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The General Epistle of James

Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Self-sufficiency is planning without God</p> <p>2. Self-sufficiency is failure to recognize the uncertainty of life.</p>	<p>B. Temptation 2: The Humanist—Boasting Self-Sufficiency, 4:13-17</p> <p>13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:</p> <p>14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life?</p>	<p>It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.</p> <p>15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.</p> <p>16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.</p> <p>17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.</p>	<p>3. Self-sufficiency is failure to acknowledge God</p> <p>4. Self-sufficiency is boasting, bragging, & showing arrogance</p> <p>5. Self-sufficiency is sin</p>
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Section V TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: COMMON TO ALL BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE GIFTED James 4:11–5:6

STUDY 2: TEMPTATION 2: THE HUMANIST— BOASTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

TEXT: James 4:13-17

AIM:

To learn more on God, less on self, for direction in your life.

MEMORY VERSE:

“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:15).

INTRODUCTION:

Self-sufficiency is a terrible sin in the eyes of God. The reason is because man is ever so frail, infirmed, corruptible, and subject to disease, accidents, and death at the snap of a finger. Yet despite his frailty and the uncertainty of his life, man

still ignores God and walks upon earth as though his future is totally in his own hands. This is the whole philosophy of humanism, the boast that man is the ultimate being in control of his life and fate. Such a boast is utter foolishness when man is nothing more than a speck compared to God, our all-knowing and all-powerful Creator. Humanism or self-sufficiency is so unreasonable and illogical that it is totally unworthy of a thinking and honest being. Yet it is the very position and philosophy, the very lifestyle chosen by so many people. This is the subject of the present passage: the terrible sin of humanism, of boasting self-sufficiency, the temptation that strikes so many of the gifted people of this earth.

OUTLINE:

1. Self-sufficiency is planning without God (v.13).
2. Self-sufficiency is failure to recognize the uncertainty of life (v.14).
3. Self-sufficiency is failure to acknowledge God (v.15).
4. Self-sufficiency is boasting, bragging, and showing arrogance (v.16).
5. Self-sufficiency is sin (v.17).

1. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS PLANNING WITHOUT GOD (v.13).

There is nothing wrong with making plans. We should plan and prepare for the future. In fact, we should never fail to take the time to plan. Scripture is very clear about this: we are not to be slothful in business or in any endeavor (Ro.12:11). But planning before we act is not what this Scripture is talking about; it is warning us *not to plan without God*.

Yet despite warning after warning in Scripture, most people plan their lives without God. They plan as if their own will and desire controls the destiny of life. Note the example of Scripture (v.13): How many plan to do this or that, whether small plans or great plans, yet in all their planning do not consider God—not to the point of making sure that it is His will they are doing? Not making sure that they acknowledge Him in all their ways? Why does man not acknowledge God as he lays plans and then carries out his plans? Because of self-sufficiency. Frankly, most people feel little need for God. They feel that their destiny lies in their own hands, that they control their own future. They feel that their future depends upon their own ...

initiative	ideas	works	education
abilities	energy	discipline	training
plans	efforts	image	production

The point is this: because people feel self-sufficient, perfectly capable of handling their own lives. They often put little meaningful trust in God.

As stated before, we not only should but must plan life and work while on earth. It is the only way to fulfill our purpose for being on earth. But we must seek God's will and guidance, help and care, and acknowledge God as we plan and live out our plans. The great error of a self-sufficient person is acting as if man is the supreme and ultimate end of life—that man can handle his own affairs and life without God. But never forget this: the future of every person on earth is at most a small boat on the stormy and uncertain sea of life.

“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pr.27:1).

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of plans do you tend to make with out consulting God? In what ways do plans go better when you do include the Lord's counsel?
2. What important truths does an attitude of self-sufficiency ignore?

2. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE (v.14).

There are two reasons why tomorrow is uncertain.

1. Our minds and nature are limited. We simply cannot know the future. No matter what we may plan or think, we do not know what will happen tomorrow; we are completely in the dark. Think for a moment: What will happen tomorrow? We do not know. In fact, we do not know what will happen one hour from now. The point is this: we forget and ignore our nature—who we are, how limited we really are, how uncertain life with all its happenings and events really is. There is a tendency within man to ignore the fact of his frailty and weakness. In all the pride and arrogance of his soul, he wants to be in control of his own life and destiny, to be completely self-sufficient. He wants to have no need whatsoever for God. But this is utter foolishness, for man cannot know what will happen tomorrow. His very nature is limited, so limited that he cannot know much about what is happening now and very little about what happened in the past. He does not and cannot know about tomorrow.

2. Our lives at most are only as a vapor that appears for a brief time and then vanishes away. Once we are born into this world, the only thing we can know for sure is that we will die; sooner or later we will all die.

A vapor appears and can be seen, but it is not solid or substantial or permanent. It is shifted and buffeted about and disappears ever so quickly. We seldom know when death will come or how it will come. But come it will; and when it comes, we are snatched out of this life and cast into eternity, never to return to this life. Therefore, it is utter foolishness to refuse to acknowledge this fact—we simply cannot know the future (or know anything) other than what God reveals to us.

⇒ Living a self-sufficient life apart from God is the depth of foolishness.

⇒ Planning the future without planning for eternity is the depth of foolishness.

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps.103:14-16).

ILLUSTRATION:

No individual has any guarantee of another day or even another minute. At any moment our plans may cease for a whole host of reasons.

Hank Gathers was a strong, healthy young man and a star on his basketball team at Loyola-Marymount College. In addition, his team was preparing to enter a national basketball tournament. The week before the tournament started, the team was practicing, doing a

simple jogging exercise. Hank fell dead right to the gymnasium floor. No one, including Hank, knew anything was wrong—right up to the second he died.

