

# Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 8

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**Pastor Paul:** We're going to just kind of answer some Bible questions and get into that a little bit this evening. There's always a lot of Bible questions to go around. One of the neat things about Christianity, though, biblical Christianity is that there's an invitation. There's always an invitation to ask questions. And we can tend to take that for granted sometimes because you're not every group. I've had people write to me who were raised like in a Mormon tradition, LDS, and I'll have had people tell me that we were discouraged from asking questions. And we were kind of told, you don't ask questions. This is what you believe and you just go with it. I'm glad that's not the way it is for us and a lot of us. I'm one of those people that I learned by asking questions, it bugs my wife, I think because she's in the middle of telling me something and I am interrupting with questions.

**Sue:** But I have seen other people in my life that are the same way and now I realize it's a personality type. It's not a defect. There are some other people like you too.

**Pastor Paul:** It might be a defect. I don't know, but it is truly the way I learn and I think there's a lot of people that are like me that you learn by asking questions and if you're told, don't ask, because it's a question that shows you're doubting and you're supposed to have faith. Well, those are different sorts of things. I mean, there's faith, there's doubt and then there's just a desire to know. I was actually looking through the questions that we're going to be covering tonight and there are some hard hitting ones.

**Sue:** Thank quite a variety.

**Pastor Paul:** There's a variety and some of them are very, very difficult. So we're going to do our best here tonight. So let's start with prayer. Let's ask the Lord to minister his grace.

Father, we just really thank you for the opportunity to ask questions and to get answers from the word and we really pray tonight that the ministry of your Holy Spirit would be here to touch hearts because, Lord, you know who's here tonight, you know who's watching online. You know the questions that are in their hearts. You know their desire to learn and to grow and to understand. And so, Father, I thank you that you have answers and I thank you, Lord, that we can take time here tonight to talk about some important questions and the answers that go with them. So guide and directives we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

**Sue:** Amen.

**Pastor Paul:** All right.

**Sue:** So Cora wrote and said, *“Hi Pastor Paul, I've been listening to you for quite a while now. Is baptism a must for a Christian? My friend said I must be baptized so as to speak out loud to others that I recognize Jesus as my Lord. However, you quote 1 Corinthians 1:17, which says it's not a must. Can you elaborate on this?”*

**Pastor Paul:** First of all, 1 Corinthians 1:17, let's put it on the screen so we can read it together.

### **1 Corinthians 1:17 (ESV)**

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

This is where the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians saying, *For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of*

*eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.* Now, the reason that I use this verse when we're talking about water baptism as a possible necessity for salvation is because if it were a requirement to be saved. And then the Apostle Paul comes out and says, Christ didn't send me to baptize. Well, then Christ didn't send him to really bring people all the way to salvation in that case, that just doesn't connect. That's one of the verses that I use. And so she's saying here in this note that you quote 1 Corinthians, which says it's not a must. Well, that verse doesn't say it's not a must. It simply says that Paul wasn't sent to baptize people. He did baptize a few people and he mentions it in the letter, but he was actually thankful that he didn't baptize some people because the Corinthians were dividing into favorites. I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollo's, and I'm of Peter, that sort of thing. So Paul was glad that he didn't do anything else to draw people into a divisive sort of a posture. But it's a question that comes up regularly. I mean, we get this a lot. Do I need to be baptized to be saved? So I wrote the answer to the question in the book that I wrote. And it's also on my blog online because so many people ask the same question, but I think water baptism is a very important step in a Christian's growth in their walk with the Lord. But I believe that water baptism is a symbol or a picture of our salvation and it is something that we do after we're saved. In the Great Commission, Jesus said go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them. Who do you baptize, disciples, followers, people who've come to Christ? I know that there are a lot of passages and people will quote, what about Acts 2:38 and what about this and what about that? Listen, there's no question in my mind that the early church connected salvation and water baptism very closely. To them, it was a very, very connected sort of thing. There was an assumption you get saved, you're going to get baptized. And so there are some passages that could lead a person to believe that it is a requirement. In other words, if you haven't been dunked in water, if you haven't been baptized in water that you're not truly saved. I get that. There are some verses that sound like that, but

