

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

Bible Questions and Answers, Part 33A

Selected Scriptures

70-5A

Welcome. We're glad you're all here. And as you know, it's our custom at a question and answer time on Wednesday night to just put microphones in the aisles there. And we encourage you to go up to a microphone and get behind one. And if you have a question, feel free to ask. We just want you to ask questions that are on your heart about the church, about the ministry here, about issues in general, if we can give some biblical perspective or about some part of the Scripture that you might need some help with. Okay? So we'll just go along with these particular microphones, starting at the left. Boy, we've got lots of people with questions...wow. You guys came loaded tonight. Okay.

Give us your name first so we can get to know you.

QUESTIONER: Yes, Gary Bole. I have two questions. One has to do with the cult, SelfRealization Fellowship. I've looked through a few of the books but they don't seem to go very far.

And I have some immediate family that are involved.

JOHN: Let me just respond by saying the SelfRealization Fellowship to the best of my knowledge has been around for quite a long time. I remember when they first began to occupy a facility on Hollywood Boulevard, down at the back of what used to be the old Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, right across from the new Kaiser Hospital. And that's been about, it must be 30 years ago.

They've been around for a long time.

What they basically are is a sort of an offshoot of eastern mysticism. I think it was originally, its roots have to do with Indian mysticism from India. It's a sort of science of the mind kind of thing, selfrealization gives it away. You sort of sit and meditate yourself into meaningful being. I don't know that there's much more you can say about it. It would be a lot of eastern mysticism, probably be involved with some kind of Transcendental Meditation to one degree or another. But as I've pointed out in the past, the bottom line of that kind of thing is that it's a selfattaining to a level of righteousness or being which is supposedly sufficient. And so it's a religion of man's own invention. But it would be sort of...it would be a form of eastern mysticism.

Q: The second question is how far are we supposed to as Christians go to protect ourselves and our family in our homes from intruders and such?

J: How far are we to go as Christians in protecting our family.

Well personally, I believe we are given the responsibility to protect our families. I mean, if you just

look at Ephesians and it's an obvious thing that one of the things that the Lord has given in terms of instruction to a husband in Ephesians 5, it says, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." The parallel here is between Christ's actual selfgiving and the husband's actual selfgiving for the sake of the wife. Christ gave His life for us. The parallel says that if need be we would actually give our lives in the behalf of our family.

Now having said that, let me add that I don't think it's necessary initially to first of all give our lives...to say, "Well, here I am, shoot me and take all the money," you know. I think there's an obvious factor of selfdefense. I think God has built into us selfdefense mechanisms. I mean, our eyes blink, you know, when something comes at us. I mean, it's just part of the human mechanism. And I don't see any limitation on the matter of selfdefense at all. I think we are given the responsibility to love and protect and it goes on in that passage to talk about being the savior, the husband being the savior of the wife to nourish and cherish, not only to feed but to insulate with warmth and protection, that word "cherish" means. And I'm sure that we would include in that the encompassing of the children as well. So I feel that you have every right to protect in a defensive mode your children. Just as I think you have the right to defend yourself against any evil aggressor. I mean, it's the same question you would have to ask on a wider level politically. Should a Christian go to war? Well the answer is, to defend those who are under attack from an evil aggressor, yes.

To be a part of the army of the evil aggressor, no.

In Romans 13 which would probably be a related passage, Paul mentions that the police or soldiers do not bear the sword in vain. And it says there they are ministers of God to be for good. They are avengers to execute wrath on those that do evil.

Now you don't bear a sword to slap people in the knuckles. You bear a sword to chop their head off. So the text there indicates to me that there are times in the protection of the good against the evil aggressor that the sword is in the hand given by God.

And I believe that in the sense of protecting my own home, if it came to someone taking the life of the people in my house, I think I have an obligation to protect them on the behalf of good and what is righteous and just against that evil aggressor. Does that answer your question?

Q: Yeah, thank you.

J: Okay. Now how you...how you practically implement that...I think I told the story about the guy who came with a butcher knife in our house and wanted to take Melinda. And the only thing I could find was a thirtyfour inch baseball bat. And I simply said to him through the door, "You come in the door and you'll find your head in Encino." And I think that was a sort of spiritual statement at that particular juncture because there was no way he was going to come in with a butcher knife against my daughter. I feel I have a Godgiven obligation. Okay.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. Rufus Harvey here. I have two questions for you. In the morning on my drive time to work right between my boss, Chuck Swindoll and my pastor, John MacArthur, there's a gentleman that comes on named John Wimber(?) and I frequently find myself turning off his program, being rather upset at his taking Scripture out of context and so forth. The last couple of days he's been reading off stories of how he's cast demons, supposedly, out of Christians. My

question to you is do you consider Pastor John Wimber to be a Charismatic brother who has a different perspective on the Scriptures than us, or do you consider him a false teacher in the light of the passage in 1 Timothy that we've been studying with you?

JOHN: Yeah, you know, it's a good question, Rufus. And I would say in my own mind, and I don't know that I can isolate this, but when I talk about a false teacher or a false prophet I usually have in mind someone who perverts the saving gospel. I'd have to think about whether that's consistently true in the New Testament text. But I think you might find that is at least the emphasis of a false teacher or a false prophet, someone who leads you away from saving truth.

So in the technical sense, I would not see John Wimber as a false prophet in the fact that he will articulate and adhere to the gospel, the saving gospel of Christ. He would not present another gospel. But from there on, he presents things that are not true. He teaches a course at Fuller Seminary which is a very interesting phenomena because Fuller is moving more and more toward Charismatics because when you go into liberalism and when you begin to let go of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture and you wind up with a vacuum of liberalism, you also wind up with no real spiritual reality. And in a grasping for some kind of spiritual reality, some kind of, if you will, feeling or emotion, they have done two things over the last few years. One, they hired a Catholic priest with a doctorate in spirituality from some Catholic university to come and teach spirituality and take their students away to some monastery so they could learn spirituality. And the second thing they've done is to bring in this Charismatic influence to try to infuse some feeling into the sort of the vacuous theology that they've wound up with. And Wimber was that person. And he began to teach a course called, MC501. Christian Life, or Christian Herald magazine about two or three years ago did a special article on that in which he teaches people how to heal and how to cast out devils. And he sees the tongues of fire coming out of the sky and this big sword zapping people in the head and so forth.

But he is definitely a Charismatic. He has a personal sort of warmth and gentleness about his personality that I think is different than a lot of the sort of screaming type of Charismatics. And seems to have some balance in his life in terms of his life style that some of them don't. But I think basically he's really at a loss in terms of Bible interpretation.

I heard him say one day that...and I'm telling you this because you need to be warned...so many people have asked me about him cause he's on right before we are...but I heard him say one day, "Now when you talk about miracles, you can't go to the gospel of John," this is almost a direct quote, "You can't go to the gospel of John since John doesn't deal with miracles." And I almost fell off my car seat because the entire gospel of John is one long series of miracles which are all about proving, as John 20:31 says, that Jesus is the Christ. And so, that kind of stuff really is so tragic. And he has a personality that's attractive but you have...you just have to know that his understanding of the gifts of the Spirit, his understanding of the...I guess you could call it the ontology of spiritual life, or whatever, is not true to Scripture.

And I don't know how people can keep telling themselves they can cast out devils and heal everybody when they know themselves that they can't. I mean, they can't or they'd be at the hospital doing it. So they seem to always find a way out. But you need to be very cautious in listening to him.

Q: Okay. In the case of a Christian friend who is about to marry a nonbeliever, would you suggest attendance at the wedding ceremony as their friend?

J: I wouldn't go. That's my own feeling. You know, that brings up an interesting point, if I can digress for a minute, just to illustrate. When I first came to Grace Church there was a very prominent person in the church who was a teacher and very involved in the church, an elder. And had a daughter going to marry an unbeliever and the board said, this was the first two weeks I was here and this was the key guy, gave a lot of money to the church, you know, very important person...they said, "Well, will you do the wedding?" And I said, "I can't marry a believer to an unbeliever."

