

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 24

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Life Bible Ministry

Pastor Paul: We're back with some more Bible questions. What do you got?

Sue: I have a question from Claire. She says, *“My friend often uses the phrases, “Oh my God!” and “I swear to God!”. One day I felt a very strong urge to tell my friend not to say such things as it is using the Lord's name in vain. She didn't take it well and she said in her heart, she doesn't mean anything bad or disrespectful. It is simply a saying. Please can you tell me if it is sinful to say such phrases?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, there's a lot of things that are just a saying that are probably not good to say. Technically speaking, saying, “Oh my God”, is not taking God's name in vain because it's not his name. That is his title. God, we think God is his name, dear God, but he is God. Again, that's his title. So when someone uses the name of Jesus, that's a clear violation of using the Lord's name in vain, and there are other things. Now, just because it's not technically using the Lord's name in vain doesn't mean that it's okay to do. I would caution people from just speaking or just using anything related to the Lord. I mean, Jesus told the Jews of his time, they used to love to swear, not swearing as in obscenity, but swearing vows like I'm telling the truth. And he'd say, you guys, you're into this swearing thing, and so you swear by something you think is bigger than you to prove that you're telling the truth. And so you'll say, I swear by heaven or whatever. I swear by Jerusalem. And he says, don't do that. When you swear by heaven, that's God's throne. When you swear by the earth, that's his footstool. When you swear by Jerusalem, that's the city of the great king. Just don't do that. And so that wasn't even using the Lord's name in vain, really. But Jesus was still saying, don't do that. So I think it's a good idea not to say, “Oh

my God”, or something like that. Here's the deal though, and I want to hear what you have to say as well. Telling somebody else not to do it, that's rarely going to go well. And because they're going to become defensive. And now it might end up being good because she might end up thinking about it and thinking, well, maybe I shouldn't do that. But I think we should be more concerned about our own personal habits and not kind of doing that sort of thing, rather than correcting other people.

Sue: Unless you're a mother.

Pastor Paul: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Sue: I can remember when I was a young girl, I'm sure I was school age, but my mother pulled me aside, and I think I had tried out saying, “Oh gosh”.

Pastor Paul: Oh, even gosh.

Sue: Gosh. And she pulled me aside and explained to me that that just wasn't a good way to speak. And in her mind, it was using the Lord's name in vain. Here it's a core memory. I mean, I can remember it, and it had a big impact on me. And I think that we live in a culture, which by and large, just plain uses such vulgar language all the time.

Pastor Paul: Oh, yeah.

Sue: And so there's nothing wrong. In fact, there's a lot good about a Christian swinging the other direction. And purposefully...

Pastor Paul: You're going to stand out if you do.

Sue: If you never lean that direction that our culture does of vulgar language. And that's probably what I would tell a young person these days. I wouldn't tell them that they're taking the Lord's name in vain as a parent. But I would say, do you want to stand out in your life for Christ? Just don't do any of that.

Pastor Paul: Yeah. Things can be inappropriate without necessarily coming under the category of taking the Lord's name in vain. And I think saying, “Oh my God,” all the time is inappropriate. And I think it becomes habitual. And somebody who's convicted about doing it simply needs to change their habits and that's hard.

Sue: Once in a while, I'll see someone comment on one of your things and say, OMG, as people do. And then another viewer will get after them and say, you shouldn't be saying that.

Pastor Paul: I used to love, back in the 70s, watching MASH and Colonel Potter. He had the greatest expletives, which weren't really expletives at all. He'd say when he got angry, horse feathers or something like that or horse hockey, and it was always kind of cute and it was never obscene.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: So there's ways you can train yourself to exclaim and so forth without bringing God into it.

Sue: Absolutely. All right. Chris has a question, *“I enjoy watching supernatural, action, and horror films. I like the good-triumph-over-evil ending, most of the time. Is it okay to enjoy such films and dramas for entertainment value?”*

Pastor Paul: When people ask me this question, my practice is to return a question to them. And that is, what is the Holy Spirit telling you? What is he saying to you? The fact that Chris is writing to us and asking tells me right there that there's a question mark concerning this sort of a thing. And if you felt completely at peace about it, you probably wouldn't even ask. So if you're asking, you're probably wondering. And if you're wondering, you need to ask the one who really matters. And you need to go to the Holy Spirit and just say, is there anything here? Is there

anything going on here that is going to negatively affect my heart and influence me in ways that I shouldn't be influenced? Those are the questions that need to be asked.

