Bible Questions and Answers, Part 37
Selected Scriptures
70-9

What I'm going to try to do is get in to some of the questions that you asked and do as many as I can in just forty minutes or so that we have.

Now let me answer one regarding this, it said, "I see that someone is speaking on MacArthurism, could you let us know from the pulpit what your belief is on the blood of Christ?"

I have done that in the past and just in order to touch base with the fact that he may have created some questions in your mind. Through the years there has been no question about what I believe regarding the blood of Christ, none at all. For twenty years that I've been preaching here, and all the myriads of books and tapes and things that have come out of the church and my ministry, no one needs to question anything that I believe about the blood of Christ. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and literally shed His physical blood. He died as a sacrifice for sin.

I saw a letter the other day from someone who said that Christ could have died any other way as long as He died. That is not correct, that is not true. I do not believe that. He had to die by being lifted up. He had to die shedding blood in a sacrificial way to fulfill the pattern of Old Testament prophetic truth. I believe what the church has always believed.

And somebody always says to me, "Well why are they always attacking you on the blood of Christ?" And I need to tell you what I have mentioned before that this basically has very little to do with theology, it has very little to do with the blood of Christ and everything to do with trying to discredit me. And so they're trying to pick an issue that is volatile, misrepresent what I believe just for the sheer sake of sort of attacking me.

I will never forget, of course, when this first came out. It came out in a magazine put out by a Christian college that I denied the blood of Christ. I called the president of the school and I said, "You know better than that, you know me, you know exactly what I believe, you know what I teach, why would you do that?"

He said to me on the phone, "We've made a terrible mistake."

I said, "Well is there some way you can correct it?"

He said, "No, we could never do that."

So he admitted to me that it was a mistake personally over the telephone. What was curious about it was I heard from a faculty member that there was a faculty prayer meeting there, a prayer meeting

with the administration in which the request that was given for the prayer meeting was, "Lord, help us find a way to discredit the ministry of John MacArthur." Now that was the prayer request. Now if you're seeking to do that you can find some way, I suppose, to do it. For some reason perhaps unknown to me these people have decided to try to discredit our ministry and to attack our belief on the blood of Christ, that is the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ for salvation would be definitely a way to upset people, and that's what they've done. But what we believe about the blood of Christ is available for all to see, in fact I gave a special communion message on that a number of months ago, and I believe exactly what the Bible teaches and what the church has always believed...was always believed. And I just think we have to just keep dealing with this onslaught because of the effort to discredit.

And I realize there are ramifications of this, I realize that. I realize that people have left our church over the last couple of years, it's been a tough two years, and part of it has been the endless attacks on our church. I know there have been attacks on our church but we just keep trying to be faithful to the Word of God, moving ahead. If you have any question about what we believe on the blood of Christ, you can read the New Testament and we believe that...exactly what it says.

Another person wrote a question, another practical question. "This week in the newspapers it was reported that some experts, in fact they called them biblical scholars," I read the article, "biblical scholars met to discuss the Scripture regarding the Second Coming of Christ and they voted and twenty-seven out of thirty of the scholars voted that Christ did not promise to return a second time." So the article in the Daily News, I think it was, said that Bible scholars now agree that Christ will not return a second time and it's foolish for us to start a cult of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ because biblical scholars now know that He never said He would come again.

You know, that...that's difficult to understand in the light of the fact of several things, but one Scripture that comes to mind that seems to me to be rather significant, Jesus said this, "Heaven and earth will pass away, My words will not pass away, but of that day and hour knows no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son but the Father alone, for the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah." And then He goes on to describe the coming of the Son of Man. And then...that's Matthew 24.

In Matthew 25 we find again that He is going to come and when He comes He is going to bring about judgment on the earth. Verse 31, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him..." Now how can twenty-seven Bible scholars vote that that's not in the Bible? You say, "How do they do that?" Well they just eliminate that verse. They just say, "Well that doesn't mean what it says and Jesus didn't really say that. Somebody fabricated that. Somebody said He said that." And so forth and so on.

You know, one of the distinguishing marks of the Christian church from the very outset has been a hope in the coming of Christ. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 it says, "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." That's basic to the life of the church. Peter calls it a living hope. We have a living hope in Christ's return in spite of what these men say. We have to come up with a new definition of scholars, I think.