there are also another host of verses in the Bible that speak of salvation and how to be saved and make no mention of water baptism, none whatsoever and then you got other situations. Peter goes to in Acts chapter 10, Peter goes to the home of Cornelius. Preaches the gospel to the first group of Gentiles, the Holy Spirit falls on them and they show this evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then they go and get baptized. Peter says, does anybody have any objections if we baptize these people because they got saved? So you've got this situation in Acts chapter 10 where the people got saved first and then they went and got baptized. I personally believe that when people say that you must be baptized to be saved, they are exalting the picture above the reality. The reality of our salvation is faith through Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith. Paul says this not of ourselves, it's a gift of God, not by works, lest anyone should boast. And there's a lot of people that object and they say, water baptism isn't a work. Okay, fine, but the point is you're still exalting. You're making the picture, the mechanism of our salvation. The mechanism of our salvation is two things, the sacrifice of Jesus and our confidence in that sacrifice. That is the mechanism. It's the same thing as when people believe that taking communion for the first time saves you. I've actually talked to some Roman Catholics and I said, are you a born again Christian? They say, yes. How do you know or when were you first born again? The first time I took communion, the Eucharist, I've had people say that to me. And again, what you're dealing with is someone advancing or exalting the symbol above the true mechanism. They're thinking the symbol is the mechanism of their salvation. I took communion. I got baptized. It was something I did, and now I'm saved. No, you put your faith, it's what Jesus did that saves you. You just put your faith in him. So that's my elaboration on the topic.

**Sue:** Good. That's what she wanted, and it was very good. Joanna says, *“Hi Pastor, I have a couple of questions that I've been wrestling with for some time. Question 1: If a woman is being emotionally and physically abused by her husband and she wants to divorce him because of it, is this sin? We know the Bible forbids divorce unless adultery or abandonment is involved. But what if someone is abused and the abuser shows no indications of change?”*

**Pastor Paul:** The first thing that we need to address here, and this is one of those challenging questions, it's particularly challenging in our culture because physical and emotional abuse has become a really touchy sort of a subject. The Bible doesn't address physical and emotional abuse and the Bible does not speak of it as grounds for divorce. Let's get that out there. And there's a lot of people that are really upset when I say that because they think it should be, you got to take that up with God, but he didn't include it in there. So what this person is asking here is if a woman is being physically and or emotionally abused and she wants to divorce her husband, is this a sin? Well, when people ask me the question, is this a sin? I always have to ask the question, what does sin mean to you? There's a lot of people that believe that if I sin, I'm going to hell. So what they're really asking without asking it is if a woman is abused and she divorces her husband because of the abuse, you're telling me she's going to hell. See, that's how convoluted it gets very quickly. So you and I, we understand that sin simply means missing the mark. And we all miss the mark every day. Every single day we miss the mark. So I have to always talk to people when they're asking the question, is this a sin?

**Sue:** Will this unravel my salvation?

**Pastor Paul:** Will it unravel my salvation? Will this threaten? Will I not make it to heaven because I did this? Now she goes on in this question and she says, we know that the Bible forbids divorce unless adultery or abandonment is involved and she's

right. There are statements about that, but she wants to know what if someone has abused? There's an interesting statement that the Apostle Paul made in 1 Corinthians 7, and I want to put this up on the screen because this is important. It says,

**1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (ESV)**

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

*To the married I give this charge.* And he says, parenthetically, this isn't coming from me. This is coming from the Lord. And he says, *the wife should not separate from her husband*, but I want you to notice these next four words, *but if she does* and by that statement, “but if she does,” Paul is recognizing that there are extenuating circumstances, and he goes on to say if that happens, *she should remain unmarried or else* hopefully at some point maybe he can come to his senses and they could be reconciled and so forth. And of course, he goes on to say *the husband should not divorce the wife*. Why is Paul saying here in this passage that if a woman separates from her husband, she should not marry? It's because unfaithfulness is what breaks the marriage bond. Physical, sexual unfaithfulness, that's what breaks the marriage bond. And so if that's happened, she's free. She has a technical right to divorce him and to remarry. But in a situation where a husband has been abusive, that's not sexual unfaithfulness. It's a horrific crime against the institution of marriage. And I'll go on to say it's against the law. I believe men should be prosecuted who do that sort of thing. I really do. But he didn't break the marriage bond. And so Paul says in that sort of if she does, get that distance from her husband, let her remain unmarried. So you can see in those words. But if she does, he's leaving room for extenuating circumstances. I'm sure in Paul's day, there were extenuating circumstances for things like this. So he's kind of saying, listen, I know it's not a perfect world and

women go through all kinds of horrific things, sometimes at the hands of men and not just men, but the one man who was given the task and responsibility of protecting that woman. And now he has become the opposite of her protection. He is now a danger to her. That's the worst thing that can happen. I mean, that's horrific. That is horrific. So the first thing that a woman, if a woman is enduring any kind of abuse, whether physically or emotional, I just tell them you shouldn't be thinking about divorce. You should be thinking about safety. Get away from the man. I have personally helped women move out while their husbands were at work and I would do it again. I've had women in the fellowship who I've said, "Listen, we're going to your house today after your husband leaves for work. We're moving you out." We've done it and I would do it again because that's the first thing. You got to get them to safety and then deal with the rest of it later on. But is there some kind of a sin that's going on here? You pray about it. Deal with it. God knows and understands, but just don't rush into another marriage, that's the dumbest thing you can do. I know she has another part of her question.

