

# Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 18

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**Pastor Paul:** Hi everybody, we are back with some more of your Bible questions and our answers. I'm Pastor Paul, I'm here with my wife Sue, we're in our living room, and we're here to do another Bible Q&A. So what do we have for this week?

**Sue:** Well, let it begin with Brenda's question.

**Pastor Paul:** Okay.

**Sue:** She says, *“Dear Pastor Paul and Sue, you often stress that faith in Christ and His finished work is what saves us from eternal damnation (and I agree) but you seem so to downplay living according to His Word as recorded, for example, in Timothy, Titus, Ephesians, etc., where it is stated clearly. Please help me understand specifically what you are teaching in this area of faith in Christ for salvation and living a submitted life to Christ.”*

**Pastor Paul:** I think Brenda is absolutely right. I do probably stress more salvation by faith rather than living obediently. And I'll tell you why. Because there is a reason. There are so many people, and this is one of the things Brenda can't know, but I get so many emails and correspondence from people who have been taught a plan of salvation that includes faith plus something. And it could be faith plus water baptism or faith plus obedience, faith plus any number of other things. So I have reacted to that. I've responded to that by trying to convey the pure gospel as it relates to salvation, that it is by grace through faith only, or faith alone, as people like to say, and that it's not faith plus something else. And this was also a major topic in the Bible as well. Paul's letter to the Galatians being one of them. The book of Ephesians

and Romans. All of these books emphasize salvation by grace through faith alone. Now, the books also talk about obedience, and there's plenty in the Bible about that, about the whole issue of you need to walk in obedience. But here's the pivotal word. When we say you need to walk in obedience, need for what? That's the question. Need for what? Need for salvation? No, not for salvation, but because of salvation. I understand Brenda's concern. I understand that she is wanting me, perhaps, to talk a little bit more about what it takes and walking out the Christian life. And I do, obviously, talk about those topics. But I trust more that once a person gets saved and they've genuinely heard the gospel, that the Holy Spirit's going to do a work in their heart about the issue of obedience, because that is something, in fact, that's one of the very first things that the Holy Spirit conveys to a brand new believer, is walking now in the light of Christ and learning to walk according to His Word. I find that when you have someone who emphasizes obedience a lot and really doesn't talk a whole lot about salvation by grace through faith, it is a very natural tendency of human beings to slip into an attitude of, I have to do this in order to be pleasing to God in any way.

**Sue:** Or the contrary is, if I do this, am I so displeasing to God that He has turned His back on me? A lot of people ask, Pastor Paul, I can't kick this habit of fill in the blank. Am I going to hell?

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Sue:** And that idea came from somewhere.

**Pastor Paul:** Exactly.

**Sue:** But I'd also like to add, look, I've listened to you teach the Bible many more times than our listeners have.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, that's true.

**Sue:** They have access to one plus-ish rounds through the Bible. I've listened to you teach it all four times. And you teach obedience to an obedient life in Christ as often as it comes up in Scripture.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, I do.

**Sue:** And some of these books that she was mentioning, Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy and Titus, you don't pull back when you're teaching those.

**Pastor Paul:** No. We talk about what it is to live an obedient life in Christ. And we do address that. But when it comes to salvation, I will never add anything to faith. And so if somebody is going to be upset about that, they're just going to have to be upset because I'm not going to add anything to faith because it's not faith plus. It's not you're a Christian because you believe in Jesus and you're obedient. You're a Christian because you believe in Jesus. You put your faith in him. Now, since you've come to Christ and now that you're born again, we do need to talk about obedience. We need to discuss what the Bible discusses. But only after you're saved.

**Sue:** I think that's a good explanation. I don't think she was frustrated with you. She wanted an explanation and you gave a good one.