Here's another question of a different nature. And by the way, these are not necessarily related, I want to cover as many as I can so I won't take a lot of time on them. "Should Christians drink wine coolers?"

Perhaps some of you were hoping this question didn't come up. Should Christians drink wine coolers? Let me just give you a brief response to that.

A wine cooler is an alcoholic beverage. It is my own personal conviction that I do not drink alcoholic beverages of any kind any time and there are several reasons why. Reason, and they're not in a particularly spiritual order, but reason number one is the fact that I believe the Bible warns very, very strongly about drunkenness and very, very strongly about losing control in dissipation, Ephesians 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine in which is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit." If I'm going to be under the control of something I want it to be the Holy Spirit, not some substance.

Beyond that I am convinced after studying the Word of God and studying the backgrounds around the Word of God that that wine which was imbibed in the time of the New Testament, and even in the Old Testament, was highly diluted with water, five to one, six to one, seven to one, eight to one. And wine...and they really drank water if you want to see the true picture and they simply purified the water by putting a little bit of fermented wine in it because it...it killed whatever else would be in the wine that might cause them some physical problems. But it was not the normal drink of the time of our Lord for people to drink unmixed wine. You read in the Bible about two kinds of drink, wine and strong drink. Strong drink was unmixed and those who drank strong drink drank it for the purpose of drowning their problems. The wine that was consumed in the Bible was very definitely mixed with water extensively. Because you lived in a warm climate, the land of Palestine was hot, the very fact of thirst could contribute to a high consumption of wine. In order to prevent drunkenness they mixed it with water so that your body could not hold the amount that it would take to inebriate you.

So, that simply to point out to you that I don't think you can advocate wine drinking from the Bible unless you have diluted it sufficiently with water as they did in biblical times.

The other reason that I will give to you as to why I don't believe that Christians should drink wine is simply because of what the apostle Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not food and drink," Romans chapter 14. And he says if anything that I eat or drink offends my brother, I won't do it. Now I have lived long enough to have dragged enough people out of saloons to have tried to patch up enough shattered devastated lives, to have tried to put together families and marriages that have been devastated by alcohol to have a healthy hatred for it. And since we live in a culture where alcohol is only an option, not a necessity, it seems to me without particular constraint for us to consume that kind of beverage. I certainly would not want to be responsible for giving someone else the idea that it was okay to drink alcoholic beverages and then watch them in an out-of-control way be destroyed by what they saw me do. And so, in deference to a weaker brother, in deference to not making someone stumble, I choose not to do that. And since there's no compelling reason to do it because there are so many other things to drink, it has no place in my life.

Another question, what is dominion theology? Have you heard about that? Dominion theology, that's a new label for a new kind of theology, and they're always new theologies.

Dominion theology comes in a lot of forms, but I think what you're probably talking about is John Wimber who is now advocating a new kind of dominion. Let me give you this very simply, okay?

Dominion theology espoused primarily by John Wimber who is networked through a group of churches called The Vineyard churches, but basically what he is saying is that as believers we are to take power over Satan and demons. We are to exercise dominion over them.

There is another kind of theology that's existing today it's called Liberation Theology. It is a form of theology that says that the church is to take dominion over the institutions of the world. That's another form of dominion theology, or kingdom theology. And what it basically says is that the church's mandate is to take over the institutions of the world. That's the liberation theology side. And what dominion theology says is that we are to take over the powers of darkness, we are to take over the demons and we are to take over the spirits and we are to dominate Satan, we are to take dominion. And that's why they talk about power evangelism, talks about power healing. In other words, he trains people supposedly to invade the satanic world and take dominion over demons, that we as Christians by living in the natural world and by just moving around in the visible world have failed to exercise the power that we have to literally take over the satanic world. You hear them talk about binding Satan, have you heard that? Binding demons, pleading the blood on demons, pleading the blood on Satan, taking dominion over not only demons but all of the institutions of the world that are infiltrated and influenced by demons. And they believe that whatever people's problems are tend to be demon induced and it gets extreme. No matter what it is it's a demon and you have to take dominion over these demons. And that is why they talk about power evangelism. They say you cannot evangelize without signs and wonders, you have to overpower the demonic world and demonstrate your divine power to the lost in order for them to be saved. Power healing--break the bondage of demons and so forth.