**Sue:** Here she does. Her second question goes like this, ***"There are several parts of the Bible that are troubling concerning women, such as women being forbidden to teach in the church, women being called the "weaker vessel," or even in the Old Testament where women who had daughters were deemed "unclean" for longer days than if they had sons. If Galatians 3:28 says we are all one in Christ, regardless of gender, why are traditional churches staunchly against women in leadership?"***

**Pastor Paul:** I wouldn't say traditional churches are staunchly against women, but let me talk about the various things that she says. First of all, she says women are forbidden to teach in the church. That's just not true. My wife is a teacher and she teaches in the church. What is forbidden in the Word of God is a woman to teach a

man. That is what is forbidden. So I really encourage people stop generalizing and be specific about what the Bible does say because we've done a lot of damage by generalizing statements. Women can't teach.

**Sue:** Or speak.

**Pastor Paul:** Women can teach. They're just to teach other women. So that's the first thing we need to clear up. Second of all, what's the offense of calling a woman the weaker vessel? Isn't that what all the outcry is right now about biological men, playing women's sports?

**Sue:** Because they're stronger. They're physically bigger and stronger. Physiologically stronger, I would say.

**Pastor Paul:** I forget how much more muscle mass a man has than a woman. And that's not every man or every woman, of course, because there are some women that do a lot of weight lifting that I wouldn't want to meet in the dark alley. But, by and large, men are bigger and stronger and women know that. So calling a woman a weaker vessel is not an offensive term. It's just biologically provable. Now, as far as the unclean, she mentions in the Old Testament when women bore a daughter versus a son, there were longer periods of uncleanness. I don't know why that was. And I've taught through that several times. You just have to talk to the Lord about that. There may be some biological reason that we don't know about. I have no idea. But the final thing that she mentions is Galatians 3:28. And she says, if Galatians 3:28 says we are all one in Christ, regardless of gender, why are some churches still against women in leadership? Let's take a look at Galatians 3:28 on the screen because that's going to help here a little bit.



### **Galatians 3:28 (ESV)**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one.* Here is the key, “*in Christ.*” You got to circle that part. If you leave that part out, this verse could be jumped on by people to mean all kinds of things that it doesn't mean. What is Paul saying here? In Christ, these divisions that the world makes a big deal about don't exist? Women's lib doesn't exist in Christ. Racism doesn't exist in Christ. However, the world that we live in is set up with certain aspects of order that God put into place. And I would talk to this person who wrote this, Joanne apparently is her name. And I would say, those divisions are gone in Christ, but how do you read the statements that Paul makes in Ephesians where he says the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church? Well, that's not for all time. That's for now. That's in the time period we're living in. That's not going to be the case when we're with the Lord in his never removed presence. I'm not going to be the head of you at that time. In Christ, there's no difference male or female, but on the earth for this time period for this period of time that we're in, God set up order and there's order in the sexes and gender. There's order in other areas as well. And so you can't just quote Galatians 3:28 and say, see a woman should be able to teach men because Paul said, I don't allow women to teach a man or he says to have authority and that's what it's all about. Is Paul saying that women don't have anything to say to men? Heavens, no. Anyone who's been married, if you say that, you're a bold faced liar. If you say that women don't have anything to say to men. My wife is my dearest counselor, but it's a teaching thing. What Paul said was if we allow women to have authority, because when you teach the Word of God, you're taking authority. It's a position of authority. I want to be careful not to use too

many examples that might get me into trouble, but let's just say it's a position of authority. Now, if a woman is going to take up that position in church, and she's going to stand up and she's going to say, "Men, open your Bibles because I'm going to teach you now. I'm going to teach you how to be a husband. And I'm going to teach you how to do this, and I'm going to teach you how to do that." Well, now those men are going to go home. And what's going to happen in their home? You see, Paul believed, he knew and understood that God had made the man the head of the home, the head of the woman. So, he said, if we're going to allow women to take authority in church, then what's going to happen when they go home?