"Well, maybe we'll win him," you know, they really weren't sure, some of them cause they hadn't really gotten into that area, that's a long time ago. And so I said, "Well, let's look at the Scripture." So we went through the Scripture one night and they said, "Well, there's no way we can marry them, no way."

So what we should do is get someone else to marry them and let them use the chapel so we sort of mediate the thing." And I said, "Well, let me ask you a question. Would this be a marriage that honors Christ?" "No." "Is this facility for the honor of Christ?" And I remember one elder said, "We can't have that wedding here, no way." And the third question was, can we go?

If Christ...if this does not honor Christ to the point where we won't do it and we can't have it here, can we go? And my own feeling at that time was I can't. I can't lend my support to that. But that's my own heart. Okay?

Q: Thank you.

J: Yes.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. First I'd like to...my name is Payton and first I'd like to just give you a personal thanks for all teaching and everything you've done for the church here, you've help me grow an incredible amount. And I just wanted to say thank you.

J: Thank you.

Q: I have a very short twopart question. First part being, once our disembodied spirits go into heaven, would we be able to see events taking place on the earth such as the Great Tribulation and salvation of other souls? And the second part being once up there, would our prayers have any more effect on the salvation of souls or for the salvation of souls once we've been freed from sin?

J: Interesting questions. Relative to your first question, after our spirits leave to go to be with the Lord, and of course that's what happens at death, right? Philippians 1:21, Paul says, "Far better to depart and be with Christ," there's no middle ground. And 2 Corinthians 5, "Absent from the body present with the Lord." And yet we wait the resurrection of the body which occurs at the Rapture of Christ when the dead in Christ rise first, 1 Thessalonians 4. So our spirits are in heaven and the question you're asking is will we be able to look down here and see?

I don't know the answer to that question. I don't know whether we will be able to or not. But, I don't believe that even if we were able we would want to. I always think about the fact that being in the

presence of Jesus Christ will be such a consuming reality and such an utter fulfillment and our existence there will be so glorious that there would be absolutely no interest in what was going on down here.

Q: Yeah, I kind of thought that we might be totally preoccupied with glorifying God up there.

J: I think we will have entered in to a dimension of living in which we will exist for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, not for the preoccupation of the difficulties of earth. So I think to be with the Lord is a consuming thing. And once we enter into that, the Bible says once we are with the Lord, we will ever be with the Lord. And I think that it's going to be in that communion with the risen glorified Christ and all the other saints that are there, I would sure rather sit down if I have such opportunity and spend those seven years getting to know some of the saints of old than looking back here being preoccupied with whatever is happening. My sort of inner feeling is that this...what happens in this world would be beyond our concern and probably even beyond our...our capability of seeing. I don't know whether we need to divide those two, but...yeah.

Now the second question...

Q: Was about prayer for salvation for other souls down here.

J: Yeah, there's nothing in the Scripture to indicate that there's any prayer at all in heaven by anybody.

Q: Okay, thank you very much.

J: But there will be a lot of praise.

Q: Amen.

QUESTIONER: Hi, I'm Darwin. And my question relates to what you've been going over on Sunday evenings, chapter 14. In Romans 14:14 how it says that nothing is unclean. And last Sunday you were talking...you gave a lot of examples about, you know, cigarettes and all kinds of things and I somewhat understand your perspective on rock music and different styles of rock music. I don't know if I understand it totally, but as far as I understand that verse saying is when nothing is unclean, that would consist in music too, and you know a certain beat, whether it be a rock type beat or whatever, that in itself couldn't be wrong. Am I correct, incorrect?

JOHN: Not necessarily. It depends on what its purpose is and what it's used to communicate. And...

Q: Right...right.

J: See, I tried to say whatever is lawful is lawful. Whatever in and of itself is not a moral thing or has no obvious moral overtones. He's basically talking about things that don't have any moral inherent moral property to them. Now a note of music does not have any inherent moral property. Hitting a drum, blowing a horn, plucking a string has no inherent moral property.

But it is obvious that music is a unique thing which can create all kinds of moral or immoral, emotional or whatever responses.

So it's an oversimplification to say that music in general is nonmoral in a sense. You can create a music that by virtue of cultural identification.

For example, there was a song out some years ago called "The Stripper." And I remember hearing that song a lot on the radio.

And they would always say it was "The Stripper." So whenever I heard that music, I mean, I thought that's the stripper. So when...there was so much of a style of music identified with stripping, I guess, that they could literally label a certain song as the stripper that didn't even have any words. But it communicated so strongly that particular message because of our cultural comprehension of that genre of music and those sequence of notes and the way the beat was put together and so forth and so forth and so on. I mean, we hear John Philip Sousa and nobody thinks of a stripper because the genre of music in our culture.

And I admit that it is cultural. That in and of itself it may not have communicated that except that for some reason it's become identified with that.

I mean, there are all kinds of tests that have been done on, you know, the various kind of beat, what they call the anapestic beat where you have two longs and a short and all that. And you've read about the things, it kills the flowers and you know you put flowers by a radio, play that stuff, they die and so forth. But I would say there may be some inherent truth in that, but still it wouldn't be moral. Killing the flowers isn't necessarily a moral issue. But I think cultures...cultures give to music their moral identification. I think they do that. I mean, I can hear a song on the radio and you can tell me that in and of itself that song is not a moral issue, those notes aren't moral, but that music makes me think of something sinful because that is the way the culture has portrayed that sinful act through that style of music. I mean, it's like listening to a song that's on strings and violins and thinking of a blue sky and wind blowing through a meadow. I mean, music can do that because of our cultural orientation.

So I think it's an oversimplification to just say that rock music is so nonmoral that any kind of rock music if you stuck the right words in it would honor the Lord. I don't believe that. I think there is a genre of music that is given such a cultural identification that it's impossible to cross the line of putting that into a Christian vernacular without bringing total confusion to what you're trying to communicate. Okay?

Q: Okay, yeah, I understand.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. Danny ??? This week in our Bible study at work that we have on a regular basis, we've been going, as I said before on other occasions, through the Bible, you know, from like Genesis to Revelation. We're up to Jonah. And last week or this last week, we were studying the book of Jonah and one of the fellows in the study mentioned that somewhere he heard that somebody...one of the Bible teachers, I don't even remember the guy's name, but had said that he believes that Jonah actually died in the whale and then when he was spit out, God rebirth...you know, came alive again. And there was a reference to where the Lord said, "Like Jonah," I think it

was in Luke, I'm not sure.

JOHN: Right, I know that viewpoint. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the earth."

Q: Exactly. And then what this fellow...he says that since he heard this other guy, whoever it was, I don't know, but anyway, now he believes it and I said, "Well, you know, the Bible really doesn't say that Jonah died when he was in the whale." So I'm just kind of curious, maybe you...elaborate on that.

J: Yeah, I don't...I don't believe, Danny, I don't believe that there's anything in the prophecy of Jonah to indicate that he died. In fact, the time that he spent in the belly of the whale is even chronicled for us in the book. And he spent the time in prayer, really basically crying out to God which would be more than difficult if you were dead. I think...I think that the indication there is that he was alive and that God preserved him through that situation. I don't think there's anything there to indicate that he was dead.

Now to surmise that he was dead based upon the New Testament text is to push the point of an analogy. Now in an...an analogy is simply using something as a word picture. And I think the Lord is not necessarily referring to Jonah in the sense that Jonah is a prophecy of the death and resurrection of Christ. I think simply our Lord simply borrows the illustration of Jonah more in an analogous or as an analogy or an illustration sense than in any directly prophetic sense. I think Jonah went in the belly of a fish. He was there for three days. And the fish vomited in him, and I'm not surprised because I can understand why the fish would want to vomit such a disobedient prophet.