It is unbiblical. We are never told, never told to take dominion over demons. We are told by James, "Resist the devil and he will...what?...flee from you." We are never told to bind Satan. We are never told to bind demons. We are never told to plead the blood on Satan or demons. Listen to Jude 9, "Michael the archangel when he disputed with the devil argued about the body of Moses did not dare pronounce against the devil a judgment but said the Lord rebuke you." Even Michael who is super angel did not dare rebuke Satan but rather said, "Lord, You take care of him." And if Michael as a holy angel does not take to himself the exercise of authority over fallen angels, where would we find a mandate to do that? The Bible simply tells us that if you want to deal with the enemy, you put on the whole armor of God, right? You put on the whole armor of God and you'll be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We are not called to take dominion over the institutions of this world.

We are not called to take dominion over demons and over the devil. We are called to get on our spiritual armor, to resist that demonic world and trust in the power of God who does take care of them.

Another question, isn't it true that only the regenerated, that is only the born again, the saved people, can communicate with God for the purpose of solving their problems?

The answer is yes. The only ones who have access to God are those that are His own because the

only access to God is through whom? Christ...Christ. It says, "No man comes to the Father except by Me." You can't go to God on any terms for any reason unless you come through Christ. The way has been opened for us, the way has been opened for us and that's what the writer of Hebrews means when he says, "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace to find help in time of need." No, there is no promise in the Bible that God will answer the prayer of an unsaved person, no promise at all. God is not obligated, God is not bound. God has made no such promise because there is no access to God, access only comes through Christ.

You say, "Does that mean that God does not always...or God does never do for a person what they ask done?"

That's a very difficult question. It's been asked a number of times. I would venture to say that an unbelieving, unsaved person might pray a prayer to God and say, "Well, God, I wish I had a wife," and three months later find a girl and marry her. Or he might pray, "You know, I wish my mother would get well," and maybe his mother gets well.

So it is possible that circumstances could appear to...to look like God answered a prayer when in fact it was just the working out of the providential plan of God anyway and the prayer was irrelevant to what God was going to do. I mean, if you pray, "Lord, heal my mother," only one of two things can happen, either she does or doesn't get healed. And if she does it doesn't mean God answered your prayer, it just means she got better.

But it is also true, and I want to say this, that God may for His own purposes hear the cry of an unregenerate person. The point is this, He is not obligated to do that. There is no claim on that because you see in John it says, "If you ask anything," Jesus said, "in My...what?...name." If you come in Christ's name, if you come in Christ then the Father will do it. He has no obligation to answer the prayer of an unregenerate person though sometimes He may in His sovereign choice and sometimes it may appear as if a prayer has been answered simply by the way things turned out.

In 1 Corinthians 7:29, someone asked, what does Paul mean when he says, "Those who have wives should be as though they had none." Now you could really preach on that passage and get in a lot of trouble. "Those who have wives are to be as they...as though they had none."

What he is talking about there is in context, he's talking about the significance of living a godly life in an ungodly culture. And as the apostle Paul is talking here about marriage and singleness, he says basically, verse 27, "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife, do not seek a wife." You're a Christian, you're living in the end times, don't seek to get married. If you should marry you haven't sinned and if a virgin marries she hasn't sinned, yet such will have trouble in this life and I'm trying to spare you."

You know what he simply says? You get married, you complicate your life. Is that true? Yes....yes. Now wait a minute, wait a minute. Hold your wife's hand so she feels good. You do complicate your life because now all of a sudden you cannot do strictly what you would desire to do, you must be sensitive to the needs of a life partner. There is a complexity. You have introduced a very, very significant factor in to the quotient of living your life so you're going to have some trouble, you're going to have some distress.

I'll tell you one way you have it, before you were married you had the pain, for the most part, of your own troubles and now when you got married you have the pain that you bear in your heart because you bear the pain of the one you love so much. Marry someone and I'll make you a promise, somebody is going to live with grief because somebody in that marriage is going to die and that's pain, that's deep pain. Get married and I'll tell you something else you're going to have very likely, children. You say, "Children are a blessing." Yeah, you have children and I'll promise you something else, you'll have pain, you'll have trouble, you'll have anxiety that you wouldn't have if you didn't have children. It's just built into it. Multiply the people who are in my heart and in a troubled world you multiply the trouble of my heart. It doesn't mean I don't love them, no it reflects the fact that I desperately love them and that's why there's so much anxiety and such a burden to carry.