**Sue:** We're going to lose the created order.

**Pastor Paul:** We're going to lose that created order. And it's not like men are at home, they're cracking the whip saying if I say jump, you say how high. He's to be a loving leader. He's to be a gracious leader. He's to lay down his life for the woman. But he's still the head and he's not the head because he wants to be the head. He's the head because God made him the head. I've said this before, I'll say it again. Most of the men I've met don't like being the head truly. I've met a lot of husbands who are very uncomfortable being the head of the woman. They look at their wife and they say she's far more qualified. And you know what? He's right. She is. Often women are much better leaders. That's just the fact of the matter. They're more sensitive to situations. That's not what it's about though. It's about calling. God put the man in the position and he said, I don't really care whether you feel qualified or not. You're it, you're the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the church. Now, how did Christ show his love for his bride? He sacrificed himself. He laid down his life. So much for a man being a Sergeant Major Hitler Jr. That's not going to happen if he's truly being a godly husband. But he's still the head. So women are not to violate that by taking authority in the church. Paul was just incredulous. He's like, why would I

tell people that the man is the head of the woman and then turn that around in church. Why would I switch it? That's going to only bring confusion. Again, her final statement is why are so many traditional churches staunchly against women in leadership? Some are against women in any position of leadership. They're misunderstanding the Word of God. Women are great leaders and there's no problem with women being leaders. All Paul said was, I don't want women to take authority through teaching over a man. That's all he said, as far as that goes anyway. There you go.

**Sue:** That's a good answer. That was Joanne with two questions. Here comes Louann with two questions. The first one is, ***“Would it be true to say that the 144,000 in Revelation does not include those who have previously passed away? I ask because the JW’s teach that the number of the 144,000 started at Pentecost in the first century.”***

**Pastor Paul:** They say a lot of really dumb things that have absolutely no validation in the Word of God, and that's one of them. There is nothing in the book of Revelation that would suggest that the 144,000 are people who have been raised from the dead or who were previously living and now have been raised to do whatever they were going to do during that time period. And by the way, the 144,000 are Jews. Sorry JDubs, but they're all Jews. It even mentions the tribes they're from. The JW’s just make up their own rules. JDubs, “Jehovah's Witnesses” for those who might not know what that means.

**Sue:** So her second question says, ***“Do prophecies that have a double fulfillments (contemporary and future) always have significant clues to validate that interpretation? The JW's teach that Daniel 4 has a contemporary fulfillment with Nebuchadnezzar as well as a future fulfillment in 1914 as it concerns the Watchtower Organization.”***

**Pastor Paul:** They thought a lot of things happened in 1914 because that's when they were just developing their whacked out doctrines. First of all, she's asking about the phenomena of prophecy containing double fulfillment, which we call the “Law of Double Reference”. I've taught it many times throughout the Old Testament and even some in the new, and it is a biblical phenomenon where a single prophecy can relate to two events, one that's usually near and then one that's usually much farther down the road. But what the JW is, what the Jehovah's Witnesses have done is, they just simply say that it has a dual fulfillment because it's part of their doctrine and their prophetic future. Those double fulfillments, when the law of double reference comes into effect, there's a validation to it in the text. You can see in the text something that isn't totally fulfilled in this area, but it's going to be fulfilled later. And you always see that in the Bible. With the JW's, they just made it up. That's all.

**Sue:** All right. Joseph says, *“Dear Pastor Paul and Sue. Thank you for your ministry. I watch your sermons regularly and it has been a blessing to me. I have read a lot of sermons, blog posts, and commentaries talking about Matthew 18:6 that warn of a heavy penalty (even possibly eternal) for Christians whose actions or sins accidentally lead another Christian to sin or fall away from the faith, or accidentally influence a non-Christian away from Christianity. This causes me great anxiety as during a period of habitual sin a few years ago I may have accidentally influenced an atheist friend into being a worse person and I heavily regret it.”*

**Pastor Paul:** Most of the people who write in and have great anxiety and worry over something are misunderstanding the passage that they are reading. And this is such is the case here. Let me put Matthew 18:6 up on the screen so you can see it. It says,

**Matthew 18:6 (ESV)**

“...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

*but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me*, and then we talked about this when we went through Matthew, little ones is not a reference to children. It is just simply a reference to believers. It's kind of, I don't know if I'd call it a euphemism, but it's just a reference to believers. And so the comment that Joseph made was that this scripture says that if a Christian causes another Christian to fall into sin, then they could potentially lose their salvation. When you boil that down, so in other words, if I as a Christian, did something against another believer and that person abandoned their faith according to his understanding of that passage, I would be doomed because of that. If you boil that belief down, then what that means is, I'm not saved as a free gift. I'm saved by my works. Because works come into play, whether they're good works or bad works. Whether you're saved by good works or whether you lose your salvation by bad works, it's still salvation based on works. You're with me? And that's why people who write in and say things like, I've known the Lord for 10 years, but I committed this terrible sin and I haven't repented or I didn't repent up to a point. And some pastor told me that because I hadn't repented, I was going to go to hell or something like that. That's salvation by works or damnation from a situation of being a Christian to no longer being a Christian based on works. It all comes down to works and that's what people have to remember. And I've said this before, I'll say it again, nobody is going to wind up in hell because they made a mistake or did something accidentally.