He'd make anybody sick...even a fish. So he vomited him out.

I think all our Lord is saying is that in a sense that is analogous. Now if you want to go a step further, you might even want to say that that is a type of Christ which would be a non verbal prediction. I wouldn't necessarily argue with that.

Maybe the story of Jonah is in a sense a type of Christ. But I don't even think our Lord says that. He doesn't say it is the fulfillment of a prophecy. He just says as Jonah...so shall the Son of Man. So I think it's an analogy.

Now to take an analogy and then to try to push backwards into that analogy, everything that is true about what you're using it to illustrate, there's no basis for that. There's no reason to do that. He's simply saying as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish, I'm going to be three days and three nights in the earth. Well, there's obviously difference.

There's a difference between a fish and the earth...so why can't there be a difference in the condition in the fish and the condition in the earth? It's simply used, I think, as an analogy, a time analogy and what appeared on the surface to be obviously a resurrection.

Now there is another element to it, too. And this you have to realize if we want to push the argument a little bit. The truth of the matter is that Jesus even when He was in the earth wasn't dead. If you want to argue about the fact that Jonah had to be dead because Jesus was dead, you're talking

about the body and not the spirit, right? Was Christ...did He go out of existence? Did He pass out of existence in there? In the grave?

No. He was...it's pretty clear, He was made alive in the Spirit, Peter says, by which He went and preached to the spirits in prison. So I think it's just pushing the analogy. I think it's an analogy and no more. Okay?

Q: There was just one other point he mentioned, I think in Jonah it says "My spirit was down into Sheol," or something. Using that as a corollary.

J: Yeah, the Old Testament uses that word in a very general sense for the grave...for the darkness of death. And I don't think it can be used literally to refer to the grave, it can be used literally to refer to death, or it can be used metaphorically or symbolically of deep despair. It could also be used to speak of...and we could probably dig up some illustrations of each of these...to speak of being very near to death...my soul went into Sheol in the sense of right at the edge of the grave. And I don't think you can push the point there that he was dead. I really do believe and maybe the best argument of all would be that if indeed that was a resurrection, the Holy Spirit is not in the business of minimizing resurrections. So if Jonah had literally died and been raised from the dead, it would seem to me that that would have been significant enough for the text to have made that clear...since the Lord does not minimize resurrections. Okay?

Q: Okay. Thanks a lot, John.

J: Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. My name is Gina. This is more of advice.

You give me advice, than a question. I have a little boy who is going to Christian school, he's in kindergarten. And it's come to my attention that they are going to be making jacko'lanterns for Halloween and black cats. And I talked to his teacher and she said that at Christmas they make Santa Clauses and Easter Bunnies on Easter. And I told her, I says, "But this is why my son is in Christian school, I want him to be separated from this. I teach him at home that we are not supposed to be a part of Halloween or this and that, but you are compromising or...contrary to me to what I am saying." And it's confusing him. "Mommy, why can't I do this? They are doing it." And he understands, he's in a Christian school.

I have an appointment to talk with the principal of the school tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. Can you give me some advice?

JOHN: I think that's good. Well, I think you're right. I mean, why...why create the unnecessary confusion? I mean, jacko'lanterns and cats and witches and devils and demons and people dressed up in funny costumes, and all of that. That's all out of paganism. In fact, I wrote a whole thing on that one time, I don't know if we have any of those around anymore, but the terrible mixture of old church festivals with pagan festivals. You know, like the Saturnalia feast of the pagans that got all mixed up with Christmas and that kind of thing. I think it's good to keep those things distinct. And I think you're right to go talk to the principal. And I think it's a simple an issue as basically saying, "Look, this is a Christian school, so let's celebrate the things that speak of Christ and the Word of God and set a

different pattern."

What we've always done with our kids in reference to Halloween is to give them some kind of an alternative when they were little. Now they don't care. But when they were little, you know, we want to do something as a family that would be even more special than what everybody else did. And if you can create that for your own child, he's not going to have any problem with what the others are doing if you do something with him that's even better.

Q: Yeah, that's what we planned on doing.

J: But I would definitely speak to the people and let them know how you feel about that. I think that's very important.

Q: Because of your understanding no compromise, the truth, the whole truth and nothing but...that is why I feel so strongly and I called Grace School and I asked them what they thought...did they do this? And they said absolutely not. And I was very glad to hear that.

J: Me, too. That's right.

Q: One more thing, I have a husband who is very scared to get up here and talk to you. He has a question and that is he's a very good Christian, I believe, but he wants to know how do you personally know Jesus Christ? I mean, it's such a struggle. I find the same question in my heart. You know, I sit and I pray and I have answered prayers, but yet do we really know Him? It's like I want to know You so bad...you know. Do you understand me?

J: Yes I understand you. Yes...that's a wonderful question.

It's a thrilling question. And if it makes you feel comfortable, listen to this...this is Paul the Apostle, have you ever heard of him?

Q: Oh yeah.

J: Not a bad Christian. He's got to rank up there with the best. This is his prayer. Okay? His prayer is this, "That I may know Him..." That I may know Him? What in the world are you asking that for, Paul? You've known Him for years. You've given your life to His service. I believe and I know you know the gospel and I know you know what it is that Jesus died and rose again and I know you believe that and I know you've committed your life to Christ. And all you are manifesting, I believe, is the insatiable thirst of a true believer for the fullness of the knowledge of Christ...that never goes away.

Q: But that personal relationship, it's...I don't know, it's like climbing a rope and slipping down and keep climbing cause you want to get up there, you know.

J: Any of you identify with that? I can identify with that.

See, that's wonderful. I mean, I've been a Christian for a long time and I've learned some things in the Bible, you know, and I could give you little answers about well, try this verse and do this and do

that. But the truth of the matter is, you will live all your life long and the more you know about the Word of God and the more you walk with the Lord, the more down deep in your heart you will hunger to know Him.

Q: Thank you.

J: That's a pursuit of life that I may know Him, Paul says. And what about Him do you want to know? I want to know the power of His resurrection. Do you ever feel impotent? Do you ever feel like there's so many things you wish you could do but you want to know the power to do them? And then he says that I may know the communion of His sufferings. I mean, I want to be so close to Him that I hurt when He hurts, that I bear His reproach, that I feel His pain. It's that longing for intimacy. That's that...that's that phileo love, the love of intimacy that cries out and says I want to know more than that You're my Savior, I want to walk with You and I want to sense Your power and I want to see You moving in my life.

And if I may suggest to you, the way you see that is not by a feeling. There are times when you feel the presence of the Lord, I don't doubt that. But I don't see the power of God and the fellowship with Christ and the knowledge of Christ so much in what I feel as I see it in what God does through me, what Christ does through me. When someone like you comes and says we've learned from you the Word of God, or as the other young man said a minute ago, I've been coming and learning the Word of God and I'm growing...see, then I say there's the power of Christ. I can see it when it comes through me and touches you. I can't see it in me alone. You know what I'm saying?

Q: Yes.

J: So as you grow as a Christian, I have to tell you that appetite won't go away, hopefully, because that is the appetite, I believe, of a spiritual person...not of a fleshy one. And certainly not of an unregenerate one. So I think it's going to always be there. But you'll begin to see as the Spirit of God uses your spiritual gifts and uses your ministry that the power is there and that God is using you and that there are times when you do understand His sufferings. There are times when you are unjustly persecuted and you will fellowship and commune with Him in His sufferings. There are times when you'll get literally angry because Jesus Christ is dishonored, like at Halloween and Christmas and Easter bunnies and that gets you upset. Why?

Because you are protective of His holiness and You're protective of the integrity of Scripture. And that all is part of the fellowship of communing with Christ.

So, it's a life long pursuit and, you know, when I was young, I used to as a high school kid read the mystics. I used to read like, Imitation of Life by Thomas Akempis(?) and E.M.

