

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 3

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Pastor Paul: Welcome back. This is Episode 3 of our Bible Q&A. Do you have some more questions for me?

Sue: I always have questions for you.

Pastor Paul: Good. Let's do it.

Sue: The first one is from Jodi, *“I watch Pastor Paul every morning to start my day. I have been told many times that I have the gift of exhortation. People often come to me with problems and issues asking for help and prayer. Is there a gift of counseling? Is it biblical? Is it included with other gifts like wisdom, discernment, and exhortation?”*

Pastor Paul: When you go through the Bible and you look at the passages that speak of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they're listed for you in 1 Corinthians 12. Although there's no listing for a gift of exhortation, I do believe that people are gifted through the Spirit to do all kinds of things. And if somebody is able to exhort, that usually means that they have a gift of wisdom and the ability to speak a word of wisdom into a person's life. Usually that gift is a supernatural gift. It's a gift that is able to apply the word of God in a very practical sort of a way for someone's issue. So what Jodi may be dealing with here is a gift of wisdom and discernment, although usually discernment is not this kind of discernment. The biblical gift of discernment is more a discerning of spirits rather than just the ability to correctly discern someone's situation. Again, that probably comes back to knowledge and wisdom, but I don't think it's important as much to define these things necessarily, but just to know that

if Jodi and others have just a heart for people and a heart to love and to encourage and exhort them, then that's what they should do. That's what the apostle Paul would say, if you have this gift, then do it. And if it's been recognized in the body of Christ, then go for it and use it for the glory of God.

Sue: Sure. And just because it's not listed in a particular passage like the Romans 12 passage of gifts isn't identical to the one that you mentioned. So there's a variety of gifts. In fact, the Bible says that there are a variety of gifts.

Pastor Paul: Exactly. I think there's a lot of people who have long believed that Paul's lists of gifts were not meant to be the end all and say all of every gift that could potentially come through the Holy Spirit. What's very cool about her note is that she says, I've been told many times, and that's one of the ways that we discover our gifts is that the body of Christ confirms and she says, people come to me with their issues. Well, people are drawn to those who have a gift to be able to minister in that unique way.

Sue: I've often said when we have a pie auction, people don't flock to me and ask me to bake a pie for the auction.

Pastor Paul: It's not your gift.

Sue: No, apparently it's not my gift and so it's not confirmed.

Pastor Paul: Some of them are bake pies, some of us buy pies.

Sue: And some of us eat pies.

Pastor Paul: And all of us eat pies.

Sue: All right. Julie says, ***"Hello, Pastor Paul & Sue! My husband and I get so much out of your teaching -- thank you! A friend shared that she heard, at a Bible study, that your thoughts are either from God or from Satan. Even if you think***

your thoughts are your own, I believe what was being said is that their source is either one or the other. Is there scripture to back this up?”

Pastor Paul: Not really. I guess I can see why some people maybe come to this conclusion, but it really takes away from the humanity of God's creation of mankind. It really does it. It takes away to say that every thought is either from God or from Satan. I think that there are different ideologies and there are different influences in the world, the world is largely under the influence of the enemy. We know that. So when somebody has been brought up through the world and they've learned the things of the world, their words are going to reflect that influence. It doesn't mean that they're speaking the words of Satan. It just means that they've been influenced by the world. By the same token, somebody who spends a lot of time in the Word of God and spends a lot of time with the Lord in prayer, and that sort of thing is going to be influenced by that word, and their words will reflect that influence in the same way. But I think we do speak as individuals as well.

Sue: Our next question is from Mirna and she commented on your Revelation chapter 1 message and said *“Why do some teach that when we die, we go to sleep until Christ comes back?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, the reason people believe that is because when the Apostle Paul refers to a believer dying physically, he uses the euphemistic word to sleep. And that was just his favorite way of describing a believer dying. It does not mean that we go to sleep. It means that's what the body appears to be doing at death. But we know elsewhere from the Scripture that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord and the soul and the spirit do not sleep. Everybody who dreams knows that. You and I probably wake up almost every morning and talk about how active our dreams were and we're sometimes exhausted by it. It's like, when can I just shut this off? Well, the answer is you can't shut it off because your soul and your spirit are

always moving and grooving and alive. So when your physical body dies, your soul and spirit go to be with the Lord as a believer. So again, the answer to the question is why do some teach or believe that you go to sleep until Christ returns? It's because of the language that Paul uses, but is not to be taken literally. It's a euphemism.

Sue: All right. Eartha says, *“My question is found in Colossians 1:23. Does this passage teach that a believer can become unsaved if they let go of faith? Please clarify this for me.”*

Pastor Paul: I wanted to look this one up because this is an important question that needs to be addressed here because it really comes back to the issue that everyone loves to talk about losing your salvation. And you know what I have said over the years as it relates to this. First of all, it's a very, very, very emotional discussion for a lot of people there. And many people believe what they believe and they really don't care if it's biblical or not. They're going to believe what they believe because it's what they want to believe. Now, Colossians 1:23, and I'm going to read this out of my NIV because that's the Bible that I grabbed, but this is where the Apostle Paul is writing about the fact that the believers in Colossae were once unsaved and are now saved. And he says here, Colossians 1:20-23a (NIV), “Once you were alienated from God and we're enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation”. Here's where verse 23 comes in. “If you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.” That is an important passage and it's not the only one where that conditional clause ‘if’ is introduced for us as it relates to our salvation. So people always want to know, is it possible to lose your salvation and if so, how? Listen, I don't know anything about losing your salvation. All I know is that the Bible says we are saved by grace through faith. It is not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.