**Sue:** What I see in this is when he says, I've read a lot of sermons, blog posts and commentaries. We need to be very careful about whose voices are speaking into our

lives because you can collect a lot of very bad teaching that is really just trying to control you. You better be careful because you could accidentally do and it paralyzes people. And it's very sad for me to hear that voices have gone into their heads that have given them anxiety over. He talks about a period of habitual sin. I'm glad. It seems as though he's passed that, and I'm really glad. But it's a lot of weight to carry.

**Pastor Paul:** Incredible.

**Sue:** Be careful who you listen to.

**Pastor Paul:** Just be so careful, be very picky about who you listen to and just stay in the word. There's so many opinions out there. And if you're just opening up yourself to everybody's opinion, you're opening yourself up to a train wreck.

**Sue:** John says, *“How can I overcome the fear of persecution and find joy when I am sharing the gospel? I often get paralyzed with irrational fears, and worry about what and how I'm going to speak. And does the Holy Spirit supernaturally speak for us like He did for Stephen before he was martyred?”*

**Pastor Paul:** This is what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for. When you look at the book of Acts and particularly Peter, for example. Peter was a man who boasted a lot, but when it came down to it, he ran, he deserted the Lord and then went on to deny 3 times that he even knew Jesus. And then fifty days later we have Peter in the book of Acts standing up in front of all these assembled people that were there for Pentecost. And he says, the guy you crucified, he was the Messiah and you better repent and you better get right with God and he just was bold. And this is 50 days later. It's just bizarre. What happened between him wiggling out in front of a slave girl or whatever, and then standing up and boldly accusing the people of Israel of crucifying the Messiah, the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Let me show you what Jesus

said what would happen to people when they got baptized. It's in Acts chapter 1 up on the screen, Acts chapter one verse eight:

**Acts 1:8 (ESV)**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*, and that's not the Holy Spirit coming in for salvation, this is the Holy Spirit coming upon, and he says, what's the result of that power? *You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samarian to the end of the earth*. So Jesus promised us power. So for John who writes in here and says, how can I overcome the fear of persecution? What you do is you pray John and you say, “Lord baptize me with your Holy Spirit and give me the boldness.” Remember when Peter did get arrested in the book of Acts. I think it's in Acts 4. They were persecuted in whipped and stuff. Anyway, I'm moving ahead. So Peter is incarcerated. He's released through a supernatural angelic visitation. He shows up at the house where they're all praying for him. And he tells them all what happened. And he says, I got to go, see you guys later and he scoots. And you know what it goes on to say? He says the believers prayed for boldness. They prayed for boldness. Why do you pray for boldness? Because you need it. So I would tell John, “Listen, John, it sounds to me like you need boldness. So pray for it.” Expect that God is going to give it to you. I know that it can be very off putting to talk to somebody about the Lord and to have them, get upset with you or say things that are hurtful or even reject you. And sometimes there's a greater fear of rejection. The Lord can handle all those things. The last thing he said was, does the Holy Spirit supernaturally speak for us like he did for Stephen before he was martyred? I wouldn't call it the Holy Spirit speaking for you. I would call it the Holy

Spirit speaking through you. But he's going to always use the person. The person is a vessel and the Holy Spirit speaks through. And that's what Jesus promised. In fact, Jesus said when you're arrested, when you're persecuted, when you're hauled before the officials and governors and so forth, he said, don't even plan on what to say. Just say what you're given at the time. I think for people who've never experienced that before, when the Holy Spirit's given a message, they think that somehow they're going to be like a puppet.

**Sue:** Or they won't sound like themselves anymore. I always think about the gospel writers who wrote carried away by the Spirit and their personality is very intact.

**Pastor Paul:** Very much.

**Sue:** You can see it come through. So they sound like themselves, but yet they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**Pastor Paul:** Exactly. And that's the thing that people who've not experienced that really struggle to understand that when the Holy Spirit speaks through you, you're still speaking and it's your personality and you can even choose some of the words, but the Lord gives you a sense of what to say in the direction to go with it. You and I have talked about it like riding the wave. I've never surfed in my entire life. I'm just not that coordinated. What happens when the Holy Spirit begins to move and speak through you, it's it feels like surfing to or what surfing ought to feel like. You're just being carried along by the wave, but you're still there. You're on the board. You're maneuvering, and you're doing your own thing and you're keeping your balance, but the Lord's moving it along.

**Sue:** Don't you think that John would benefit greatly from a really good study in the book of Acts to apply some of these things?

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, for sure.