Bounds, Power through Prayer and these were guys who were real mystical, you know, crying out to know the Lord and praying and wearing holes in the floor, you know, with all these sort of deep, deep feelings toward knowing Christ. And I did that because I thought something was missing in me because I seemed so shallow and my Christian life seemed so pragmatic and it lacked mysticism and whatever that is. But I've learned that I can best see His power and experience His fellowship as I move in ministry and see it as it touches other lives and as it happens in that context. Okay?

Q: Thank you, John.

J: Yeah, you're welcome.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John, my name is Bob. My question relates to Discipleship Evangelism. After you go through DE and you began to train others, you find yourself losing your fear to witness or to present the gospel to others to the point where you really become bold and even to where you start to challenge the cults.

My question is is this a problem when you...

JOHN: A problem? A problem? This is terrific..

Q: Well, when you begin to pray and ask the Lord to lead people into your life and the next thing you know you see Mormons knocking at your door and Jehovah's Witnesses, well should we be greeting them and having them come into our home? I know we're not supposed to be cordial to them and I just want to know what the Bible says about that and in your opinion.

J: Good. Okay, let's take a look at what the Bible says. Turn first of all to 1 John chapter 2 and this is a good place to start. Just to put things in perspective. He says in verse 12 of 1 John 2, "I write unto you little children," he uses a general word, tekna which basically means offspring. It doesn't identify any particular age. So he's writing in general to all who are children. "Your sins are forgiven you for His name sake," that is all the redeemed.

Then he sorts out this whole collective group of children into their various spiritual ages. "Fathers," are identified as those who have known Him that is from the beginning. And then "young men" are identified as those who have overcome the wicked one, who is Satan. And then paidia, infants, another word than the word for children in verse 12, actual infants, because you have known the Father.

Now he sorts everybody into three categories. You're either a spiritual infant who knows the Father, dada, that's spiritual googoo, you know, you know God, that's it. On the other end of the spectrum is a spiritual father who has plumbed the depths of the eternal God. He knows Him who is from the beginning. We're all on the way from being an infant to being a spiritual father.

We don't want to be an infant very long. Paul says in Ephesians 4 that they're tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine. We'd like to be a spiritual father, mature, comprehending the truth of God and knowing God in an intimate way. That is we know the God behind the page. We're not stuck just with what the Bible says, we understand the God behind it.

We've come to the place that she was asking about where we begin to know God in a personal and intimate way, beyond just the word.

But the middle step of growth he identifies as being a young man who has overcome the wicked one. Now in what sense has a spiritual young man at the growth point in his spiritual life that this identifies overcome the wicked one. Well verse 14 explains it. "I've written unto you," in the middle of the

verse, "young men because you're strong." How did you get strong? "Because the Word of God...what?..."

Q: "Abideth..."

J: "Abides in you and you've overcome the wicked one." Now he asks a simple question, with what does the wicked one occupy himself? Well, according to 2 Corinthians 11, Satan is primarily disguised as an angel of what? Of light. I think his primary occupation and primary function is in the realm of false doctrine and false teaching and false religion. Therefore what a spiritual young man is in my mind is one who has overcome the wicked one in the sense that he no longer is weak in understanding the faith to the point where he can be victimized in his doctrine. And it is inevitable and I've seen this in my own experience that when someone reaches that level of understanding the Word of God, understanding what he believes and having overcome the wicked one in terms of false religion, it is very frequently manifest by an aggressive approach toward evangelism, particularly to people who are in systems of false doctrine. That's very common.

As a pastor, I can tell you, I can almost label a guy when he gets to that level. Because invariably he wants to take on the cults and he wants to straighten everybody's theology out.

Because he's there in terms of understanding. Cults aren't a problem to me. They can't woo me away. They do not confuse me at all because I have become strong in the Word of God and I've overcome the wicked one in that sense of his deceptiveness. I'm still on the way to becoming that spiritual father. So that's a very common thing.

Now what do you do when you're in that situation? Well, first of all, I think it's important for us to preach the truth.

I mean, I don't think we need to go in and defend that biblically, right?

Q: No.

J: I mean, we're to be able to...Peter says...to give an answer to every man that asks us of the reason for the hope that is within us. Right? First Peter. So, when anybody comes along, I don't care what cult they're in, we should be able to answer them with a reasonable answer in meekness and fear with reverence, but nonetheless a direct answer. We should even be able to confront them as we're encouraged in Titus to confront the heretics. So I don't see anything wrong with that.

The thing you don't want to do is get in a position where you become the student and they become the teacher.

Q: Right, sure.

J: And if you can set the ground rules, fine. If you can't, then I think you don't want to victimize yourself because you do not want to expose yourself to unsound doctrine. You do not want to expose yourself to the kind of thing that Paul says "eats like a gangrene and begins to consume." You don't want, also, you don't want to be gracious to them to the point where as John the Apostle

writes in his epistle, you are actually bidding them God's speed and therefore becoming a partaker of their evil deed.

So it all depends on what the ground rules are.

Now we have to realize several things. Realize number one, these people are victims. They are victims. They are deceived people. And they desperately need the truth. So if there's some way in which you can get to their vulnerability and establish the ground rules by which you can give them the truth, that's the seed planted. You shouldn't shun that. You shouldn't shun that if you're a spiritual young man if you're at the point where you can do that. But at the same time, you don't want to expose yourself to their gangrenous kind of teaching. And you do not want to give them a platform.

Let me tell you something. They don't need the reinforcement of restating their system again and reassuring themselves by our inability to respond adequately to it. So whenever they come around me, the ground rules are always the same. "I'd be happy to tell you what I believe if you're open to that. But if you're not, I'm not interested in what you believe."

Q: Thank you very much, I appreciate your help.

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Melissa. I've got a question. I've been reading in 1 Timothy 3 about the qualifications for elders and deacons. And I find no where from verses 8 to...where is it?...13 where it says that a deacon can be a woman because it says let deacons be the husbands of one wife.

JOHN: How about that. I agree with that. Let me tell you what that means, all right? So you're wondering why there are women deacons?

Q: Yes.

J: Okay. Verse 11 is a key verse. I just wrote a book on deacons and rather than try to cover everything, it will be available this week. So we will have...could you pick one up on Sunday, maybe? Or next week? And it gives...I go through all the whole process of discussing it.

If you look at verse 11, he's talking about elders and then he sort of shifts gears and talks about deacons, verse 9. And the qualifications basically are the same. In fact, what I had found in my study was that the difference, the only difference I could find between an elder and a deacon basically was skill in teaching the Word of God and refuting those who taught error.

In other words, the primary distinction between an elder and a deacon, textually, is that unique ability to handle the Word of God, that is a Godgiven gift. The spiritual qualifications really aren't any different. It takes just as godly and virtuous a person. And we might also conclude that deacons don't have to be leaders like elders, but that's wrong...because they have to have demonstrated in verse 12 that they can rule their children and their own house. So I don't see a difference in leadership capability between an elder and a deacon. All I see is a difference in the skill in which they can articulate the Word of God.

But verse 11, in the midst of discussion here, says, "Even so," and it uses the word "women" rather than wives, wives would be an arbitrary translation, "are to be serious, not slanderers, overminded, faithful in all things." And it is my conviction that the reference there is directly to those women who serve in a deacon role. The word "deacon," by the way, is a very general term in the Bible. It simply means "servant." And Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is called a deacon. And she was a woman, obviously.

There are other women who served with me in the gospel, Paul says. He uses the verb form of the same word.

So, I think the women are mentioned there in verse 11. And there are some reasons in the Greek text why it seems to me that that's a separate group, isolated out from the rest, so that he talks about elders, he talks about deacons and then he talks about the women who serve as deacons also. So I think there is room for that.

Early church history corroborates that in that they recognize deacons calling them, I guess, in English, we call them deaconesses. Okay?

Q: Okay, thank you.