**Pastor Paul:** Good.

**Sue:** All right. Travis says, *“I'm getting to that age (mid 50's) where my friends and family have died or are sick and dying as they too are getting older. I'm on my second pass through the Bible following your teachings and while I'd like to think my faith has grown as a result, I'm not so sure because I fear death more now than I ever did before studying the Bible. The thought of death, and the fear of death, is a constant for me. Am I doubting God's Word and His promises for those that die in faith or is it normal for Christians to fear death?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I think it's absolutely normal for anyone to be afraid of the unknown. The unknown is always going to scare us because we have no frame of reference to go by. And so I think that in that case, now there are different personality types that don't fear the unknown very much at all. And that's just their personality. They're very adventurous types. And kind of like it says on the movie Hook, dying will be the greatest adventure of all. But I think it's really common. Now, I think that it's also possible for it to become so prevalent in our lives that we begin to, it erodes our joy. It can become like anything we fixate on. Fear is an interesting dynamic in our lives. When we become afraid of something, it begins to consume us. And then we become afraid of being afraid. We literally fear fear. So it becomes like this dog chasing its tail. And it's a real challenging thing. Every person has to deal with this in their own heart and need to seek the Lord and really come before the Lord in prayer. I know that's my answer to so many things, but it is the answer to so many things. God doesn't want us to be fearful. The Bible even tells us that, how many times does the scripture say, 'Fear not'. So I think that whatever our fears are, whether it's death, whether it's sickness, whether it's poverty, whether it's loneliness, childlessness, people have all kinds of fears. And they can all become unrealistic. That's not the right word. They can all become consuming to the point where you can't, I think the word is maybe unreasonable. It goes beyond kind of reason if we let them. And when we begin to hear or see that happening in our lives, we just need to bring it to the Lord. Say, Lord, I don't know why, but I'm afraid of this. And I don't want to be afraid of this. And I want you to work in my heart so that I no longer struggle with this fear. I've had fears in my life. You've had fears in your life. Probably not as many as me, but we all share fear alike as human beings. And as Christians, we have the precious privilege of bringing all those fears to the Lord and trusting him with them and trusting that he's going to work those things out in our lives.

**Sue:** You know I was teaching a retreat last week, and one of the concepts that I was talking about was the antidote for fear, sometimes we just want our fears removed. But the antidote is really courage. Courage is the face of faith. It is the practical face of faith in an environment of fear. And I can't teach the whole retreat here, but that's really maybe a nuance for some people to consider is asking the Lord for courage. In fact, Billy Graham even said, 'Don't ask for your fears to be removed. Ask for courage to face your fears.'

**Pastor Paul:** That's a good point.

**Sue:** Thank you.

**Pastor Paul:** I like that.

**Sue:** All right. Shade says, *“I'm not sure how to feel about Calvinism in general but the principle of unconditional election particularly bothers me. Could you please explain why you believe that unconditional election is or isn't Biblical?”* In 30 seconds, please.

**Pastor Paul:** In 30 seconds or less, please explain. Calvinism is a big topic that does come up from time to time. And John Calvin was a man who wrote very prolifically and talked about salvation and stuff. But frankly, his followers developed his teaching, I believe, even further than Calvin originally probably wanted it to go. But what they've come up with is they've come up with kind of a system of understanding salvation. And they use an acrostic, which is the TULIP. And the TULIP stands for essentially these five areas of Calvinism. And they are;

The “TULIP”

- Total Depravity
- Unconditional Election

- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints

Let me start off by saying I'm not a Calvinist. And I don't subscribe to Calvinism. But Shade is referring to just one of the tenets of Calvinism, which is unconditional election. And that essentially, according to Calvinists, is the idea or the belief. It really is what is behind the whole idea behind predestination. And it is essentially the understanding that some people receive salvation because God has chosen them before the world began. And other people are not chosen or not elect. And therefore, there's no chance for them to ever come to Christ because they were not chosen ahead of time. That's the whole idea. And I think it's interesting how Shade says that it kind of bothers me. Well, it bothers me too. And it bothers me because I don't think it's biblical. Unconditional election is very similar to the idea of limited atonement, which is one of the other tenets, which says that Jesus only died for the elect. He didn't die for all people. So this is the reasoning. God chose some people to be saved. He chose some people not to be saved. So therefore, when Jesus died on the cross, he died for the elect and not for everyone. So it's just a pattern of thinking that kind of goes along with the whole idea. Shade asked for a biblical response to this. And the best one that I can come up with is 1 John 2:2 (ESV). And it says that Jesus, it actually starts off saying He, but the personal pronoun belongs to Jesus, is the propitiation for our sins. And that means the one who takes away the wrath of God. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

**1 John 2:2 (ESV)**

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

I think that's fairly conclusive. And so that's my biblical response to what I believe is an unbiblical, Calvinistic, reformed doctrinal position.