**Sue:** All right. Kettly says, *“Good day Pastor Paul. I really want to know your thoughts on fasting. Do you see it only as an Old Testament commandment or are we supposed to be following it?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Again, here's language in a question that is very telling. Are we supposed to be following it? And it almost sounds like, are we supposed to be keeping this idea of fasting and so forth? The first thing that people need to know about fasting is that the Word of God does not command believers to fast. However, we have many biblical examples of people fasting throughout the Bible, in the Old Testament, in the New Testament church. But it's not something that we're commanded to do. When you talk to people about fasting, it's often the focus for people is often the idea of going without food, or even for a short period of time drink, which you can't do for very long. And what happens is the focus gets shifted and they'll talk about fasting and it's like, “Oh, you haven't eaten anything.” No, I'm fasting. That means I'm praying. It means I'm pressing in on God. The focus of fasting is to set aside our daily distractions. A little bit of fasting might have lost some of its meaning just in our culture just because we don't have to go to all the work of food preparation that they did back in biblical times. Making meals was an all-day event for certain people. Whoever was making the meals, you're constantly making. As soon as you feed somebody for this meal, you got to be preparing the food for the next one. So fasting was a way of putting all that distraction aside and just saying, you know what, for this period of time, however long it is, I'm going to fast. I'm going to set the distraction of that aside so I can focus on prayer. I personally believe that there are many other kinds of fasting. Before the Lord met with the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai, he told the people to withhold physical relations between husbands and wives. Well, that's a form of fasting. He said, “All right, I want you guys to just knock off any togetherness here because you're getting ready

to meet me on the mountain and I want your heads to be clear and on and on.” I think today there's all kinds of ways that we can fast that may have nothing to do with food.

**Sue:** But maybe more productive in a culture where food is plentiful and really, if we want to, we can have it without requiring much work.

**Pastor Paul:** It's not much distraction today to eat. So how about fasting from social media? How about fasting from movies, TV and stuff like that? There's all kinds of things you can fast from to get the distractions aside and focus on prayer.

**Sue:** So this next one is a good follow up to an earlier question from an anonymous person that said, *“I got divorced in 2014 before I was saved. I did not know how great my sin was until after my salvation. Can I remarry or would it be a sin?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I never want to suggest to anybody when they come to faith in Jesus that all of the consequences necessarily from sin are just going to go away. I want to be careful how I say this. There is a passage in 2 Corinthians that speaks to this and I want to put it up on the screen because this is important. It says “If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Now that's a wonderful, wonderful passage. And I have received this question many times in the past and people will say, I got divorced but I didn't know the Lord. And then I came to the Lord and I've repented of the decision that I made. But now I would like to remarry. Am I able to remarry? I believe that 2 Corinthians 5:17 is saying yes. The old is gone, the new has come, and the old has passed. It's under the blood of the Lamb. Before I even give an advice along that way, the real question is, does the Lord want you to remarry? That's something that people never ask. I got a divorce before I knew the Lord. Now I realize I made a mistake. Now I've come to Jesus, I know that my sins from the past have been forgiven. Can I remarry? Does

God want you to remarry? Why aren't we asking that question? Ask the Lord if he wants you to remarry. If you've got a green light, you might be thinking about something you haven't even asked God about.

**Sue:** All right, that's good. Erin says, *“Thank you for your ministry, it has been a blessing in my life! My question is regarding the Holy Spirit: Is it biblical or necessary to ask the Holy Spirit to “come” or “fill this place” since, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit in dwelling in us?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Erin is probably referring to songs and even prayers by pastors, maybe my even myself. We have songs that say come and fill this place. We pray that Lord and so forth. I don't see anything wrong with it. In Matthew 18, you'll remember that Jesus said wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them. So he talked about being among. Yes, we all have the Holy Spirit within us, but what's wrong with inviting the Holy Spirit to move in this place? Because you know what, often in church, not everybody does have the Holy Spirit living within them. And on a given Sunday, it'd be interesting to take a poll, which we can't do. But it would be interesting to know on a given Sunday, like when an auditorium like this is filled, how many people don't haven't bowed the knee to Jesus.

**Sue:** Like light up over their heads. Red or green?

**Pastor Paul:** I'm willing to bet that sometimes it's up to 20% or more people who don't know the Lord or don't know him in that sense of being saved. So if I'm inviting the Holy Spirit into this place to touch hearts, is that a bad thing? Even if it's not something that we can say, there's this one verse that says you should do this. We've got liberty in some of these areas. I don't think there's anything wrong with inviting the Holy Spirit to move in the midst of a gathering of people.

