

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 33

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Pastor Paul: Hi, we are back. We have more answers to your Bible questions that you've sent in to us. And let's hear what we've got going this time.

Sue: Hey, first question comes from Becky, *“Hello Paul and Sue, thanks for your faithful teachings. My friend said their church is doing a course on “finding your spiritual gift” but there seems to be a lot involved, such as course work and questionnaires for them to fill out. When they told me about this it didn’t sit right with my spirit. I appreciate people searching for their gift and wanting to serve the Lord but surely this is something we go to God about. I wanted to know what the Bible says about this and how can people find out what their gifting is?”*

Pastor Paul: What the Bible says about finding a spiritual gift is relying on the Holy Spirit. In fact, I don't remember any specific instructions given in the New Testament that say, here's how you find your spiritual gift. It's shown us that gifts are confessed or acknowledged, I guess I should say, by the Holy Spirit. We see this happening to Paul and Barnabas. We know that Paul talks to Timothy about how his gift was acknowledged through the Holy Spirit when the elders laid hands on him. I really think that's the best way. When the body of Christ comes together, they see a person's life, they see his gifting, they acknowledge that person's gifting, and then even send that person out or encourage that person to function in that gifting. Obviously, the Bible doesn't know anything about courses or questionnaires or anything like that, and I think you need to really use discernment as to whether or not you even want to participate in it. I understand people getting involved in those sorts of things because it's kind of almost like those personality tests.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: They help you understand maybe a little bit more from an academic standpoint. But ultimately, all those tests are going to show as it relates to spiritual gifts is really kind of where your interests are. They're not going to reveal where there's a spiritual calling upon your life.

Sue: Well, there's also natural giftings and spiritual giftings.

Pastor Paul: That's true.

Sue: And not to make too big of a distinction between it, but there are unbelievers who clearly walk in natural giftings. And one of my concerns is sometimes that methodical approach to find your spiritual gift merely uncovers your natural giftings which is fine. People like to talk about themselves.

Pastor Paul: Or your natural desire, the things that you're interested in and so forth. So I don't put a lot of stock in those things. I understand why people do them, but I also understand that we've kind of gotten lazy in our culture in a lot of ways. And honestly, praying about your spiritual gifting and waiting on the Lord is not easy. It's not an easy thing to do. And it can be very frustrating waiting and I get that. Waiting is probably one of the hardest things that God ever asks us to do. Our tendency is to kind of run ahead and figure out things from our own perspective. And I think that's kind of what those spiritual test quizzes are all about.

Sue: Sonali says, *“I've grown up being very independent and used to handling everything on my own, partly because it often feels like no one else truly cares in this world. Because of that, I find it hard to completely depend on God. I've watched your messages about trusting Him in daily life, but I still struggle with this idea. In a world that constantly teaches us to rely on ourselves, how can someone like me learn to genuinely depend on God and include Jesus in every*

part of life? What would you suggest I do to grow in this trust and dependence on Him?"

Pastor Paul: Stay in the Word. I really do think that that is critical. There's a lot of people who recognize at some point in their lives they have trust issues, and they've been betrayed by people, and they've been hurt by others. So they'll even say, I have a hard time trusting people. And that kind of translates into my relationship with God. And honestly, I think that the more we allow the Word of God to do what it does best, we have to remember the Word of God is alive. It is living. It is active. And it can help transform us into more trusting individuals. So I would encourage this person, just stay in the word, study the Word of God, open your heart to the word, pray about how it applies to you and what the Lord is saying to you every time you get into the Word, and just let the Lord do what He's going to do to shave off those rough edges and that lack of trust.

Sue: That's very good. Anthony & Georgia say, *"Hi Paul and Sue. My children have to be christened Catholics to get into the schools we want them to attend. As recently saved Christians, my wife and I don't agree with this and think we're betraying our faith. Would you have any advice on this?"*

Pastor Paul: Find a new school for your kids. I mean, that's a very simplistic answer. However, you're telling me that you don't believe that what they're doing is correct, and you're right.

Sue: And then you're sending your kids there for education.

Pastor Paul: And then you're sending your kids there, and you're saying, but we want our kids to go to school here, but we don't really agree with what they teach or what they believe or what they're doing.

Sue: How they go about things.

Pastor Paul: So find a school where you do agree. And I get it.

Sue: I know educating our children is one of the hardest decisions young parents make.

Pastor Paul: Yes, it is.

