

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 35

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Pastor Paul: Hi everyone, I'm Pastor Paul. I'm here with my wife Sue, and this is a time that we tackle your Bible questions, questions that you've sent in, and we're going to see what we can do about giving some answers today.

Sue: All right. Markus says, *“I have been walking with the Lord for almost two years and I struggle with the idea that Adam's sin is “forced” on everyone else. How is it fair that God will judge us because of our sin, when we never had a chance to NOT be sinners? Adam and Eve had a choice, but we don't since we are born into a life of sin. I would appreciate your insight on this.”* Common question.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, it is a common question. We've heard it many times, haven't we? Adam and Eve were our corporate representatives. They were created perfect. They were created without a sinful nature. They were put into a perfect environment, and they had fellowship with God. The idea that we could have done better, or I could have done better, or I didn't even get a chance to do better, is a little bit of short-sightedness on our part, and stir in just a little arrogance.

Sue: So you're saying if it had been Paul and Sue...

Pastor Paul: We would have done the same thing. We would have fallen the same way. And I think that's something we all have to kind of come to terms with, is that I wouldn't have done any better in that sort of a thing. So, we are judged as sinners because we understand that they were in a perfect environment and still gave in to the temptation and so would we have.

Sue: Well, Markus has a second question, *“As a newer Christian I was wondering about what music to listen to. I struggle with addiction to secular rap music that has plenty of profanity and un-godly themes in them. I started listening to just the instrumentals of the songs to at least not take in the lyrics”*. I wonder what an instrumental of a rap song sounds like. But anyway, he says, *“I wonder if that's okay in the eyes of God, or if I should completely stop listening to all the secular music. I'd appreciate your insight on this.”*

Pastor Paul: I really believe that this is a question that each person needs to ask and get an answer from the Holy Spirit. And what I mean by that is, are you under conviction when you listen to secular music? And if so, maybe the Lord is speaking to you. Because this is not a one-size-fits-all sort of an issue. I think that there are people who can listen to secular music and essentially be kind of untouched or uninfluenced, for lack of a better word, by it. And I think there are others who just can't. Different Christians have different levels and areas that are a potential harm to them. So it's really up to the Holy Spirit to how He speaks to you. If He tells you to stick to worship music and Christian-themed music, then do that. If you have liberty to do something else, then that's what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians. All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial for me. And there are some people for whom listening to secular music is not beneficial. And there are others who have the liberty to do it without being affected negatively. And we need to be careful not to create a situation where if the Holy Spirit tells me not to do it, then that means it's wrong for everybody. No, not necessarily. It just means that's for you. That was what the Holy Spirit told you.

Sue: Our next question is from Sue, and she said, *“Where did celebrating Christmas come from? Also, was Jesus born in a stable which is portrayed every Christmas?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, celebrating Christmas came from believers wanting to celebrate the birth of Christ, and they picked a day. And whether or not December 25th is the day isn't an issue. It isn't really even a question, because we don't know the day. We don't know the day that our Lord was born, and yet it's okay to pick a day and just to say, hey, you know what, we're going to call this the birthday of our Lord, and we're going to celebrate. And that's how it got started. People genuinely recognized that God's gift to us in the person of His Son was significant enough that we should take time to mark that day. I mean, it's as simple as that. As far as Jesus being born in a stable, the Bible doesn't say that. In Luke's gospel account it simply says that she gave birth to her firstborn, and she laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. Well, manger is another word for feeding trough. So it is our assumption that there was some kind of a barn, shed, maybe even a cave, and that's where Jesus was born. I mean, if there was a manger, it's logical to assume there may have even been animals present. We look at manger scenes today, and there's the lambs and the oxen or whatever, and that sort of thing. And were they there? We're not told. But we're told that Mary laid him in a feeding trough, and we know that the inn was full. We know that. So that's where he was born. We're not told. Stable, cave, barn.

Sue: That's what we do know. And then Grace has a question about Exodus, *“I'm going through Exodus and my question is, why did God want everything to be made in gold and other specific colors?”*

Pastor Paul: Gold is a precious metal, and it has always carried a connotation of that very idea, kingly, royal. Even under Solomon's glorious reign, gold became commonplace. Silver, we're told, became like stones, and gold was even common. And that just, again, speaks of the gloriousness of his reign. So we're going to see that in the renewed Jerusalem and heaven's details. As far as other colors, usually

those colors go along with precious gems. And those have very specific meanings. And some of them we know about, and some of them we don't. But those different gems relate to things, relate to various truths and it'll be fascinating to learn all about them one day. Because I don't think anything was random in God's economy. So it'll be interesting to see how all those things play out.

Sue: Baha says, *“Why can't someone simply open the Bible and start reading without praying first and still consider it a quiet time with God?”*

Pastor Paul: There's obviously a story behind this.

Sue: There must be.

Pastor Paul: I mean, somebody obviously told this person...

Sue: That you can't do that.