Sue: And his category that he grouped is pretty broad from action to horror. And so the question to go back to the Lord is to say, of all these things I've grouped together, you know what is profitable for me? None of it, some of it. Help me distinguish.

Pastor Paul: I love that word profitable. That's a good word. What is profitable? Or is it just a waste of time? Even if it's not affecting you negatively, even is it just a waste of time? Those are things we should be thinking about.

Sue: Absolutely. Scott & Stacy say, ***“We are very grateful for all you do! How do you respond to so-called “progressive pastors” who claim Mary was not a virgin before Jesus?”***

Pastor Paul: With the Word.

Sue: Well, that's a good idea.

Pastor Paul: I mean, if I was even in a conversation with a progressive pastor, which probably wouldn't happen, but if I was, and he said, I don't happen to believe that Mary was a virgin, I'd say, hmm. You see, this is a bigger problem that we have going on here than just the virginity of Mary. This is someone who's telling me, I don't believe the Bible. Because good grief, the Bible is crystal clear. I mean, Mary even says to the angel, how's all this going to come about since I'm a virgin? I've never been with a man. And so the angel answers her, here's what's going to happen. The Holy Spirit will overshadow you. And then we're told that Joseph had no physical relations with Mary until after Jesus was born. I mean, again, if a progressive pastor said that to me, I don't believe Mary was a virgin, I'd say, oh, so you don't believe in the Bible. You don't trust the Bible, or you don't believe that

what the Bible says is true. So that must affect a lot of things. And I think the virginity of Mary is the tip of the iceberg.

Sue: Sure. And so if this is their progressive pastor, you would probably say you need to be praying about a different church.

Pastor Paul: A different church where they take the Word of God seriously.

Sue: Exactly. All right. Trent says, *“Your Bible study has really helped me more than you can imagine. Will the “different forms of Christianity” such as Jehovah's Witness or Catholic, etc. be raptured when Jesus comes for His bride?”*

Pastor Paul: Wow. I wouldn't call Jehovah's Witnesses a different form of Christianity. It's a cult. And Roman Catholicism barely resembles biblical Christianity. But here's the deal. I don't care where you go to church, whether when the rapture takes place, there's only one thing that's going to matter. Jesus isn't going to look at our membership card as to where we fellowshiped. The only issue is going to be, are you trusting completely in the work that I did on the cross? Bottom line, is it possible that somebody from a Jehovah's Witness background could be trusting completely in the finished work of Jesus on the cross? I would say, yes, it's possible. I mean, there are things that kind of argue against it, such as the Watchtower doctrine, which is messed up. There are things in Roman Catholicism that are really messed up and very unbiblical. But is it possible that people who attend a Roman Catholic Church are going to be raptured and saved? Absolutely. All it takes is believing in Jesus Christ. No, no, no. Not just believing in him, trusting in him for the forgiveness of sins. Believing that what he did on the cross was enough. And there's nothing else that I have to do to be saved. That's it. That's all it takes. That's what the Bible tells us. So I don't care where you went to church. And Jesus doesn't care where you went to. Well, he cares. But in the final analysis, the

only thing that matters is, are you trusting completely in the finished work of Jesus on the cross? I had somebody write to me not that long ago and say, why do you keep saying finished work? Why don't you just say, trusting in the work? I use the word finished very purposefully, because the word finished means it's done, and there's nothing else that needs to be done for us to be saved. That's why I use that word. The problem with Jehovah's Witness, Mormonism, even Roman Catholicism, and a host of other things, is that they don't really believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ. There's other things you must do, even in Roman Catholicism. So that's a problem. But anybody who puts their faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross is born again, saved, and will be in the rapture.

Sue: I'm sure that when the rapture happens, there will be born-again Christians who the previous Sunday were in a Jehovah's Witness assembly, or a Catholic assembly, or even a Mormon assembly that will be raptured. And there will be people who the previous Sunday had been sitting in a Christian church, but were not born again.

Pastor Paul: But were not born again, and will not be raptured. Exactly.