J: By the way, the footnote, too, on that husband of one wife, that is in the Greek text a onewoman man. And I think a lot of people have misunderstood it because of the Authorized translation. It isn't saying that in order to be qualified to serve in the church you have to have one wife because that's not a spiritual qualification for anybody. You can be an outright pagan and not have...and have one wife. That doesn't qualify anybody for anything. That would be the only nonspiritual, non leadership thing thrown in. But what the text says is a one woman man, the issue is not have you only had one wife, the issue is is the one you have the one you're committed to. The issue is are you a onewoman man. And there are plenty of people in the world who have only one wife but they have a whole lot of interest in somebody who isn't their wife.

I heard today about a church in our area where the pastor and the assistant have just been caught in affairs with different women. They blew the whole leadership of the church. Now that's not a onewoman man. He may only have one wife, may have had only one wife ever, never a divorce, but he's not a onewoman man. And it is...you show me a onewoman man and I'll show you a man who's got spiritual integrity. You show me a man who is only married to one woman and I can't tell what he is. You know, okay?

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. My name is Al and I praise God for being here tonight. And I also want to thank you for your teaching and for the ministries of Grace Church because it was through Grace Church and my beautiful wife that I came to know the Lord 10 months ago into obedience.

JOHN: Great.

Q: I want to read a couple of verses first and then ask you a question. The first one is in Mark 11:23, Jesus is saying, "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him." And now in Romans 10:10, it also says, "For with the heart man believes." And then in Mark 12:30 it says, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and

all your mind and with all your strength." And I don't want to doubt with my heart, and I want to believe with my heart, and I definitely want to love the Lord with all my heart.

But I don't understand exactly what is a heart? I don't know it's not this physical thing that pumps blood...

JOHN: That's good. Yeah, it's terrific. What is a heart? You know, we've got so much cultural garbage piled around the heart in our world. You see them on the bumper stickers...you know, with Beagles and dogs and parakeets, you know, "I" and then a heart, love, "KMart" or whatever it is. We associate the heart, you know, with emotion, that's our problem. We associate the heart with emotion. I love you with all my heart, means...whoom...you know, whatever, more than something that's cold and decisive, it's something that's emotional.

But that is not the biblical use of the term "heart." And the best way to understand it, to simplify, you know, your question is this, the heart is the core of our being in the Scripture. It is that part of us which knows and thinks and feels. The Old Testament says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." I believe the heart is really the equivalent of the mind. And I think when you look at loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, you cannot sort out all four of those things and say, "This is this, and this is this, and this is this, and this is that," and we've got four little deals in us all going independently. I think what he's doing is simply trying to get the message across that we have to love God with every fiber of our being, in every perceivable and imperceptible dimension of existence. But the heart is the composite essence of my thinking processes. I think there, I know there, I understand there, and I feel there. And so, it is not emotion without mind. That's what I'm trying to say.

Now if you want to talk about emotion...you're going to find in the Hebrew culture that the emotion is in the Bible, translated in the Authorized version, bowels. And you go back to Song of Solomon and when his lover comes to the door and he's at the door and he says, you know, in effect, "I feel my love for you in my bowels," that doesn't sound too, you know, romantic, frankly. And if you try that on some girl, she'll probably slam the door in your face, but...the viscera.

And you know, the truth of the matter is that that's where you feel your emotion. That's where you feel your emotion in your...you know, you have, 1 John 3:16, if you say you love God and your neighbor has need and you shut up your bowels of compassion. In other words, you don't feel any emotion, you're not hurting over his need, how dwells the love of God in you? So I would say that in a general sense the Hebrew understanding was that the heart was representative or equivalent to the mind...to the thinking capabilities. That means that you can only love God in the sense that you know God or know about Him. Therefore the more I know about God, the more capable I am of loving and adoring and praising Him. The more I know about God, the more ready I am to believe Him for everything because I know Him. I cannot know God...I mean, I cannot trust God for something in a vacuum of ignorance. You know what I mean? I can't believe He'll deliver me unless I know He's a God whose proven to be a deliverer. I can't believe that He'll strengthen me unless I know He is a God of great strength. I can't believe He'll comfort me unless I know Him to be the God of all comfort.

But when I know that, it is my knowledge about God that controls my responses. I mean, that's where Habakkuk was in chapter 1, he's crying out to God, "How long am I going to keep crying, God? Come down and judge this bitter and hasty nation, the Chaldeans, and come down and revive

Your people Israel." And then God says I'm going to use the Chaldeans to judge the Israelites. And he says I don't understand it. Why don't You revive Your people? Why are You judging them? And how can You judge them with this bitter and hasty Chaldean nation? And he's got a terrible problem. And so he steps back and starts to recite what he knows about God. And he says, he uses the term "Almighty God," he talks about God's eternity, that is He was before the problem, He'll be after the problem. He uses the term of God's covenantkeeping character. He says God's too holy to look on iniquity, cannot look upon sin. And God doesn't make mistakes. Therefore... And as he begins to recite in his own mind his theology proper, his knowledge of God, it begins to control his emotion and his feeling so that finally in chapter 3, after he's recited all the history of what God has done, he says, in effect, "If everything in the world goes to pieces, I'll continue to rejoice in the Lord of my salvation." I mean, if all the crops die, he says, and everything goes whacky in the world, I'm okay...I'm okay because of what I know.

So, loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, believing in God with all your heart, trusting God with all your heart is a question of knowing God in your heart.

And then that has the effect of, you know, effecting your feeling and your emotion. But that's the distinction you want to make.

And we could say more about that but that's the basic distinction that the heart is the center of thought and attitude and understanding and knowledge. It's the mind, really. Okay?

Q: Okay. Thank you.

J: Uhhuh.

QUESTIONER: My name is Steve and I've had many people ask me this question and they would like to know what the Christian attitude should be to the California State Lottery?

JOHN: To the Lottery?

Q: Yes.

J: I told somebody the other day, don't buy those lottery tickets but if you win, give the money to Grace Church. And..let me give you an answer to that. It's a good...I'm glad you asked that, Steve, I was going to bring that up tonight.

Personally, personally, I don't see gambling as a legitimate expression of my stewardship of what God has given to me. There is no verse in the Bible that says "do not gamble." Somebody always says, "Well, I mean, even the disciples cast lots."

Right, that was a means by which they were able to determine the will of God because God spoke through that method. That's a little different.

I do not believe that the Bible legitimizes gambling as a means of stewardship. I also feel that on the social end of it, I think the lottery is a disaster and I'll tell you why. The people who buy the tickets are

the people who can least afford to buy the tickets. And an already poor populace are literally consuming those things. It plays into the hands of the people who need to learn how to work productively and not hope against hope. And it's another expression of them that would be rich fall into many snares and hurtful lusts.

I heard on the radio today something that is a bizarre illustration of this. I couldn't believe what I heard. There was a guy, a Midwest, I don't know if you heard about it, a bank manager who embezzled ten million dollars out of his bank, went to the Caesar's Casino in Atlantic City, deposited on account and gambled away every cent...ten million dollars that he had embezzled. And they have now...they're going to punish the Casino by making them stay closed for one day. Now that...that tells me several things. One, that's a joke. But, two, it must be a significant punishment, you can't even imagine the kind of money they take in. When you create an environment in which people can gamble away what they have, they will do it. And if it's legalized, you know, it's a tragic thing to think about.

And these are the people who can least afford it. And they are the people who most need to learn how to be productive by working.

You know, the Bible advocates gaining money by inheritance, that's fine. You know, the Bible talks about that. By hard work, by wise investment, but it never advocates getting rich by gambling, fast money. So I just...I mean, I'm not going to tell you it's a crime to pay a dollar and, you know, you're curious.