Pastor Paul: Quiet time always begins with prayer, and then you open your Bible. People make rules because they think, maybe it works for them. And so because it works for them, they assume this is the right way. And everybody's kind of got to do it that way. I would tell this person, hey, you have your quiet time the way the Lord prompts you to have your quiet time. And if that means opening up your Bible and reading first, and then praying later about what you've read.

Sue: And if that means listening to your Bible instead of reading it with your eyes, then you do it that way.

Pastor Paul: That's a good point.

Sue: Some people are just much more auditory.

Pastor Paul: That's true. Do it your way.

Sue: That's not to have too many rules.

Pastor Paul: That's right. I've said many times when it comes to devotions, and prayer time and stuff like that, do it in a way that works for you far better to do it that way than to try to fit into somebody's mold and have it not work and you get frustrated and give up.

Sue: Courtney says, *“Thank you for your ministry, it has blessed me and helped me grow in my faith. If a person truly believes that Jesus is Lord and Savior and has prayed the sinner's prayer, but has not yet begun to actively pursue the Lord through reading Scripture, prayer, or fellowship with the local church, are they born again and do they possess the Holy Spirit?”*

Pastor Paul: It's interesting that Courtney begins by saying, if a person truly believes that Jesus is Lord and Savior, in other words, has accepted him as their Savior, and then she goes on to ask her question. So my question, if she were sitting here today, would be how is a person saved? What does the Bible say? Are they saved by actively pursuing the Lord, reading scripture and prayer? No, that's how we grow as a Christian. That's not how we're saved. We're saved by putting our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. So she already answered her own question. If a person, as she describes them, truly believes, that's how we're saved, is by truly believing. Now, is it possible for someone to truly believe and not apply themselves to the study of the Word and prayer and stuff? Oh yeah, absolutely.

Sue: Is it good for that person?

Pastor Paul: No, it's not. And they're not going to grow. They're not going to be transformed like they should be. They're not going to see that kind of transformation, but they can be saved.

Sue: And finally, Angela says, *“You've mentioned that 2 Corinthians 13:5 tells believers to “examine yourselves” or “test yourselves to see whether you are in the*

faith.” I would appreciate your guidance on how we are meant to do this in a healthy, biblical way. What does self-examination look like in practice, and how can we do it without falling into fear or doubt?” That's a good question.

Pastor Paul: It is a good question. Again, it comes back to the simple question, how are we saved? Paul says to test yourself to see if you're in the faith. He says, test yourself to see if you have faith. Are you putting, do you truly have confidence in the finished work of Jesus on the cross? He's not telling you to test yourself on how good of a Christian you think you are. Most believers are going to give themselves a failing grade. We're very hard on ourselves. And the people that I talk to often are caught usually in that sort of a deal of thinking that it's their job to judge their works, as it were, and they end up coming up wanting, and then they go, maybe I'm not saved. Maybe I never actually put my faith in Jesus.

Sue: And that's where the fear or doubt comes in.

Pastor Paul: That's where the fear or doubt comes in. When we start being the judge of our lives.

Sue: It depends on what you're examining.

Pastor Paul: Yeah, because we look at our lives and then of course the enemy loves, loves to accuse. So somebody gets this idea wrong. They think that examining themselves means looking at every aspect of their lives and they start realizing, there's still some area, I've got some areas that are pretty ungodly. And then the enemy jumps into that conversation and says, in fact, I don't think a real Christian would do the things that you do. And pretty soon you're in a tailspin and you're wondering whether or not you're really saved. Paul says, test yourself to see if you're in the faith. See if your faith is strong. It's all about your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Test yourself to see, are you really truly trusting Jesus Christ as your

savior? Or are you trusting in something else? Are you trusting in good works? Are you trusting in other religious things? Test yourself. Is it all about Jesus or is it Jesus plus something else? Jesus plus going to church. Jesus plus doing good deeds. You know what I'm saying? Test yourself. See if it's Jesus only because that's how we're saved. So that's really the whole deal here. People can save themselves so much grief by just refusing to look inward all the time. When we take inventory of our hearts, we're going to see darkness. There's darkness in there. And if you start fixating on that darkness, and then the enemy, as I say, gets a hold of that fixation, you're going to go, it's a downhill slide very fast. You are to keep your eyes on Jesus as the author and finisher of your faith. And that's where joy comes from in recognizing it's what he did, and I've put my faith completely in what he did for me.

Sue: So let's boil this down to one sentence.

Pastor Paul: Alright.

Sue: I'm going to ask you to give me one sentence that answers her question, *“How are we meant to examine ourselves in a healthy biblical way?”*

Pastor Paul: Examine your faith. Examine your confidence. That's the biblical way to examine yourself.

Sue: I asked for one sentence, and you're such a teacher.

Pastor Paul: I know, but I'm a pastor. That's right. I'm a pastor. We don't do things in one sentence.

Sue: No, you don't. I'll give you another chance again sometime.

Pastor Paul: Good. So, is that it?

Sue: That is it. That's the last question we have.

Pastor Paul: That was a shorter one for this time. We've got more questions though. And we'll show you here at the end of this video, how you can send us your questions as well. So anyway, thanks so much for joining us today. And we look forward to having you with us next time. God bless.