Sue: So it really has nothing to do with what church you were at.

Pastor Paul: It's what you believe.

Sue: It's your spiritual condition.

Pastor Paul: Your faith. Absolutely.

Sue: All right. Anne, who is from Melbourne says, ***“Hi Pastor Paul & Sue. My question is in regard to 2 Thessalonians 2:7 “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.” I understand the Holy Spirit is The Restrainer and He goes away for a time. I'm guessing when The Rapture occurs? How long is He gone since people will***

still be getting saved during the Tribulation? Can people get saved while The Holy Spirit is not here?"

Pastor Paul: There is an assumption from 2 Thessalonians, and Anne has obviously fallen into that, where it says that he who restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And people assume that means goes away, and it doesn't mean that at all. It just means he's going to stop restraining. I think of it like if I was keeping someone from coming into a room, and I was holding back on the door, and I was saying, you can't come in here. Well, then finally I say, now you can come in. And I open the door and I let them in. Now, I'm not gone. I've just stopped restraining them. The Holy Spirit will never go away. He can't go away, because life would cease to exist. The Holy Spirit is critical to life. And as she even mentions, there are going to be people who will be saved during the great tribulation. So the Holy Spirit has to be here for that. A person can't be saved apart from the Holy Spirit, because they have to be born again by the Spirit. So the Holy Spirit, let's just clear this up, the Holy Spirit never goes away. He stops restraining, but he never goes away.

Sue: That is such a good analogy. I like that.

Pastor Paul: Good.

Sue: Restraining coming into a room. That's very good.

Pastor Paul: Good.

Sue: All right. George & Heidi, *"I wonder what you think about book signing? To me, it smacks a little like idolizing."*

Pastor Paul: Whether something is worldly or whether something is wrong really largely depends on the person's heart, and not the event or the act itself. Are book signings worldly? Maybe. It depends on the person. We've written some books. I've

written two books. You've written one. And then you've written a host of study books. And I've had people ask me to sign my book. And I can tell you right now, I felt very uncomfortable doing it. I didn't like it, but I did it. I did it out of deference to the person, because they asked, and I didn't want to be a dope about it. But if somebody would have walked by and seen me signing my book for that person, and they would have said, wow, that's pretty worldly action on his part, they wouldn't have known that I didn't want to do it. I wasn't comfortable doing it, but I did it for the person. I think it's very, very dangerous for us to look at a situation and make a determination without knowing the person's heart. The Apostle Paul said, who are you to judge another man's servant? By his own master he stands or falls. And the reason Paul said that is because we can't know what's in someone's heart. Now, if you don't like book signings, don't attend one. Don't go there. But I would say to anyone, just be careful about presuming to know what's really going on in the heart. Because the person who's signing the books may not even want to be there. And they may be very uncomfortable doing it, but they're doing it because they feel they have to.

Sue: I have two experiences. I think I am asked to sign my book way more often than you are, because women are super relational.

Pastor Paul: Sure.

Sue: And so when I go to teach at a retreat, and they've been given my book, and at the end, sometimes they'll come. And all it means to me is they want a connection.

Pastor Paul: It's a personalization of the thing.

Sue: Yeah, it's a personalization. The word meant something to them, and they just are seeking a connection. And I think it's sweet. I too was really uncomfortable at first, like, what in the world?

Pastor Paul: I know.

Sue: Now, I just think it is super sweet that they want to connect. But we don't do formal book signings where we sit and wait for people to come. But I was attending an Elizabeth Elliott conference years ago, and she did do book signings, but she was a prolific writer. I was blessed to stand in line and wait for her to sign my book that I purchased of hers. And it meant so much to me. It was really a treasure to me. So again, it's just all in the heart of the person wanting the connection. It's all in the heart of the person giving. I never for a moment thought she was being, I don't know, I couldn't classify anything weird about her signing a book.