**Sue:** That's a good one. All right. Sarah says, *“I have a very dear friend that I work with, who has fallen into the trap of believing so many wild conspiracy theories. She loves the Lord but is constantly talking about conspiracy theories at work, such as: The moon landing was fake, the Illuminati is real and in charge, Elvis is still alive and preaching down south, the earth is flat, and the list goes on. Other than praying for her what else can I do?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Basically, there are certain people, Christians and otherwise, who are just more gullible than others. And that gullibility allows them to hear something. And even without any sort of evidence, they just believe it. And sometimes there's a tendency to be skeptical too. It's a skepticism that's gone awry. It's like, I'll bet they never did go to the moon. So what can you do about a situation like that other than pray? Obviously, we got to be careful when we say other than pray. We got to be careful not to put prayer on a level like, I really want to do more. That's not all that important. I write to people all the time and I say, praying is the most important thing you can do. But I would encourage Sarah to get this gal into the Word. I think that Christians need to be more proactive about inviting people to study the Word of God with them. And I think some of that naiveté and gullibility can be matured, for lack of a better word, if this person just is more in the Word of God rather than in the Word of all of these conspiracy theories that she's laid hold of. So I would encourage Sarah to invite this person over. She's already, the gal's already a believer. Maybe sit down and watch some of my teachings, have some discussion afterwards, or just read a chapter of the Bible and invite her. Invite her to get into the Word. I believe it is the Word of God that anchors us and keeps us from swallowing conspiracy theories.

**Sue:** Very good. All right. Callie says, *“Hi Pastor Paul and Sue! Thank you for taking the time to answer our Bible questions. I was just listening to your teaching on the book of Nahum and at the end you said the book demonstrated God's judgment/wrath on the nations but to not think the same doesn't go for the nations of today. That got me to thinking about Judea when they were conquered by the Babylonians. I'm assuming there were still righteous people amongst the captives. Does the same go for us now? If the U.S. is to face the wrath of God, will His people also be among those punished?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, His people will not be along with those punished, but they may experience difficulty. Do you understand the difference? Let me give you an example. If a family with five kids had made a decision to go out to Dairy Queen in the evening, Dad said to the kids, we're all going to go out and get a cone, but one of the kids did something terrible and had to be punished, and Dad said to the whole family, our Dairy Queen date is off because Johnny did such and such or whatever. The other kids weren't being punished, but they were experiencing the negative consequences that go along with being in a family where someone was disobedient. That's really often what happened in the nation of Israel. When there was disobedience, it doesn't mean that everybody in the nation was disobedient, but because they were a community of people, they all felt the difficulty that came along with things like droughts and other, when the Philistines were given power to come and punish the nation of Israel because of the idolatry and disobedience of the people, certainly there were righteous people that felt the brunt of that difficulty, but they weren't being punished. We have to remember something about what God's Word says related to those of us who are in Christ. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, and he said, for God has not destined us for wrath. We've not been destined for wrath, but rather to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.



### **1 Thessalonians 5:9 (ESV)**

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So does that mean that we'll never experience hardship? No, not at all. If God were to choose to punish, if you will, the United States of America because of some act of rebellious behavior or sinful behavior prior to the Great Tribulation, I mean, if God just chose to do that, those of us who believe in Jesus, we're going to feel the brunt of that, but that's not our punishment. We're not being punished. We are just experiencing the difficulty right along with those who are. So that's really the answer to the question.

**Sue:** All right. Sandra says, *“I've come across passages in the Old Testament where the people of Israel were removed from their land and taken into captivity due to their idolatry.”*

**Pastor Paul:** So a very similar question.

**Sue:** Very similar. *“I've come across fellow believers who say that we need to repent and ask God for forgiveness so the same thing doesn't happen to us. I would like to know what you think about this.”*

**Pastor Paul:** The Bible tells us to confess our sins and pray and seek God's face, and I think that's always a good thing to do. What we see in the Old Testament when the nation of Israel was essentially removed from the land, however, is a promise, I guess you could call it a promise, also a warning that God gave to the Israelites because their covenant was a covenant where the land was really what God was promising them. In other words, when God gave the Mosaic covenant to the people of Israel, He said to them, if you obey me and obey my word, I will bless you in the

land. This land will be a blessing to you. Your neighbors or your enemies will not be able to stand up to you. Your crops will be fruitful and full. The diseases that came upon the Egyptians will not come upon you. And there were a whole slew of promises that God gave concerning the land of Israel. But He also told them, if you choose to follow other gods, I will remove you from the land.

**Sue:** Right.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, that's never something that God told the church. The church doesn't have a physical land. So we're under a different covenant. It's a different situation right away. So when people say, you got to pray for your country and pray for this, or we're going to be taken away from our land. I don't think so. I mean, sure, God, I suppose could do that, but that's not our covenant. God never promised us the land. Our promises are spiritual under the new covenant. So it's a different covenant with different promises and different obligations.