He says then in verse 29, "I say this, brethren, the time has been shortened so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, and those who weep as though they didn't weep, and those who rejoice as though they didn't rejoice, and those who buy as though didn't possess, and those who use the world as though they didn't make full use of it, for the form of the world is passing away.

What he is saying is...Look, if you're married don't consume yourself in the matters of that marriage. That's what he's saying. Don't get all embroiled in that. Why? Verse 32, "I want you to be free from concern." One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord. Verse 33, "One who is married is concerned of the world, how he may please his wife and his interests are divided."

So, Paul is simply saying if you can stay single you have an undivided interest in the kingdom. As soon as you get married you have a divided interest, the kingdom and your wife, the kingdom and your kids. And so he's saying if you can do it, try not to lose yourself in all of the details of your life. That's why he means by be as though you had no wife. In other words, don't lose yourself. He's not saying get rid of your wife. He's not saying be indifferent to your wife, cause that would contradict many other Scriptures. But what he is saying is live your life as if this world and this marriage isn't the end of everything, isn't the purpose for everything.

And this is what I've been saying recently, consume yourself on the kingdom together. You know, this is such a basic point and I shared this with you a few weeks ago. You watch people...you watch the day in which we live and you watch how all this data about marriage is telling two people how to adjust to each to each other and you spend all your time doing that, all your time doing that. And when the real issue is if I live for the kingdom and if I am consumed with the glory of Christ and if my wife is consumed with the glory of Christ and the will of God and the purposes of Scripture and we lose our lives in that, then marriage is rich and wonderful because it's not focused on us, it's focused on Christ. And Christ pours back into that marriage all of the spiritual blessings that a marriage must have. But today the trend is to focus on each other and find out what your husband ought to know about you and what your wife ought to know about you and how you can adjust and move and shift and get along, and you spend your time being consumed with that. He's simply saying you're married, you're married in the difficult time when the kingdom must advance and sin is rampant, try to keep your focus on the kingdom, don't be consumed with the things of this life.

Okay, another question...can the people in heaven see what we are doing? Do they know what we think?

There's nothing in the Bible to indicate that they know what we think and there's every reason to assume they could care less. There is nothing in the Bible to assume that they could see what we were doing and there is every reason to assume they could care less about that.

Let me tell you something, folks, when you go to heaven you are lost in wonder, love and praise and you will gaze on the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be taken into the rapture of having reached perfection. There will be NO desire on the part of anybody to look back here and there is no indication that they can see back here anyway. There is none.

And I know it's a kind of a whimsical thing to think...My saintly grandmother who is now in heaven is looking over the edge and watching me. Don't you believe it. Your saintly grandmother isn't the least concerned with you and your daily routine. Your saintly grandmother is totally captive to the majestic, unimaginable glories of the eternal dwelling place of God.

Another question...is there such a thing as a carnal Christian?

Yes, in fact there is no such thing as a Christian who is not at times carnal. Did you get that? And if you're saying to yourself, "I've never been carnal," God have mercy on you.

But let me tell you what people mean by that. There was a definition of a Christian as a carnal Christian, as if that was a permanent condition. And they used to teach, people in the church used to teach...there are three kinds of people--natural, carnal, and spiritual. And they would define the natural person unregenerate, unsaved, self on the throne, life in chaos, sin everywhere.

Then there's the carnal person. What's that? It's a Christian, that's a Christian who still has self on the throne, Christ is in there somewhere running around but He's not in charge and the life is still in chaos. So the only difference between a natural and a carnal person is that Christ is in there somewhere but the life hasn't changed.

And then thirdly there's the spiritual Christian, self is off the throne and Christ is on it and the life is all in order. And so people came up with the idea that you could be either a carnal Christian or a spiritual Christian...you know, once you're saved you could say..."Well, I'm going to stay a carnal Christian, I like it better." And that brings in this whole idea of lordship because those are the people who accepted Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord. Those are the people who said, "I don't want to go to hell and I want You to save me from hell, and I want You to forgive my sins, I just don't want You to run my life." And the old definition of a carnal Christian was a person who believed in Jesus for salvation but didn't let Him be Lord and didn't let Him run his life.

