort of...Well, we got through with him and he married a Christian girl, and that's that.

And then all of a sudden you wake up a little while later and they start having grandchildren and you realize...We've got to worry all over again. We've got a whole another generation coming along. Only these, we don't have any control over. So you just have to continue to pray for the future.

But it was a very special wonderful time for us. Believe me, in every sense.

Okay, just these last three, very quickly. We'll do this in just a minute or so.

DAVID: Hi, John, my name is David and my question is from Luke 16 where you have Lazarus and the poor man and they're shown in a place together, one in Abraham's bosom and one in torment. My question is, was Lazarus, or Old Testament believers in general, in the fullest sense in heaven or did they have to wait until Christ died to gather them up. I say this because I heard something in your tape that you don't believe in a sort of holding tank of limbus patrum, I don't know.

JOHN: Right. I don't believe in a holding tank, limbus, purgatory, or anything like that. I believe that they were in the presence of God but they were not in the full final new heavens and the new earth, which have yet to be created, right? In the future. Jesus when He came to the earth said, "I go away and I go away to prepare a place for you." So the finally prepared place was not yet prepared, but I believe to be in Abraham's bosom was to be in a place of bliss, a place of blessing, a place of the presence of God. I believe that torment was to be in a place of punishment but not the final hell

because the final hell, according to the book of Revelation, awaits the final judgment. So after the final judgment is the final hell and the final new heavens and new earth. Until that time the unbelieving are in torment, the believing are in a blessed place where God's presence is. But there will be a final form of that and that's just splitting hairs, in a sense, but that's where I am.

And sometimes I can't be specific about that because I can't remember all the detail of a message. So if you want to know what I really believe, you can go back and find some of the tapes on that and I'll give you a more detailed explanation. But I don't believe...I don't believe, for example, Ephesians 4, there was a holding tank, Jesus went into the holding tank where all these people were in limbo and took them up to a good place. I believe they were in the presence of God in a good place. And until the final new heaven and new earth, they are in an eternally blessed place that will still yet have a final form. Okay?

JOHN FORD: Hi, my name is John Ford. A few weeks back you were teaching and you mentioned that the...believe that the crown of the believers was not a physical material crown, but that of the joy that we have when we lead someone to Christ. I was just wondering how that fit in with this verse in Revelations 3:11, speaking of the church of Philadelphia, it says, "I am coming soon, hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown."

JOHN: Right. What he's...what He's saying there, well He certainly wasn't meaning a physical crown or they'd be going around like this....holding on to it. What He is saying is don't default in your spiritual life and forfeit your reward. John says the same thing. Second John 8, I think, "Look to yourselves that you lose not the things which you have wrought but that you receive a full reward." You can earn a reward and lose it. And that reward, the crown of rejoicing, for example, is not a crown that says "rejoicing," it is a crown which is rejoicing. The crown of life is not a crown that says "life," it is a crown which is eternal life. That crowns your life. That's what that means. And when He says don't let anybody take your crown, what He means is don't let anybody lead you down a path of sin that will somehow lessen the potential of your eternal reward. That's what He's saying. Okay?

JOHN FORD: Yeah.

GENE: John, Gene Shreider(?). Jay Adams' new book on forgiveness that came out in 1989 is in the book shack. He clearly teaches in accordance with Luke 17:3, "Be on your guard, if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents forgive him." He teaches that you have to have a heart always for forgiveness, yet there are many, many fine Christian theologians that take a different point of view, their point of view being that forgiveness is there, it is consummated just in my mind and it doesn't need to be that the sinner come and ask for forgiveness. Could you clarify this for me?

JOHN: Yeah, I think that it's both. I think that I have to forgive in my heart, that takes care of my heart attitude. But until that sinner comes and repents to me, that relationship will never be restored. So it's a two-dimensional forgiveness. I don't want to bear a grudge. If you sin against me, I have to forgive you in my heart, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me. So, I do that willingly. But I will never be able to have a right relationship with you until you come to me and seek the forgiveness that opens up the relationship.

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