Sue: What you're going to do about raising those kids and educating them is tough.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, it is very, very tough and I get that. But you have to understand that if you go against what your beliefs are in this respect, where's that going to stop? Where's that going to stop? What about at this Catholic school where they start telling your kids that they need to pray to Mary? What about that? So this is the tip of the iceberg, honestly. I wouldn't send my kids to a school that taught things or believed things that were not true in our home and were not in the Bible.

Sue: Sure. Shelana says, *“Hello Pastor Paul and Sue. I recently joined a Devotional Tour through Greece, but midway through I realized—by discernment—that it felt more historical than biblical. Part of that was due to the host's belief that Revelation is an evolutionary theory. I'm curious—what are your thoughts on the growing trend of interpreting Revelation through an evolutionary lens?”*

Pastor Paul: There are always trends and there are always different ways of looking at the Bible. And without an historical, literal approach to the Bible, I believe you're always going to go wrong. Whenever you try to apply some other form of interpretive process, whether it's evolution or anything, you're heading for trouble. The Bible is a historical book. The Bible is a literal book. And we have to apply it that way in order to get out the message that God is giving us in it. So these sorts of things, these sorts of different ways of looking at the word deconstructionist ways,

they're going to come and go. They've been coming and going for a long time. So my thoughts on it are stay as far away from it as you can.

Sue: All right. Leo from South Africa says, "***Good day Paul and Sue. My wife and I have been following you for years, and I pray for you. I was recently studying 1 Corinthians 15:21-27 and I was shocked to see that every commentary interprets the first "he" in verse 24 and 25 to be Christ and not Satan as I believe it to be. Please help!***"

Pastor Paul: Here's what this passage says, and we're going to start reading in verse 21. It says,

1 Corinthians 15:21-25 (ESV)

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. You can see what Paul's starting to do, comparing Adam and Jesus. Verse 22, For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he, and that's the first pronoun he's referring to in verse 24, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. And he is saying in verse 24 and 25, he has always interpreted he to be Satan, and he was shocked that all of these commentaries were saying, no, that's Jesus.

Well, it's Jesus. What's probably throwing him is that it says he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. So people think that's inconsistent with anything related to Jesus, because why would he reign until. It sounds like his reign will come to an end because elsewhere we find out that his kingdom will have no end. Well, it doesn't necessarily mean his reign is going to end. But anyway, the he pronouns in these verses refer to Jesus. This is not Satan. So very, very clear.

Sue: Cleared it up. Anna from Tanzania says, ***“Hello Pastor, God bless you so much for what you're doing for us. I wanted to understand the concept of the Trinity and when I read that God said, “Let us make man in our image” it appears He created us with three parts, spirit, soul and body - just like the Trinity. What do you think?”***

Pastor Paul: I think that there's a similarity. I think that, Anna is onto something from the standpoint that we were created in the image of God. I think that it means more than just body, soul and spirit. And I think that you can't compare our makeup exactly with God, because of course, in our makeup, which is tri-unity, a tri-unity of body, soul and spirit, there's still just one person. In the Trinity, the divine Trinity, we have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is one being with three persons. So it's not a perfect comparison, but it's an interesting one. I think there's more to the statement that we are made in the image of God. I've said for many years, I believe that the free will choice that he's given to us is also something that reflects the image of God. But Anna's onto something. The problem is you can't go around saying to people, this explains it. In fact, there's nothing you can point to that says, this perfectly explains the Trinity. And you know what, every time I say that, I get letters from people, and they say, oh yes, you can. Here it is. H₂O, that's a very popular one. And we know that from H₂O, you can get liquid water, you can get ice, you can get steam. It's all H₂O, but it's in different forms. Well, God is not one God in

three different forms. He is one being in three persons, and there is nothing on earth that perfectly models that for us. We get hints, we get glimpses of the Trinity. Anna is right. When God in the creation account said, let us make man in our image and in our likeness, that is the Godhead talking at creation, because it goes on to say, so God made man in his own image. So obviously God wasn't talking to anyone except among the persons of the Trinity. But again, there are no examples that are perfect.

Sue: But I like it when people see these little things and get excited about it.

Pastor Paul: Sure. Absolutely.