Pastor Paul: The last several years that I pastored Calvary Chapel Ontario, you know this, because of our internet, YouTube kind of popularity, I suppose, for lack of a better word, we had people coming from all over the world to sit in a service and watch a service live. And those people would come up after the service, and they would want to take pictures with us. And you know we always did it. I never really felt comfortable doing it because I've never wanted to be the celebrity pastor. That was never my desire. I just simply wanted to teach God's Word. But people get excited, and they recognize that they've received something very special from you. When you speak the Word of God into someone's life, and it has a life-altering effect, they're so appreciative. We get notes every day expressing appreciation. I get that. It is very important that they not idolize. It's very important that they don't enter into a worldly attitude, and they recognize that we're just servants, just as they are, and that we're not celebrities. We're just people. We put our pants on one leg at a time, just like everybody else. But we recognize that people also just have a deep appreciation for what the Lord has done in their life, and the vessels He has used from time to time to do that work. Now, again, there's nothing special about the vessel, but there

is something special about the appreciation that is expressed, and that's what we would probably say.

Sue: I think that's the longest answer we have ever given to a non-Bible question.

Pastor Paul: Is that a fact?

Sue: I think so, because you rarely answer questions about, what do you think about this? It's usually Bible questions.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, that's true.

Sue: Book signing is not in the Bible.

Pastor Paul: Right.

Sue: All right. Melissa says, *“First I want to say I'm enjoying reading through the Bible with you. I'm so glad I found you on YouTube. Second, since starting my walk with the Lord, I've been conflicted about my years-long friendship with a lesbian. Can a Christian be friends with someone who is a homosexual?”*

Pastor Paul: I appreciate the question, but the question is misasked. The question isn't, or shouldn't be, whether a Christian can be a friend with someone who is sinning openly or involved in sexual immorality. The real question is, can you be a friend of someone who's living in sexual immorality and not be either (a) drawn away, (b) influenced in such a way that you compromise your faith and or the Word of God? Those are really the questions. And the reason I say that is because there are Christians who have developed friendships, deep friendships, with people who are walking or living in a homosexual lifestyle, and because of their love for those people, they simply can't bring themselves to say that that lifestyle is wrong. That's compromising. Because the Bible is very clear. I mean, it's not an issue. So there are dangers that go along with it. Now, should we be friends of people who are

unbelievers and are living in that unbelief? I mean, how else are they going to hear the gospel? We might have to be careful about how deep that fellowship goes. But the Apostle Paul kind of addressed this. He had written to the church in Corinth where there was rampant sexual immorality, and he told them to stay away from people involved in sexual immorality, and they assumed that that meant anyone who was involved in sexual immorality. So Paul wrote again to them, and this is in 1 Corinthians 5. Let me read this. He said;

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 (ESV)

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

In other words, what he's saying is you'd have to leave the world to not deal with those kinds of people, because they're all around you every day. What he went on to say was, don't hang with a person who claims to be a follower of Jesus but is living in that lifestyle. So we have to interact with people in the world because we need to give them the good news. Now, close friendships need to be monitored closely. Is that friendship causing you to compromise what you know to be true? Is that friendship causing you to be drawn into a sense of, well, it's really not so bad, and they really love each other? And these are the things that we hear Christians saying, and the reason is they haven't been careful. We are to love people, but not to the degree that we compromise the Word of God. So that's the answer.

Sue: That's excellent. I think about Rosario Butterfield's testimony when she was in that lifestyle. And was it not the late Tim Keller who would invite her?

Pastor Paul: No, it wasn't Tim personally. No, it was just a pastor.

Sue: A pastor. As someone would invite her over for dialogue, for fellowship, for a meal, that's quite a different thing than being friends with someone and going on road trips together.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, being besties.

Sue: Being besties. And so there's definitely a place for opening our hearts and our homes and our dialogue to someone who we perceive is open to seeking a relationship with the Lord.

Pastor Paul: Absolutely. Here's the deal. Well, that didn't work. Believe it or not, both of our cameras simply decided to stop recording just as we were finishing our final thoughts on the final question of this Q&A. So anyway, what we were basically saying is that when a born-again believer has a heart and desire to reach out to an unbeliever who is living in sin, that person, that believer, needs to be very careful. They just really need to walk in discernment. They need to walk in the strength of the Word. They need to be careful about many things, one of which is not getting drawn into a sinful lifestyle. Number two, they need to be very careful about not compromising the Word of God as it relates to the severity of that person's sin. And that's something we see Christians doing because of their love for the other person. And they need to just be careful about their own personal testimony. So those were the final thoughts we gave. I hope that makes sense. We'll see you in next week's Q&A. God bless.