If you went through Las Vegas, you'd probably put a quarter in the machine once or twice, just to see what happened. And I don't want to lay some legalistic trip on you, but I do not believe that that is a legitimate way...certainly not a legitimate way to fund education at the expense of already poor people who are going to waste their substance on that. It's the reverse of what a society ought to do. If it wants to educate its people, it ought to take the money from the people like us who can assist in that properly, rather than the poor people. But that's where the money is going to come from. So...

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. I was reading through 1 Corinthians this week and I came across...

JOHN: You were reading where?

Q: First Corinthians...

J: Good.

Q: And I came across verse 7:12 and I was wondering, if the Bible is the Word of God, then why does Paul say, "This I say, not the Lord?"

J: Oh, okay. First Corinthians 7...

Q: Twelve

J: Right. He's talking about marriage and singleness and, you know, it's amazing, I can go all the way

back to my seminary days when we were studying this passage and it...it continually is a question of people but all you have to understand is one basic thing, what he is saying is, very simple, to the rest speak I, not the Lord. Now all he means is I'm saying this, the Lord didn't say this.

Now there were a lot of things that Paul said that Jesus didn't say, right? In fact, Jesus didn't say anything in the book of Romans, Paul said all that. All Paul is saying here is this, I'm saying this, not quoting Christ...that's all. He's not saying this isn't inspired. He is saying I'm not quoting Christ, this is not something that Christ has taught.

See, go back to verse 10 and, "Unto the married I command, yet not I," I'm going to tell what my command is, don't divorce your husband, but the Lord said this, too, and he's reaching back to where the Lord said that. Don't divorce, Matthew 5, Matthew 19. So all he's doing here in his discussion of marriage is at one point he is quoting the Lord and at another point he's saying now I'm saying this, this is not a quote from the Lord. But he is not saying it is not the Holy Spirit speaking through him in inspiration. Okay?

Q: Okay.

J: Good...good question.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. My name is Jeff. I had a question on Isaiah 7:14 through verse 16, on the context. When you read it, it sounds as though the child had to be born during the time of the prophet whereas Matthew refers it to the birth of Jesus.

JOHN: Right. That is a...that's a difficult passage and I was reading not long ago on this passage and I would commend for your reading, if you can get a hold of it, several things. My dad has recently done an awful lot of work on this passage. It's too complex to dig into there, there is, I think, a legitimate prophetic application here. And I think he's done a good job.

What I'll do is if you'll give me your name and address, I'll send that to you, cause I think you'd enjoy reading it.

The other view that I've heard recently and I heard this at the inerrancy congress when we were discussing these passages.

Dr. Walter Kaiser who is...I don't know what he is at Trinity, what is he? Dean or...Dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the Chicago area. He believes that this is an analogy.

In fact, he believes that the word plereo(??) when it even says being fulfilled can legitimately be related to something that is no more than an analogy. And his illustration of that is Matthew 2 where Matthew's gospel says that Jesus, around the time of His birth, went to Egypt and then left Egypt. And it says out of Egypt have I called My Son. And you go to Hosea 11:1 and when you get to Hosea 11:1 there's no way it can mean Jesus, no way, it has to mean the nation Israel. And so Kaiser says we have to see in the word plereo or the word "fulfilled," we have to see the latitude to understand analogies. And that everything that is fulfilled is not fulfilled in the sense that we think it is a direct prophecy with a direct fulfillment. It may mean nothing more than an analogy.

So Kaiser takes 7:14, if I remember correctly, and says it is simply an analogy. That is to say like a virgin had a child, so a virgin had a child. I really can't give that one away. I feel there is a direct prophetic indication here. But to do a complete answer, let me send you that material so you can see the full historic picture and then you can see its application.

Q: Okay, shall I see you...

J: Afterwards, give me your name and address and I'll send that to you.

Q: Okay, thanks.

J: Sure. Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Gee, Dr. MacArthur, it's Philip Ortiz and I just wanted to ask you if I quote a verse of Scripture and cross reference it wrongly but the concept is okay, expressed in words, would that be okay? Is that acceptable as far as I'm concerned and the hearers?

JOHN: Let's see, Phil, if I understand what you're saying. If you quote a Scripture and then try to elucidate or make it clear by quoting another Scripture but the other Scripture is out of context, is that okay?

Q: I give two different verse numbers and they are slightly different but the concept is biblical that I was trying to give to somebody. And I was wondering if that would be acceptable inside of me and in my love towards those that I'm speaking to.

J: Sure.

Q: Thank you.

J: Sure.

Q: Thanks.

J: You're welcome. Okay, over here.

QUESTIONER: Hello, Pastor. I have a question, well it's...for the sake of many in this congregation, I have some people coming to me, well, first of all, I've been reading a book called, The Death(?) Christ Die and the book they have here, Jesus, the Lord and I've been reading the part...

JOHN: Now wait a minute, you've been reading The Day Christ Died, Jim Bishop's book?

Q: The Death Christ Die, you know...

J: The Death Christ Die...yeah, I don't know that one.

Q: Okay, anyway, I've been reading the part on the impeccability...Christ not being able to sin...

J: Yeah, the impeccability, okay. Sometimes when I'm watching you speak and your mouth is right behind this microphone, I can't make out your words cause I can't hear the speakers too well.

I'm sorry, don't...you're speaking clearly, I just...my fault.

Q: All right. I had somebody telling me about that, you know, I stand and I believe that Christ could not sin when He came into this world, but somebody has come to me and they say, "Well, if you say something like that, you are robbing Christ from something. You're robbing Christ..." Well, you know, they try to make Him...they put Him in their box and they said that if He didn't sin well, you know, what is the purpose of...well, something like, if He didn't sin, I cannot acquainted with a God that who could not sin because He doesn't really know my sins, you know, kind of a deal...I don't know.

J: Yeah, well, that doesn't make much sense because the fact is He didn't sin. So if you're going to make His ability to understand you the fact that He had to understand your sin, then whether He could or couldn't have sinned wouldn't be an issue because He didn't sin.

Q: Right.

J: So what's the point?

Q: Yeah, okay...

J: The point is a moot point. But the thing that you're driving at and I know people bring this up is they say, "Okay, do you believe Christ could sin?" Of course he couldn't sin. He was impeccable. He could not sin. He was in all points tempted like as we are, Hebrews says, but He could...but He did not sin. He did not sin because He could not sin. But that's a ridiculous question anyway, the fact is He didn't sin. So what is the argument about whether He could have or couldn't, He didn't. So who could ever say He could have anyway.

Q: Well in His humanness He could have sinned.

J: You can't sort Him out. What would humanness have done that He didn't do?

Q: Right.

J: Well, what does your humanness do that you don't do?

Nothing. If your humanness did it, you did it. And I did it.

Q: Right.

J: No, here's the point. The question that people always struggle with is if He couldn't sin then how

could temptation be legitimate? That's really the issue. And the answer to that is very simple. Have you ever been tempted and not sinned? Have you ever been tempted and not given into it? Say yes.

Q: Yes...yes.

J: I'm not trying to put you on the spot. You can ask...have I ever been tempted and not sinned? Of course. Yes, and I have been tempted and sinned. But there have been many times when I was tempted and not sinned...did not sin. Now was that temptation illegitimate because I didn't sin? Of course not.

Sometimes that temptation was very strong. In fact, if I can push the point a bit, it just so happens for Christ who never sinned, He must have known temptation to its limits because at some point in the temptation when we give in, the temptation is over because its accomplished its purpose. But in one who never gave in, temptation would literally run itself to its extreme limit every time. I mean, when have you ever sweat great drops of blood? When have you ever been so tempted as to tears and strong crying and sweating great drops of blood in the agony of stressful temptation?

Well, the answer is...I mean, Hebrews doesn't it say that?