Sue: That's fantastic. Sophia says, ***“Hello Pastor Paul. When God's second coming takes place, will non-believers have a last chance to accept Jesus?”***

Pastor Paul: When Jesus comes or returns to this earth, non-believers are going to have a chance to come to Christ during the entire tribulation period. And there's going to be many, many, many people, a multitude, who comes to the Lord during the Great Tribulation. We see this in the book of Revelation, where John is shown a multitude of people whom he doesn't recognize. He's asked, who are these? And Peter says, I don't know, you know. And he's told, these are they who have come out of the Great Tribulation. So these are the tribulation saints, we call them. Now, when Jesus returns to battle, people are still, there are going to be mortal people on the earth. And how all of this is going to play out, we don't know exactly. Because you kind of think about this in terms of Jesus returning and then people coming to faith in him. And it's like, big deal. I mean, you just saw Jesus return. And he fought for Israel, and he put down the enemies that were coming against her. And here he is sitting on his throne, who wouldn't believe in him? And that is frankly, one of the reasons why at the end of the tribulation, or excuse me, the millennial period, there's going to be another time of testing. Because people do have to be tested on their

allegiance. And God wants people to come by a freewill choice, not for any other reason. So how it is exactly going to play out at the very time that the Lord returns, we're not told. We just know that God is faithful. We know that God is fair, and he's going to work it out perfectly.

Sue: Jon says, *“Hello Pastor Paul and Sue. I have learned so much from listening to you over the past several years. Once we are saved and have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Bible teaches in Ephesians chapter 4:30 that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. But it goes on to speak in chapter 5 about the things that we can do to grieve the Spirit. Many will teach that the Holy Spirit is the indication that you are forever saved. My question is, can we grieve the spirit so much and ignore the Holy Spirit's instructions and eventually die in sin to where we have forfeited our salvation?”*

Pastor Paul: The short answer is, I don't know. I get a lot of questions like this, where people want to know, what's the place where we've gone too far? And I don't know the answer to these questions. Is it possible for someone to get to a place where their faith becomes so riddled with doubt and unbelief that they actually walk away from their salvation? All I know is that the Bible warns us saying, this is how you're saved, by grace through faith, through belief and confidence in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. That's how we're saved. It's not by works. So I don't believe that you can lose your salvation by works either. But we know that we're saved by grace through our faith, our trust, our confidence. So what happens if that confidence goes away? What happens if that faith is diminished to a place of utter unbelief? I no longer believe. I don't know. All I know is the Bible gives warnings about that.

Sue: And a warning like this, what he mentions here is, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul said, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Human nature says, but how much can I?

Pastor Paul: Exactly. And Paul is simply saying, don't grieve the Holy Spirit with whom you've been sealed unto the day of redemption. That can happen. We do. We grieve the Holy Spirit whenever we sin. Whenever we go contrary to the will of the Lord, we grieve the Holy Spirit. Paul says, don't do that. It doesn't mean you're going to lose your salvation because you've grieved the Holy Spirit. Good grief. Our children grieved us during the course when we were raising them at home. We didn't kick them out of the house.

Sue: No, never.

Pastor Paul: We loved them through it, and we helped them to grow and mature. And that's what God does in our lives as well. So I think that there are questions here that honestly, we don't have an answer to specifically. And I often wonder, why are you asking? Were you kind of hoping to see how far you can go without losing your salvation? Or are you wondering if you can just kind of go and do anything and you're still safe? I don't know what's in people's hearts. All I know is there's a whole lot here. The Bible warns us. The Bible gives warnings. Don't mess with it. Don't mess with your faith. So that's where we're going to leave it.

Sue: That sounds good to me. Grace says, *“Dear Pastor Paul & Miss Sue, thank you always for your teaching. I am listening to Exodus. My question is, why did God punish all the first born of the Egyptians when it was Pharaoh that resisted God through his own hard heart? It sounds cruel.”*

Pastor Paul: This is the tip of the iceberg. There are things in the Bible that are really troublesome. I've taught through the Bible multiple times, and I got to tell you, there's parts of the Bible I don't like to go back and revisit because it's just hard to figure out what's going on and why it played out the way it did. And what Grace is saying is, there are times when I read the Bible and it seems to me that God is

being cruel. Here's the thing. This is the question that every believer has to grapple with at some point. Am I going to believe God when He says He is good, kind, just, fair, and all-knowing? Am I going to believe that even when things don't appear that way? Because there's things we just can't figure out. There's things we can't know.

Sue: It's like, am I going to accept the fact that I see on a completely horizontal plane and there's a lot in the way that I can't see. And I believe that God sees from a completely vertical plane and He sees clearly. Am I going to accept the fact that I just don't see the world and the history in the same way that God does?