**Sue:** Okay. Akailah says, *“Hi Pastor Paul and Sue! I'm a 20 year old wife wanting some advice. I've been married for 7 months and everything is going very well, but I find that sometimes I'm overly snarky. My husband often takes no offense, but if he does he lets me know and I apologize. However, I want to be the wife that embodies 1 Peter 3:4. My husband says it's not an issue with him but I'm afraid others might see my actions as disrespectful toward him. I'd love to hear from both of you.”*

**Pastor Paul:** So she wants to hear from both of us. And I think this is good that perhaps you address this as a wife. She's kind of explaining that sometimes she probably bristles under his leadership from time to time and makes snarky comments that could come off as very disrespectful.

**Sue:** Also, some of us grow up in a culture in our home of origin where there was a lot of verbal tangling. And things like that just happen. And then you marry a soft hearted person. It's like, what's this? Now, I'm not excusing it. I don't think it's good, but I can tell by her note, taking the time to write to us, the Holy Spirit's convicting her to make changes. And it's not going to happen overnight. I think we've experienced the same thing. We created a culture with our kids. We were a joking family. And that didn't always fly so well when they got married and there had to be some adjustments made there. So some of this just is part of the process of living and growing up and learning to prefer one another. And even if something feels playful and I don't think she is saying it's playful. She's convicted. It's snarky. I shouldn't be saying. And she's right about something. She doesn't want her actions to be interpreted as disrespectful. Hey, that's legitimate.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, it is.

**Sue:** And we should consider how we present ourselves as Christians.

**Pastor Paul:** I think that when the Holy Spirit convicts us of a particular behavior that we know that we need to change, one of the best things to do is that every single time it happens, you go to the Lord and you ask for forgiveness. And then you pray and you say, Lord, give me the strength to hold my tongue, to not say things that are going to be disrespectful and help me to be respectful and to honor this man that you've given me as my husband and to respect him in the position that he has. That whole process of remembering to go to the Lord every single time. Boy, I tell you that begins to add up in your life when you realize I had to come to the Lord 10 times today and confess the very same sin. You're going to become more aware and your prayer each time is not going to go to waste because the Lord wants her to be respectful, too, because that's obedient to His Word. So bringing it to him, bringing it to the Lord every time is, I think, a really important step.

**Sue:** Very good. All right. Jasmine says, *“Hello Pastor Paul and Sue. I'm in need of godly counsel about discipline and training up a toddler. How did you guys as Christians handle tantrums or outbursts?”*

**Pastor Paul:** We raised four kids who are all adults now, but none of them were really given much to tantrums. We had pretty soft-hearted kids for the most part. And I'm thankful for that. It made our lives, I think, a lot easier in those childbearing years.

**Sue:** It was God's grace. Now, when she uses the phrase outbursts, we did have one that was a screamer and responded to sibling things.

**Pastor Paul:** Interaction.

**Sue:** Interaction with, like, screaming.

**Pastor Paul:** Sometimes.

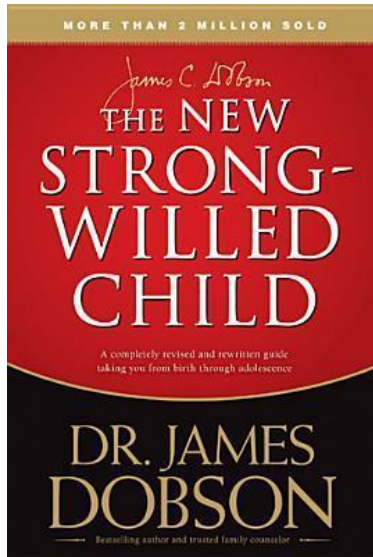
**Sue:** And we just had to kind of come, and I think physical touch is important to come. And it was the same child that we had to say, this is a restaurant, quiet voice, restaurant voice, because some kids just have big voices. And it's just the consistency.

**Pastor Paul:** It is training. Back in the 1970s, Dr. James Dobson wrote a book called [The Strong-Willed Child](#). You and I actually watched his video series before we even had any kids.

**Sue:** Well, before we were even walking with the Lord.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, I don't think we even really gave our hearts to the Lord yet. And I remember a lot about that video series. It was very impactful. That book, and actually an updated version of that book is still available. I would encourage Jasmine

to get on Amazon or go to a bookstore if she's got one near and look for the book entitled [The New Strong-Willed Child](#) by Dr. James Dobson.



Great book. But it's specifically geared to parents who are dealing with a difficult child, a child who is difficult to control. And there are very important principles and tips in that book. So I would really encourage her to do that.

**Sue:** And just as an aside, I'm always a strong proponent of all of the basics in life, proper bedtime, proper amount of sleep, not too much sugar, all those things, quiet time in the afternoon, all those things that help create a calm and orderly home. It goes a long way with just giving those kids the foundation from which to flourish.