We have not yet suffered unto blood. I'm not sure...the parallel's there, but the point is the same. We give in long before that. So to say that because Christ couldn't sin He couldn't experience temptation is just opposite the truth. The fact that He didn't sin meant that He endured temptation at extreme levels, especially when you realize the fact that if there was one creature in all the universe that Satan would want to have sinned, it would have been Him. I mean, he may fuss with us a little while and if we don't give in, if that temptation is an external thing, leave. And in Christ's case, there could be no internal temptation so it was always external. But Satan would stay, believe me, and besiege that fort unendingly. And so, I think the fact that Christ did not sin is not only a statement that He could not sin but it is a statement that He endured temptation to its absolute limit. Okay?

Q: Thanks. I'd like to ask another question concerning witnessing to cults also...a friend already asked before...I had a friend when the Jehovah Witnesses come, both...well, two friends, they're both females. One of them when they see somebody coming, the Jehovah Witness or Mormons, whatever, she says, "Close the door, don't let them in...hide." Okay?

J: I can understand that. Sure.

Q: And I've got another friend who when the Mormons come or the Jehovah Witnesses, she experienced this about three weeks ago, some Mormons came in and she opened the door and they say, "Hi, we're the saints..." you know, they introduce themselves and they said, "You are fools, you're liars, you're going to hell, repent from your sins, get away, I don't want to listen to you, I don't want to talk to you." And they persisted.

Finally she said, "Okay, now you're going to listen to me."

And my question is, shall you go like this, boldness to this people? I mean, say for instance you...here comes an old lady, well maybe I'll listen to her and share with her...but two young guys in the Mormons?

J: You know, I think it depends who you're talking to. I've done all of those and more. I've...I've invited them in and tried to love them and sit them down and I guess maybe you sort of experiment with them. And then I've labeled them that way.

I've said, "You false prophet, you viper, you wolf, you whatever, bound for hell," and I've given them the whole prophetic shot.

Q; I like that.

J: Pardon?

Q: I like that.

J: You like that?

Q: Yeah.

J: I mean, I have done that. I remember there was a guy in our church that got ripped off by the Mormons and I went over to the house because somebody told me the Mormon bishops were at his house. So I went to the house. And I just decided I would, you know, make a whip and throw everybody out, in effect. I just really told them what they were. And I hope that I did it at that time, I don't know whether I...I thought the Spirit was leading me to do that, but at the time I thought, you know, I wanted to impress upon their minds so unforgettably how serious their error was, their damning heresy that I wanted to speak to them in terminology that the rest of their lives they would never forget, to plant in their mind this lingering reality that this might be true. I guess the one thing I don't want to do is give them even a small sense of acceptance.

I can also understand the "lock the door, turn out the lights, and hide" approach. Because there are times when you just don't want to get into a situation. So again, I don't know that there's any right answer on that. As I said earlier, you know, obviously the best thing to do might be to, first of all, try to negotiate an opportunity. And if there's no opportunity there and they are completely closed, this would be my approach, and you can't negotiate the opportunity to communicate the truth to them at that particular point with graciousness, you might want to tell them the truth about what they are.

Q; Okay.

J: I think they need to know that. I think...you take a young vulnerable, you know, they usually come in pairs, one is a strong one and one is a weak one...you take that young person and literally put fear in them with the right kind of biblical picture of a false teacher and it can have a profound effect and a very unsettling effect. And it's certainly a method that our Lord used. So...

Q: Okay, thank you.

J: Okay, I think we have just time for the three, four folks that are left, okay?

QUESTIONER: Yes, sir, Pastor Jim...Pastor John, I'm sorry, my question is in reference to newborn Christians. And one of the problems that I'm confronting right now and hopefully you can give me some insight on to all of us an insight in how to deal with this problem. Obviously when we're not reborn Christians, we walk around in this world with our own mixed personalities.

And right now because my eyes are open to witnessing the good and the bad, I've been subject to seeing the goodness and also being conscious of the badness as well. And it's closed out my personality in a tremendous sight to where I'm walking around and basically trying to hold that world up into my hands, you know, and take care of everybody. But yet in front of my job, every one is looking at me like, "Oh, what's wrong with him, he's not talking anymore," and this is something that's causing a lot of problems and yet also I'm very concerned because as Christians we're supposed to have a smile on our face, we're supposed to be happy and we're also supposed to show the world how beautiful it is to be accepted by the Lord, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in a way that we should be happy. But yet I've always been...recently especially I'm walking around like I'm sad and I'm always thinking about what I can do to possibly help these people.

JOHN: Yeah, well I really identify with that. I really identify with that. I mean, to be real honest with you, when you become a Christian there is a tremendous sense of personal joy, but you do take on an instant sadness. You really do. Because for the first time you understand. I mean, before you went on in a drunken bliss of the typical person in the world that didn't know what was going on anyway. And it was just party time, basically, live for the next fun thing and try to milk every moment you can for everything that's in it. And all of a sudden, when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ and your life is transformed and your eyes are opened as you so well put it, now you begin to see the reality of people and their eternal destiny and their lostness and their sinfulness and the mess the world is in. And I confess to you that it is the legacy of a Christian to have a sense of overwhelming sadness, that's part of it. Paul confessed to having continual sorrow and tears, didn't he? And to being constantly burdened and constantly distressed.

But he also said rejoice always, and again I say rejoice.

So, you know, we live in that very strange tension of having a consuming joy. I think the best illustration of that that I can think of, just coming to mind standing here, is found in the tenth chapter of Revelation where in verse 8 John hears the voice and the voice from heaven says, "Go and take the scroll." The little scroll...and the little scroll is representative of the title deed of the earth which Christ is going to take the title deed and conquer the earth. And that means He's going to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. You know, in the Second Coming when He sets up His Kingdom. So He says take the little scroll, open in the hand of the angels standing on the sea and the earth. "So I went to the angel and said to him, Give me the little scroll. And he said, Take and eat it." This is a symbolic picture. So he eats it and, "It will make thy belly bitter but shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little scroll out of the angel's hand and ate it up and it was in my mouth sweet as honey and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

Now what is he saying here? What he is saying is thinking about Christ coming to conquer the world is both...what?...sweet and bitter, isn't it? It's sweet because we say You deserve the glory, You deserve the honor, You deserve the praise, You deserve the rejoicing. You shouldn't continue to be dishonored the way You're dishonored. Like Henry Martine who rushed out of that pagan temple in India when he went there and said, "I cannot endure existence if Jesus is to be so dishonored." You know, you cry out that Christ should be exalted. And that's...that's a sweet thing the day that Jesus

comes and we sang about it tonight, didn't we? We sing songs of the Second Coming and songs of being with Christ but at the same time we know our own joy we know the terrifying bitterness of the unredeemed in the judgment.

So, all I can say to you is that that is a tension that you will always have as a Christian. And I believe it is the unique work of the Spirit of God to bring balance to that. You will find in your Christian life things that will sadden you more profoundly than any things you ever experienced before. You will also find things that will bring you greater joy than any joy you've ever known before because they're ultimate things. And ultimate things have the potentiality to bring ultimate sadness and ultimate joy. Okay?

Q: Yes sir, well, I just wanted to say this, that definitely put an understanding on where I should think now and feel my new heart, but it's very difficult. The only time I really feel happy and that I'm very much satisfied within my heart and within peace within myself is when I'm here at the church.

J: When you're with Christians.

Q: When I'm with Christians.

J: Sure.

Q: And when I'm outside there, it's really hard cause everyone's like looking at you...well, how should you be.

J: Cause they point up...right...I think...how long have you been a Christian?

Q: Three weeks.

J: Three weeks, I figured it hadn't been very long. Give it another couple of weeks and I think it will...the joy of the Lord will begin to charge you up. I really believe that.

Q: Okay, thank you very much.

J: Thank you, isn't that great? That's really neat. Wow...oh good.

QUESTIONER: Hi, John. My name is Nan Taylor. And first of all I want to thank you for allowing us to have the privilege of hosting your radio Bible conference people and your pastors, it's...

JOHN: Did you enjoy them?

Q: Yes, they're a real joy to always have.