**Sue:** Well, I think for the one who is praying, I know I kind of have a phrase that I've used often before teaching, and I'll just ask, invite the Lord to walk among us as we open His word. It changes me. It's for me just as much as anything else because it reminds me that His Spirit is present to do active things. So thank you for the grace to pray as we would like to pray. Allanah says, ***"I'm a teenager and recently I have been struggling with lust. I've been delivered from this sin for a while but recently I have been falling back into the same cycle of praying for forgiveness and sinning again. Do you have any advice on how to stop this?"***

**Pastor Paul:** This is another really common question. I usually get it from young men and from all over the world. But it is just a real, real challenge. And one of the things that I tell people who are struggling with lust, they've opened the door and even the Song of Solomon talks about this, about not giving room to this thing too early. And the world is just this open door for people to walk into the sexual immorality. But when somebody does, it's very difficult. It's very difficult to expunge that from your life. And one of the things I tell people is don't do this alone. Don't do it alone because we need people to stand with us. We need people to be accountable. We need people to encourage us. And we need to be praying for other people while they're praying for us. That's one of the reasons. Here at Calvary Chapel, we've got two groups that are built on that premise that when you're dealing with sexual sin and particularly temptation to lust and so forth, that you need help, you need people to come alongside and help. So we've got broken chains and we've got pure desire and they meet on different nights of the week and they're important groups. They're not hugely attended. They should be. One of the reasons they're not is because it's a very shame filled sort of a thing.

**Sue:** So one strategy is what you're saying to a person is like, you need to understand that shame might keep you withdrawn from this, but sin flourishes in the darkness. So what you need to do is find accountability, find people to pray with.

**Pastor Paul:** Another major piece of advice is deep dives into the Word of God and even committing whole passages of Scripture to memorization, because that's the sword of the Spirit. And we're to take up the sword of the Spirit at times when we're battling things because our battle is not against flesh and blood. The thing about this sort of a sin is that it puts a focus on flesh. But there are other issues going on. There are spiritual issues going on. There's other strongholds that are going on, and we need to take up the full armor of God. So I would tell somebody know what the full armor of God is all about. Learn how to use the implements of warfare that God's given to you. Don't do this alone. If your church doesn't have a program for helping people, then find some pray that God would bring somebody across your path that you can say, "Hey, I struggle with the same thing. Let's get together and encourage one another. Let's get into the word together. Let's pray for each other. I'll pray for you. You pray for me. And let's be accountable to one another." And the other thing that the Bible says that is so important. The Apostle Paul talks about not giving room for the flesh. He says basically don't make allowances for the flesh. And I'm paraphrasing that. One of the reasons we struggle in the areas of lust is because we allow these sources of influence to be kind of unchecked. Paul said make no provision for the flesh. That's his wording. But that means don't give the flesh an easy road to walk on. Make it hard for your flesh. If you have to surrender something or your freedoms in certain areas in order to win back your freedom from sin, it's probably worth it. Well, not probably take out probably it's worth it. I've talked to people who had to surrender their car keys to a spouse. And, by the way, if you're

married, get your spouse on board supporting you toward freedom. That's a super important step as well.

**Sue:** Ramie asks, *“Does God want us all to get married? Is it sinful for me to be single and not want to pursue marriage?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Does God want us all to get married? To hear some people talk, we put a lot of pressure on unmarried people. We try to get them connected to somebody to date. You need to meet my cousin. He's single. He's a great guy. Here's what's interesting, some people have been given a gift of singleness and the Apostle Paul even recommended it if it was something that somebody was gifted to carry on. Let me show you this from 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Paul writes, he says,

**1 Corinthians 7:6-7 (ESV)**

Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

*Now as a concession, not as a command.* I'm not giving you a command now, but *I say this, I wish that all were as I am myself.* And what he means there is unattached, *But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.* Now, I never had the gift of singleness. I wanted to get married as soon as you would marry me. I've met though people that are just fine and they're like, I'm happy. I'm single and the Lord has just given me the grace to be single. I'm not lonely. I'm not tempted. In that sort of a situation, Paul said, it's better to marry than burn with lust. But if somebody's not burning with lust, they're like, the Lord's giving me grace. Well, by all means, stay single. And we need to kind of get out of their hair about it sometimes.

**Sue:** I think one of the keys really is usefulness. As a married couple, you want to be useful for God's Kingdom, useful for the Lord. As a single person, you want to

be useful. It's not just a matter of I'm happy this way, no, be useful. Every believer has a charge to be useful and boy, those that don't have a relationship, sky is the limit. Because in general marriage produces children, not always but in general and then family creates a little. It narrows your life.

**Pastor Paul:** We're going to talk about this in a minute, but when you get married, your ministry even shifts. You now have a ministry to the other person. You're entering into ministry. When we got married, my ministry is first to my wife, your ministry to me. And that's going to take us away from some other aspects. If we were single, we would just have a wide open kind of a freedom because we're not taking care of each other and so forth. So single people really should be serving more than married people.