**Pastor Paul:** I think one of the biggest reminders that I needed as a younger man when we were raising kids is that the job of a parent, you should never look at it or get frustrated about it when your child isn't behaving properly, because this is what you're supposed to be doing. You're training this child. And I think you got to look at it like that and say, we're not there yet. We're training. And then think about, okay, how can I train this child not to have tantrums or not to have outbursts? Right now we're doing it and I'm frustrated. And I think that's what's going on here. Jasmine

just doesn't really know what to do. The book is going to help a lot. But Jasmine, be patient and know that you're in a training. If this is truly a toddler, this is a child that is in those training years. So be very purposeful about your training in these years and be patient with your child. You'll get there.

**Sue:** And it is true what they say, all the training that you do at age 2 and 3 and 4 eliminates a lot of training at 12 and 13 and 14.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, it does. And it's much easier when you're doing it in the early years.

**Sue:** Cora asks, *“If we were made in the image of God, why did He implant a disobedient nature into us? This led us to sin.”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, Cora is correct about one thing. The disobedient nature, as she refers to it, the Bible calls it our sinful nature, does in fact create sin and sinful behavior in our life. What Cora is incorrect about is the fact that God did not put it in us. We put it in ourselves. It is the outgrowth of our own disobedience. And I would encourage Cora to go back and study Genesis. In fact, Cora, you might consider just going to my website, [Life Bible Ministry](http://Life Bible Ministry), go to Genesis and do the first three chapters, at least of Genesis. I would encourage you to do the whole thing. But in those first three chapters, you will go through creation, and you will also deal with the fall of man. And that's an important thing to study, to know, and to understand how did we become sinners? How did we begin this life of sin? And what is God doing about it? That's the most important thing. And Cora, you need to understand that sin is a very serious issue. God takes it very seriously. And that's why he sent his son was to die on the cross and pay the penalty of our sin so that we might be forgiven and be saved.

**Sue:** All right. We're on our last question.

**Pastor Paul:** Okay.

**Sue:** It is from Rebekah, and she asks, *“How can I graciously disagree with people's beliefs in a way that transparently advocates Jesus and the gospel whilst not coming across as a ‘Bible basher’? What questions would you ask such people or what comments would you give them in order to plant seeds and open doors for gospel conversation in such contexts?”*

**Pastor Paul:** She's asking two questions here, and I like her second one because it's very good. What questions should you ask? How can I ask certain things that are going to generate conversation and so forth? But her first question is, how can I graciously disagree? That's really hard. It's difficult. And you have to understand we're living in a very kind of fickle and picky culture where just disagreeing with someone's beliefs can bring some real attacks your direction. People consider it offensive to disagree. And which is interesting because it's like, no, that's what the whole idea of debate is based on. People need to kind of get over themselves a little bit and realize that it's okay if people don't agree with you. But this is where we're at. So you do have to be very careful in today's culture. I would encourage asking questions and finding out why someone believes the way they do, hear them, and then be able to give your response. One of the things that Dr. Walter Martin, the original Bible Answer Man on the radio, used to do is he would say to someone who just got done saying something that was untrue, he would say, if I can show you in the Bible, how or why what you've said isn't true, will you believe me? And I always felt like that was a very smart thing for him to ask, because it begins to expose what is behind the question. Do I really desire to know the truth? Or am I going to stick to what I believe because I feel like it's true? And I heard him several times use that in a very positive and fruitful way of getting the person to rethink their position. So asking questions is very important.

**Sue:** I think asking questions is very important. And listening is equally as important to genuinely listen to the person when they're saying it. And some people are going to spout off beliefs, just because they heard it, they were raised with it, they don't really have a legitimate. But to give them that honor, really listening to their answer, I think is really key.

**Pastor Paul:** I believe you're right, absolutely. So those are our questions for this week. And we are happy to answer your questions. If you have more, send them in to us by email, by sending them to [questions@lifebibleministry.com](mailto:questions@lifebibleministry.com). And while you're thinking about that email address, or excuse me, that address, visit our website, [Life Bible Ministry](http://LifeBibleMinistry.com). You're going to find links to my studies through the entire Bible laid out in a way that I think you'll find is easier to access than even on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), although it links the messages to [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). But also you'll find Sue's Women of the Word, Women's Bible Studies. And she has done several over the years written and taught Bible studies along with study guides that can be downloaded for free or be purchased in booklet form. And there are many women's groups around the country who do Sue's Women's Studies. So those are available for you. And we invite you to be back with us next week when we tackle more of your questions. So we'll see you then. God bless.