I know that it is based upon faith, putting our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Here's something else I know from the Bible. We just read it. There are warnings about a person's faith and holding on to faith, and that's one of them. Paul says it very clearly in Colossians 1:23. If you hold on, if you persevere in your faith, and that means hold on to the confidence. And that's frankly something that he says elsewhere if you hold on to the same confidence you had at first. So this is all I know. And this is really all I'm willing to say to people. They want to know. So can you lose your salvation? Listen, you come to your own conclusions. All I'm telling you is we're saved by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. And the biblical writers warned us about things that interfered with that faith or diminished that faith. The whole book of Galatians was written to warn the believers in the region of Galatia not to add to their faith. They were adding things like circumcision and other elements of keeping the law. Paul said don't do that. In fact, he said to them, if you allow yourself to be circumcised. And that's a way of saying if you add to faith, he said that your salvation, your relationship with the Lord, it'll become of no use to you whatsoever. I'm paraphrasing here. When the author of the book of Hebrews wrote that letter, it was a warning to Hebrew Christians not to go back to the law. And the warnings were very real and very severe. The biblical authors believed, and this is very clear, that if you allowed something to interfere with your faith, that was a dangerous thing and they would use the conditional clause if to describe holding fast or letting go of your faith. That's all we know from the Bible. I believe it's very unwise to begin to interject a bunch of conclusions based on things that we don't know. Now I will say this, we're saved by grace through faith, not by works. So I don't believe that you can lose your salvation through bad works. You're not saved through good works. I don't believe you can lose it through bad works. In other words, through sin. We have a mechanism in place to never ever have to worry about sin interfering with my salvation. And that is the perpetual cleansing that comes through the blood of Jesus

Christ. I don't have to worry about it. You don't need to worry if we sin, and we do from time to time, we go to the Lord, we confess it, we're done. Confess your sin. He is faithful and just and will forgive you, cleanse you from all unrighteousness. We don't need to worry about sin as an interruption. What do we need to be concerned about? Well, the biblical writers were concerned about faith that was diminished. That's what they were concerned about. That's all I'm telling people. I'm a Bible teacher. I try to be careful not to make too many conclusions beyond what is revealed. I don't think that's wise. So I'm going to tell people the same thing the biblical writers told them. Be careful. Make sure your faith is strong and stays strong because the biblical authors warned about a faith that became diminished.

Sue: Excellent answer. Sherena says, *“People use Jeremiah 29:11 to claim that God has a plan for our lives. Can it be interpreted that way? Does God have a plan for everyone's life or only believers?”*

Pastor Paul: First of all, Jeremiah 29:11 is a wonderful promise that God gave to the people of the southern Kingdom of Judah to basically say, “I'm not done with you”. They were being taken into exile because of their rebellion and sin. And God wanted them to know that he had a plan for the nation of Israel and it was spoken to the nation of Israel. And I know a lot of people have adopted that verse as their life verse. I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, and so forth. It's a great verse. Can people use it, interpret it as that God has a plan for our lives? I believe God has a plan for our lives. I don't think that we would always agree that it's a good plan. I think sometimes our definition of good and God's definition of good can be two very different things.

Sue: Well, do you think the people of Judah in that moment thought that this was a good plan for them to go and actually integrate, build homes, plant a garden, raise children? That's what God was telling them to do. He was basically saying you're

going to be taken away, but I want you to treat that as if it's your new home and in that you will flourish. They didn't think that was a good plan.

Pastor Paul: Probably not. Very few probably did believe that. And I think that we have to be careful when we read verses like that. I really do. Because, again, we interpret the words that are given in that verse as meaning certain things. So when we read that and God says, I have a plan to prosper you. Somebody could come away with that and say, wow, that's great.

Sue: I have a filter for prosper. I know what that looks like.

Pastor Paul: I know what prosper means in my mind, and it could mean something completely different and God is going to prosper you, but in a very different way than what you would anticipate. So I think it gives way to some real potential disappointment with God and that sort of thing. I believe that it's important just to trust the Lord along the way of life, no matter what comes into your life, just to trust him, and tell him that, "Lord, I trust you. This isn't what I was hoping for. This isn't even what I want, but I choose to trust you." So she asks, does God have a plan for everyone's life or only for believers? There's one thing that the word of God says that he is not willing that any should be lost, but that all would come to repentance. And that is God's heart toward all people, including the lost. The Bible tells us very clearly that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. So we know God's plan in that sense. God desires that all people would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Now, all people don't come to us saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, but that's God's plan, that's God's intent, that's his heart. Beyond that, he doesn't share with us all of the details about everything he has planned for every life.

Sue: I think a better application is rather than asking the question does God have a plan for my life is trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Pastor Paul: You know what, that's God's plan for your life to trust Him with all of your heart.

Sue: That's a wrap for today.

Pastor Paul: All right. We'll be back with another episode with some more of your questions, and we'll do that soon. Until then, God bless.