J: Thank you for doing it.

Q: Yeah, the question comes really from my daughter. She was studying the Word the other night

and it's in 1 Samuel 18:10.

Okay? "Now it came about on the next day that an...

J: I can't hear you, can you step a little closer to that mike?

Q: I thought it was too close. Okay. "Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul."

And her question is the evil spirit...cause as far as she's concerned there is no evil coming from God, it only comes from Satan.

J: Right.

Q: I tried to explain all of this...

J: Sure and all you have to do to explain that is to let her know that no evil spirit and no devil and no demon any time can ever do anything except within the larger picture of God's allowing. That evil spirit was from God only in the sense that the devil was from God when the Lord allowed him to go and test Job. You remember when the devil came before God and said You don't have anybody on this earth who will be faithful to You if given the circumstances that I can create? And God said yes I have one faithful servant, Job, chapter 1, Job. And God said to the devil, in effect, you go and do whatever you want to Job and of course it was all within the limitations of God's will. And he did and, of course, as a result of that Job's faith was strengthened. And Job proved to pass the test.

That illustrates the same idea. An evil spirit comes from the Lord only in the sense that no evil spirit, no demon, no devil himself can act in this world independently of and outside of the allowing will of God.

Q: I'll try to explain that to her.

J: Okay?

Q: Okay. Thank you.

J: Thank you.

QUESTIONER: Hi, my name is Jennifer and this is the second time I've been to church in two years. I was a part of a very large, very active church in Dallas, Texas. My family was very involved with the church. My father taught evangelism for six years. One morning our pastor came up before us after he had been preaching on marital enrichment for more than two months and told us that he had been having an affair with one of the church women, one of the women that worked in the office at church. The church completely split and divided. The bishops sent him out of the church. My question is, where can I find forgiveness for this?

It's been very difficult for me to listen to someone time and time again, the man became such an

incredible person in the church, he was almost looked upon as being God.

JOHN: You're looking for where you can find in your heart forgiveness for him.

Q: I find it very difficult to be comfortable in organized religion because I'm worried that that kind of thing goes on and it's not found. And it was a wonderful, wonderful, very fast growing church with so many wonderful programs.

J: Yeah, I'm glad you asked that question, Jennifer. That's a heart breaker because you see that's such a powerful powerful deterrent as illustrated by your own life to people to keep them out of the church. Because when somebody at that level falls, it's a total disaster. People are crushed, you know, all over the place, because if there's any one person in the world you put your trust in, it's the man of God. And when the man of God turns out not to be the man of God, you've been totally deceived.

I don't think that the devil, Satan, sin, the flesh, whatever can do anything in the church that is as devastating as that.

Nothing in the church is as devastating as the moral fall of a leader that people have put their trust in because it literally devastates not only their trust of that man but their trust of that position.

And I understand exactly what you're saying. The only thing I can say on the other side is that there have been men of God who have been proven through many, many years to be faithful.

And for every unfaithful man, God has His faithful men. And you have to, first of all, find it in your heart to forgive, I think, for the simple reason that Christ has forgiven you and forgiven me. In other words, who am I not to forgive someone else who myself, though not committing perhaps the same sin, am so in need of forgiveness?

Let me give you an illustration. Matthew 18...there was a king and this king had a large territory and he had apparently some provinces and some provincial governors. And it was time for him to collect from them the money they had collected in their own provinces for taxes. So all these governors came in and it was a time for them to account for what they had done with their responsibility.

One of those men came before the king and it says that he owed the king an unpayable debt. He owed him, it uses murion which is the highest Greek term for a number, so it's an unnumbered amount, unpayable amount. Even if it translates ten thousand talents, it's astronomical because the whole national debt of Galilee for one year was six hundred talents, so it's...he owed ten thousand talents or he owed an unpayable sum.

So he falls on his knees before the king and he says, "Have patience with me and I'll pay everything back," and he means well. And the king looks at him and says, "I forgive you." Now that king is God. And that man is any sinner. And any one of us who come to the Lord and fall on our knees before Him and recognize that we have defrauded God and we have sinned against Him and we can never pay for our own sin and God then forgives us, we're in the same situation.

Then that man who had been forgiven an unpayable debt who deserved hell, in fact the king said I'm going to sell him and his whole family and get all I can get out of them, which is what hell is, not getting what God deserves but getting all He can get, the guy who was forgiven then went out, found a guy who owed him three hundred denarii, a few hundred dollars, grabbed him by the neck, strangled him. And the guy says, you know, "Be patient, I'll pay, I'll pay." Instead of forgiving him, he threw him in prison.

So here's a guy who has been forgiven an unpayable debt by God. He goes out and he won't forgive some guy that owes him a few bucks and he throws him in jail. And then the parable says that some others who knew about it, other servants, went and told the king what he did. And he went back and punished that guy.

And the whole point of the parable is this, and that's just it in a nutshell, the whole point of the parable is this...who do you think you are not to forgive someone who has offended you when you have so offended a holy God as to be in debt to Him to a level that you could never ever pay? So on the basis of God's free and comprehensive forgiveness of you, you ought to be able to forgive another brother who is a sinner like you.

So you need to understand both those points. One, you have to find it in your heart to forgive because God has forgiven you.

Secondly, I agree that that kind of sin is a devastation that leaves scars and may I add particularly on young people who are very, very vulnerable. And I also want to add that there are men of God, there are faithful men of God that you can trust and you can believe in. And you need to put yourself in the care of those men and I think God can restore the confidence that you lost.

Q: Do you think he should have been allowed to go on in the ministry?

J: No. Not at all.

Q: Thank you.

J: Uhhuh. Yes...

QUESTIONER: My name is Craig Tanama(?) and I want to ask you a question about the term "the day of the Lord?" I always was looking forward to that in a sense as a good thing to come, and then as I started looking at it I...don't think it's very good.

JOHN: I don't think you want to look...

Q: I'm glad I won't be here for that. But, in Amos 5:18 when it says, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord," and so I have a little confusion with...

J: Yeah, let me tell you just basically and I'll give it to you as simply as I can. We're going to have to break at this point.

We're losing our people cause they've got to go pick up their kids and all. Let me put it this way, Craig, simply. The day of the Lord is any day when the Lord moves in wrath and judgment.

It is not purely an eschatological term related to the Second Coming. It is a broad enough term when referring to the Second Coming to encompass some good things...like the Rapture of the church and the glory of the saints. But the day of the Lord is primarily a judgment term. It's as if it's contrasted to the day of man. You've got your day, buddy, but God's going to have His day. And in His day, the essence of it, is judgment.

Now I believe there have been in the past many days of the Lord. Every time God moved in in a holocaust of judgment to one degree or another, that was the day of the Lord. And I think there is coming in the future a great day of the Lord which will have some good features to it. But which by virtue of the title "day of the Lord" really puts an emphasis on judgment.

Q: Thank you.

J: Okay? Good. Why don't we stand for a word of closing prayer. I hope it's been helpful tonight. We've had a great time. Good questions.

Father, we thank You for the just the joy of being together.

We thank You for the testimony of our new brother in Christ and his desire to have joy along with the sadness he feels for the first time in his life over those who don't know the Savior.

Fill his heart with joy, Lord. We know that the Kingdom is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And we want that joy and that peace. And we pray for this young girl who has been burdened and scarred by an unfaithful pastor. And we wonder how many other people in that same situation have grieved and have departed from the assembly of the redeemed and lost the ability to be healed because they left that environment of healing. We pray for any who might be enduring that kind of anxiety.

And we pray, Lord, for the questions that weren't answered tonight but are on the hearts of many. We know Your Spirit is able and Your Word is true and so we commend ourselves to the word of Your grace which is able to build us up. And we thank You for it, how...how unthinkable it would be if we didn't have Your Word. How grateful we are. And we thank You for our fellowship in Christ's name. Amen.

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