That's not what a carnal Christian is. That isn't at all what Paul had in mind in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, not at all. Let me show you what it is. There's only two kinds of people in the world, my grandfather used to say, the saints and the aint's, that's it...Christians and non-Christians, believers and unbelievers.

Now listen, the natural man is the unregenerate. The spiritual man is the regenerate man. Read

Romans 8, the spiritual man is the regenerate. But the spiritual man can act in a fleshly way. Any time you disobey the Lord, you're carnal. Any time you obey the Lord, you're spiritual. Any time you do what you ought not to do, you're carnal, that means fleshy, you're operating off the principle of sin. Any time you do what the Lord wants you to do, you honor the Word, you're spiritual. So carnality is not a permanent state of Christians who haven't given Christ lordship, carnality is simply a momentary experience of the believer who is disobedient to God. So it's not a state, it's simply a kind of behavior, okay? And all Christians at any given moment, right now, right now, this moment here, you're either carnal or spiritual depending on whether you're functioning in the Spirit or in the flesh. If you're sitting there and the Spirit of God is teaching you and you're enjoying what's happening, the Spirit of God is at work, you're a spiritual person. If you're sitting there saying, "I don't like what he's saying, I don't buy any of this stuff, I reject all this stuff, this stuff isn't true," you have hostility in your heart, you may be dealing with sin and you don't like what I've said, maybe you're still on the wine cooler thing, I don't know, your flesh is reacting, that's carnality...that's carnality. Understand? Okay.

Here's another question...although a Christian's sins have been forgiven...that's true, 1 John 2, "My little children, He's forgiven you all your trespasses,"...will Christians still have to give an account for their bad deeds at judgment?

You know, I remember when I was a little kid hearing some guy say, "You know, you may be a Christian but some day all your sins are going to be flashed on a big screen." Did you ever hear anybody say that? Boy, it scared the life out of me. I thought to myself, "Well what's the sense of forgiveness if all that stuff is going to happen then?" And I've heard people say that.

But that is not what the Bible teaches. Your sins are forgiven and even God Himself says, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more, they are removed as far as...what?...the east is from the west." How far is that? That's far. The east is from the west, they're buried in the depths of the sea, they are forgotten by God, they are cancelled because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

You say, "Well wait a minute, doesn't it say that we have to give an account?" Yes, but listen to 2 Corinthians, this is very important, chapter 5, it says, verse 10, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Now the word here is not krino, verb, or krimawhich means condemnation, or even katakrinowhich is even a stronger word, it's not damnation, condemnation, judgment punishment, but the word is bemaand it is the bemathat was speaking of a reward. I was in Corinth, the ruins of Corinth, and they took me to the bemathat was there. And whenever they had the Corinthian games which was a major athletic event, they would take the winners up on the bemaand what it was was a place of rewards. Okay? Not a place of punishment. Only the winners went there.

So he is saying here we'll all appear before the bemaof Christ so that each one may be rewarded for his deeds in the body. The only evaluation for us future will be the level of reward we should receive. And then he says this, "According to what he has done whether it is good or bad." And would you please note that word "bad"? That's the word in the Greek phaulos, it really means useless, worthless. It's not kakia, evil, wicked, it's useless. And what is left then to evaluate there...our sins are forgiven, our sins are covered, the only thing to evaluate is what out of our life was spiritually valuable and thus worthy of reward and what was just worthless, useless, inconsequential, like mowing the lawn, or whatever. Not evil, just you don't reward it spiritually.

So I believe that our reward in the future is going to be a reward related to what we have done and that the dross will be burned away. The useless things burned away and what is left will be the gold, silver, precious stones. The other things aren't bad. Remember 1 Corinthians 3...wood, hay and stubble. Wood isn't bad. You build things out of it. Hay isn't bad, horses eat it. Even stubble is used to make bricks. But it just doesn't have any spiritual value and when fire gets to it, it burns it up. So there will be a reward for us but it will be the gold, silver, and precious stone that is left after the rest is set aside by which we will be rewarded.

And the apostle Paul looked forward to that with all his heart. He said, you remember that as he looked to the future, there would come a time when God would reveal the hidden things of the heart, 1 Corinthians 4:5, and then he said, "Then shall every man have...what?...praise from God." The only thing that will be at the coming bemawill be praise and reward, sin will be already done away with. It has already been exposed and it has already been covered at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Here's another question...the Bible is clear on the fact that we should not use images of the Lord. Why do we use pictures of Jesus to teach our children?