Pastor Paul: Exactly. And obviously, God was bringing judgment upon the Egyptians. So really, you could ask this question when God brings any judgment. You could say when Joshua was told to go into these city-state areas in Canaan and eliminate all of the people in an area.

Sue: When Saul was instructed to wipe out the Amalekites completely.

Pastor Paul: Exactly. You could say, boy, that sounds cruel. But you ultimately have to ask the question, am I going to believe that God is who He says He is and that there are things that I just can't figure out?

Sue: Sure. That's a tough one on our pride. Joshua says, "***Hi, Pastor Paul. I'm grateful for your online resources. My current church is not really grounded in Scripture, has shallow preaching, and emphasizes programs and giving. Honestly, I'm thinking of withdrawing but I'm also concerned with my spiritual well-being even though I mostly use your study through the Bible. What's the best thing to do in my situation?"***

Pastor Paul: These are the questions that people should be asking the Holy Spirit, not me, honestly. But as someone whose advice I think is fairly trustworthy and someone who's pastored for a long time, if you're in a church and you recognize that

I'm not really growing here because the preaching is kind of superficial and they talk a lot about giving.

Sue: It feels more like an organization than a church.

Pastor Paul: Then what the best thing to do is to find another fellowship, but leave quietly. Leaving a church is probably more important than starting to attend a church. Anybody can walk through the doors and they're going to welcome you with open arms. It's when you leave that it's going to potentially cause problems. And if you've been there for a while and you've made contacts, people are going to notice you're missing and they're going to contact you probably, or see you in the grocery store. And they're going to say, hey, haven't seen you at church lately, which is going to give you an opportunity to say bad things about the church. You could say, I just got tired of kind of the superficial surface level preaching. And I don't like how they're always talking about money. And that, that, that's not a good thing to do. I encourage people when you, when you determine that it's time to leave a fellowship, think about all the good things that you can say about that fellowship. And when somebody asks you why you left, just tell them the Lord just moved me on. It was time and leave it at that. And if they press you for more details because they're trying to dig up dirt or whatever, I would stay as far away from that as possible. When you leave a church, even if you think that church was in the wrong, even if you think that there were problems, drop it and just let the Lord deal with it. It's his church. So take your hands off it and just go and be where you're going to be happy.

Sue: That's good. Jennifer says, *“On Sunday I heard our rector from the altar say to the congregation that we are good people, because God made us in his image. Was the rector correct in his statement that we are good people?”*

Pastor Paul: No, we were created originally good. We were created innocent, let's put it that way. But just because we have been created in the image of God, that does not mean we are good. The Bible is very, very clear on this topic. There is none who do good. No, not one.

Psalm 14:3 (ESV)

They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

The Bible tells, in fact, Jesus told this fairly wealthy young man who came to question him, he said this, no one is good but God.

Mark 10:18 (ESV)

And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”

Well, that's another way of saying you're not good. You're not God. So the Bible is very clear that we are not good. We are sinners and we are in need of a savior.

Sue: And our last question is from Denzil, “*Where would I find the chronological order of Paul's letters in the New Testament? I appreciate your teachings since 2018.*”

Pastor Paul: This is something you can Google. You can literally get on and do a search and say, *give me the Apostle Paul's New Testament letters in chronological order*. And Google will give you back a pretty accurate listing of the order of the books in chronological order. We think they basically started with both of his letters to the Thessalonian church. So those were the first letters that Paul wrote. And then we have Galatians. And then we have his two letters to the Corinthian church, which,

by the way, we think there were four letters that he wrote to the Corinthians in total, but two have been lost. So we don't know really...

Sue: Which two they are.

Pastor Paul: And then after his letters to the Corinthians, we believe he then wrote Romans, followed by Philippians, and then the personal letter to Philemon, then the letter to the church in Colossae, which we call, of course, the letter to the Colossians, Paul's letter to the Ephesians. And then we have 1st Timothy, Titus, and then 2nd Timothy.

And somebody might say, now, wait a minute, what about the book of Hebrews? We don't think Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. I don't think Paul wrote Hebrews. We're not sure who did. I have a guess, but I don't think it was Paul. So that's the order. But again, that's something you can actually get just with a Google search.

Sue: Sure.

Pastor Paul: So those are our questions for this episode.

Sue: That is it.

Pastor Paul: Good stuff. Good questions. And we hope you benefited from the answers, and we hope that if you have some questions that you'll write and send them along so that we can answer yours as well. Until next time. Bye-bye.