**Sue:** And have the ability, the privilege to do.

**Pastor Paul:** Exactly.

**Sue:** Caleb is writing from Texas and so he says, *“Love y'all's channel.”*

**Pastor Paul:** He talks like a Texas.

**Sue:** *“I have heard non-believers argue that how are we to believe in Jesus if not even the disciples believed in him until they saw him in person after his crucifixion?”*

**Pastor Paul:** But they also got rebuked for not believing. You got to remember that. In fact, there was a statement that Jesus made to Thomas. He didn't believe. He's like, “Oh, I got to believe it”. And unless I see him, and I see his wounds and I'm not going to believe it. And do you remember what happened? Let me put this up on the screen. It's from John chapter 20, verse 29,

**John 20:29 (ESV)**

Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

*Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you've seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* One of the things about when unbelievers make an argument, and that's what he's talking about here about belief and faith and stuff like that. They're completely ignoring certain elements that we believe in and understand and even take for granted. And that's things like the person of the Holy Spirit and how he plays into the whole aspect of coming to a place of faith, coming to a place of belief. So there's a lot of things. I wouldn't honestly get all whacked out about the arguments that unbelievers make.

**Sue:** That's a good point.

**Pastor Paul:** Frankly, there's a lot of evidence of the reality of our faith in Jesus. And it's in the people who have put their faith in him and their transformed lives. And if you'll get to know some Christians and, and talk to them and find out, this was my life before I met Jesus. And now this is here. Look what he's done. You know that statement I used to love to put on the wall? Jesus changes people. Well, that's evidence that you can look at and you can say this is real.

**Sue:** Here's an anonymous writer, *“My husband has recently become more involved in the ministry at our church, which means he is away from our children for extended periods during services. I have expressed my concern to him about how hard it is for me to care for our children by myself during this time. His response is that I am not recognizing the blessings that come from his ministry. As a result, attending church has become very difficult for me. Is it okay to put ministry before family because it is done for God?”*



**Pastor Paul:** You know this question hits pretty close to home because I was this guy. Except the only difference is you never came to me and complained. So she's saying, I talked to him about it and he said that I'm doing this for the Lord. And it makes me kind of want to smack him because again, I did this. I lived in such a way as to kind of think, no, God will take care of my family. And I was working a full time job and I was pastoring a church. This is up in Washington.

**Sue:** You were ambitious to serve the Lord.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, but I was foolish as well. And you'll remember, because you were there, I got a pretty hearty rebuke from the Lord over it too.

**Sue:** It's true. He did.

**Pastor Paul:** In front of about 400 people. And the Lord pulled me up short and said, this one here is your first ministry and I want you to get her healthy. And the Lord made it very clear. I can raise up any dopehead to be a Pastor and he's done it before. You know what the Lord said to me, and some of you guys have heard me say this before, the Lord said to me, there's only one person that I've called to be the head of this woman, just one, and you're it. So you make sure that she's healthy spiritually, that she's protected, and she's taken care of. This isn't really a ministry question. This is a marriage issue. This is a marriage problem.

**Sue:** She's not feeling protected.

**Pastor Paul:** Here's the deal. You know what the real question behind this is? The real question is what should she do about it? And she's not really asking that. She's kind of just saying, is it okay to put ministry before family? Of course not. I think everybody knows the answer to that question that has been thinking about it anyway. The real question is, what's a woman going to do? And I'll put this in a larger sense, what should a woman do when her husband is stumbling over some aspect of the

Word of God? What is she supposed to do? Actually, Peter gives women advice, and it's not fun advice, but let me put it on the screen. And this is what Peter says,

**1 Peter 3:1-2 (ESV)**

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

*Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word,* and he's not talking necessarily here about unbelievers at all because a Christian man can get it to a place where he's not believing or obeying the word. What is she to do? He says that, *they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.* And what Peter is saying is show him Jesus in you. That's what he's saying to women. Show your husband Jesus in you and let that speak volumes to him because it does. Because frankly, if a woman, there's nothing wrong with a woman expressing a need to her husband, but when it turns into complaining, that's going to be a problem. He's just going to shut down, and come up with all kinds of excuses. So women should communicate. If there's a problem in the home, she should communicate. And his responsibility is to love her sacrificially. But if he just keeps going on and he doesn't really pay attention, then she needs to just say, "Jesus, this is between you and me and strengthen me and live your life through me in such a way that it speaks to my husband." And that's hard advice for a woman.

**Sue:** And yet it's amazing sometimes how when we really focus on praying over a delicate situation like that, how quickly sometimes the Lord will bring about some sort of action that creates a movement in that difficulty.

**Pastor Paul:** Trust the Lord. Well, now we do need to quit because we've gotten through pretty much everything we can here tonight. Anyway, I hope some of those questions are such that the answers really encouraged you and help equipped you a little bit tonight.