Well that's an interesting question. Are we disobeying the Word of God? No, let me give you what I think might be a helpful answer. By the way, I wouldn't mind if someone wanted to believe that you should never have a picture of Christ at all. That's fine, I don't argue with that at all. In fact, personally I don't like pictures of Christ. I don't know why, I just...I don't care for them personally. I don't think they're wrong in this sense, it is one thing to have an image of Christ which is worshiped. It is another thing to have a representation on paper which is clearly not worshiped. And it is the heart attitude that is the issue. When the Old Testament commandment said that we are to not make images of God and we are to not make idols, the point was the purpose of worship. And, of course, remember now, that is the Old Testament and God was a spirit and had no image. But even God made Christ into an image that could be seen, right? He is the visible image of God, Hebrews 1. God actually appeared in a visible form.

And so, if in children's books there are pictures of Jesus, as long as we don't worship the picture as if it were Jesus or God, as long as we understand that it is simply a representation of a man that really did walk on the earth and really did live on the earth, I think we can make a distinction in the minds of children. We're not worshiping the picture. We're not drawing an image of God. God Himself came in the form of a man and we're simply reproducing the form of a man in which God came, not that the form is to be worshiped at all.

If a man is chosen by God for the ministry and later has to step down because of some sort of moral indiscretion, will God ever restore this person to the ministry?

Well let me have you look at 1 Corinthians 9:27 and just briefly give you a comment. The answer, I believe, is it depends on what the ministry is. I believe a person can fall into moral sin and be restored to some kind of ministry. But I believe that there is some ministry in which a man cannot engage himself, and that would be the ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God as a pastor or elder. And I want you to look at 9:27 of 1 Corinthians, Paul gives us a very important statement here. Please notice verse 27, "I buffet my body," that's buffet not buffet, same spelling

different meaning, "I buffet my body and make it my slave." Literally the word buffet means to give a black eye. It means to punch. I subject my body, make it my slave. Why? "Because I have this fear that after I have preached to others I myself should be adokimos...in the Greek...disqualified." And the word literally means to have been tested and tried and found inadequate.

Paul says...My great fear is that after I have preached to others I myself should be disqualified. I believe it is possible after having preached to be disqualified. You say, "What disqualifies you?" It's very clear from the verse. I beat my body into submission because it is my body that will disqualify me. Misuse of the body is a disqualifier for ministry. I have never heard anybody that talks about restoration deal with that verse. Paul says I have to beat my body into submission because it is those sins of the body.

You say, "Well what are the sins of the body?" Well he's already talked about them in this very same epistle. Verse 18 of chapter 6, "Flee immorality, every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." And so Paul says it is immorality that is the unique sin of the body, so it is that I must control that immorality so that my body doesn't fall into immorality and in so doing render me disqualified. From what? From preaching, from the role of leadership.

Now maybe a person could come back in some ministry in some other way, sure. Restoration to the church, yes. Restoration to usefulness to God, yes. But restoration to a pulpit, restoration to an elder, how can it be? A man is to be blameless and above reproach. A man is to be a one-woman man, it says it as clearly as that in 1 Timothy and Titus. That man is not blameless who commits adultery. That man is not above reproach. That man is not a one-woman man. And the model has been shattered.

You see, spiritual leadership is not just a question of what you say, it's a question of what you are. It's the integrity of life. If you think spiritual leadership is just preaching a good sermon, raising the budget, moving the church, keeping things going, then you can get anybody in the pulpit. But if standing in the pulpit and spiritual leadership is all about the life you live, then the integrity of the man is crucial.

So, yes, persons who fall into sin can be restored to the church, to fellowship. They can be restored to some level of usefulness and serve the Lord. But I believe once they have shattered the model, they cannot step back as an elder, as a pastor, because they are no longer blameless, they are no longer above reproach. They have shown themselves not to be a one-woman man.

And that puts a heavy burden on the ministry. It really does. But it is one which the Spirit of God gives us the power to bear.

One final question, then we're going to sing a little bit...one final question...I like this question...how do I know the will of God for my life? I had about ten people ask that. How do I know the will of God? I'm trying, I'm praying, I'm asking how do I know if it's me, if it's God...so forth and so on, how can I know the will of God?

I have a simple little formula and if you get this in your mind I think it will help. Okay? First thing you

do is go to the Bible, sound reasonable? You go to the Bible, find out what the will of God is.

Good, let's look very quickly. First Timothy chapter 2 verse 3 and 4, and I'll quote it from the Authorized Version. Verse 3 and 4, "God our Savior who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." First thing God's will...God wills is that you be...what? Saved...you be saved. You want to do the will of God? Get saved, come to Christ.

Second thing, Ephesians chapter 5 verse 17, it says, "So then do not be...what?...what is it?...foolish." Do you think of a word that means the same and starts with "S"? Right. Don't be stupid, "But understand what the will of the Lord is." Now let me ask you a question, if you don't know the will of God what are you? What are you? You say, "Is that in the Bible?" It says don't be stupid, know the will of God. If you don't know the will of God you're stupid.

So now wait a minute. I'm..it should say...don't be foolish but try to find the will of God. No. You say, "I'm looking, I'm looking." Well don't look too far it's in the next verse. "Do not get drunk with wine for that's dissipation but be filled with the Spirit."

First thing God wills is that you be saved. Second thing He wills is you be Spirit-filled. Spirit-filled, what does that mean? Controlled by the Holy Spirit, that's God's will...that's God's will.

First Thessalonians chapter 4...1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 3, you know it's amazing to me people running around looking for God's will, I've seen this through the years, you know, I'm trying to find God's will, I'm searching for God's will, you know. And they get real mystical, they think they're going to run down the street, slip on a banana and land on a map of Argentina, you know, and that's a missionary call. They're waiting for God to say something out of heaven, you know. They...look, verse 3, this is the will of God, "Your sanctification." God wills that you be saved, God wills that you be Spirit-filled, God wills that you be sanctified.

What do you mean by that? That you abstain from...what?...sexual immorality, that's God's will. Stay away from sexual immorality. You see, God's will is very, very specific.

Look at 1 Peter chapter 2...1 Peter chapter 2 verse 13, "Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether to a king as one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of those who do right, for such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." Fourth thing, be submissive, submit to the authorities, be a model citizen, do right, that's the will of God. That's the will of God. Very basic...that's God's will.

God's will is that you be saved. God's will is that you be Spirit-filled. God's will is that you be sanctified. God's will is that you be submissive. And then would you notice in chapter 3, verse 17 of 1 Peter. "It is better if God should will it so that you suffer for doing what is right." How committed are you to doing what is right?

Five things...saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, willing to suffer for doing what is right. You say, "That doesn't help me know God's will." Sure it does...sure it does. Let me tell you something. If you're saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, and doing right to the degree that would even suffer, you know what the next step in God's will is? Whatever you want.

You say, "You're kidding." No because who is controlling your desires? Do you know what it says in Psalm 37:4? "Delight in the Lord and He will give you...what?...the desires of your heart." Do you know what that means? That doesn't mean delight in the Lord and He'll give you what you want. What it means is delight in the Lord and He'll give you the desires of your heart. He'll put His desires in your heart.

People say, "Why did you go to Grace Church?" I say, "I wanted to." Oh...you wanted to? That's not very spiritual. Well it is if I'm saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive and suffering because who's in control of my wants? God leads through your desire, beloved. But don't trust your desire unless the things you know of God's will are true.

Simply this is the system. If I am doing what is already revealed as God's will, then I'm not going to have any trouble with the part that isn't revealed. Right? He's going to lead me to the right place, lead me to the right people, lead me to the right relationship. Guys always say...how do I find the right wife? Very simple, be the right husband. You be all that God has called you to be, you be living in the will of God, saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, suffering if need be for what is right, and if you're the person that God has designed you to be then God will lead you the next step and give you the desire of your heart for the woman that he wants you to marry. God moves through desires in the heart of a person who is committed to Him.

Well, I hope those few questions were helpful and there were many, many more and we'll have another question and answer time in the future. Let's pray together.

Thank You so much, Father, for the joy of being together tonight. We love You. Thank You for saving us through Christ, thank You for the clarity of Your Word. Thank You for the joy of the Spirit who is in us and for the fellowship we enjoy with each other because of Him in Christ's name. Amen.

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