When will you die? This simple question should pull you back to reality. No one is self-sufficient. We are all utterly dependent upon God.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so tempting to make our plans without God? What are some of the reasons we plan on our own?
2. How does the uncertainty of the future help you to see your need for God?
3. Why is planning apart from God completely foolish? Think about a time when your plans fell to pieces. How could you have handled the situation differently?

3. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS FAILURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD (v.15).

A person should consult God in his plans and life, but most—by far most—do not. Most people go about living life as they wish; they seldom consider God. But this is not the way life is to be lived. A person is to acknowledge God and confess his dependency upon God. Note that man is said to be dependent upon God for two things.

1. Man is dependent upon God for life. He should say, “If the Lord will, I shall live.” This means that whether he lives or not and how he lives is in the hands of God. Therefore, a man should depend upon God for life; he should pray and discuss his life with God, such things as...

food	health	security	love
clothing	welfare	employment	joy
housing	protection	fulfillment	peace

We must trust and depend upon God, fellowship and commune with Him day by day and moment by moment or else He cannot help us. Just think: we can have the love and presence, provision and protection of God; our lives can be in the perfect will of God. We can live and walk upon earth praying and proclaiming to the world: “If He wills, I shall live—my life and future and destiny are in the hands and provision and protection of God, totally and completely in His keeping!”

2. Man is dependent upon God for all that he does. He should say, “If the Lord wills, I will do this or that.” What this means is that a man is not able to do what he plans unless God wills it—not a single thing. A thousand things can happen to prevent us from carrying out our plans even within the

next hour, not to mention tomorrow. Therefore, a person should trust God, pray, and talk over all his ways with God...

his work	his schedule
his relationships	his activities

No matter what way a person turns, the person should acknowledge God in all his ways. He should be walking and praying all day long, acknowledging God in all his ways: praying for God’s will as he does this and that.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Pr.3:6).

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told of a farmer who went to sell a cow. As he passed his neighbor, the farmer told of his big plans. He said, “I am going to sell this cow, put some of the money in the bank, buy a big meal for myself and a present for my wife.” His wise neighbor cautioned, “Dear friend, you should say, ‘If the Lord wills, you will do these things.’” “Oh, I am going to do them all right. I have my cow right here and off I go,” the farmer said.

Later, the farmer came back beaten, bruised and bleeding, with his clothes torn. “What happened?!” the neighbor asked. “I was robbed and they took my cow,” the farmer said. “Well, what are you going to do now, go home?” his neighbor asked. “If the Lords wills,” the farmer replied.

It is easy to make big plans. We often feel very confident in our own abilities. But one day of bad circumstances can change our feelings completely. It is of the utmost importance that we rely upon God when we make our plans. We must realize and acknowledge that we can do nothing without Him. Therefore, we need His guidance in everything we do.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are we truly dependent upon God for everything in life? How does this facet affect your life? How should it affect your life?
2. What simple steps should we always take when we plan anything?

4. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS BOASTING, BRAGGING, AND SHOWING ARROGANCE (v.16).

The word “boastings” means an empty boaster.³⁷ That is, it is a person who boasts about something he thinks he has, but he

³⁷ A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.6, p.56.

does not really have it. He lives in an unreal world. Any person who goes through life without God is like this. He lives and plans, thinking that he controls his life and future. His life is one big boast of self-sufficiency, and it is wrong, totally wrong. A thousand things can happen to change his plans—to injure him or to radically change his life and work, or to snatch his life right out of this world.

Note a fact seldom thought about: most boasting is not done by word of mouth. It is done by the way we live, by flaunting our abilities and successes through our possessions and activities.

We have an urge, a tendency to boast and to be seen and recognized as better or more successful than others. And note what Scripture says: we rejoice in our boastings—that we are more successful in our work than some others. But such boastings—such pride and arrogance—are evil. Why? Because a man's ability and life are due to God and rest in the hands of God.

ILLUSTRATION:

A thought-provoking story is found in Aesop's fables about a fox and a crow.

One day a fox was walking through the woods when he spied a crow with a piece of cheese in its beak. The fox desperately wanted the cheese, so he began to try to irritate the crow saying, "What an ugly bird you are." The fox thought to himself, "If the crow responds to me with an insult, she will drop the cheese and I will have it for my supper." But the crow was intent on saving the cheese for her young and paid no attention whatever to the fox. Then the fox tried a different approach. He said to the crow, "Oh, but what a beautiful singing voice you have. Of all the birds I have ever heard, truly you are the greatest. If only I could hear one beautiful note." As the fox continued, the crow swelled with pride. Quickly, the crow opened her mouth, let out a squawk, dropping the cheese to the hungry fox below.

Boasting will not only keep us from gaining, it will cost us what we have. Stay humble before God, and He will lift you up.

QUESTIONS:

1. What situations tempt you to speak boastfully? How can you steer away from those situations?
2. How does acknowledging your dependence upon God keep you from prideful boasting?

5. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS SIN (v.17).

This is a striking definition of sin: to know that we should do something and refuse to do it is sin. As simply stated as possible: when we know to do good and refuse to do it, it is sin. A person is to trust and acknowledge God, to pray and ask God for His presence, guidance, help, care, and strength...

- when he plans today and tomorrow
- when he goes into a city
- when he continues in the city
- when he buys and sells
- when he gets gain
- when he does this and that

A person is to walk in fellowship and communion with God day by day and moment by moment, acknowledging Him in all his ways. He is to commit his life—all his ways—unto the Lord. Refusing to do so is sin, and the wages of sin is death—spiritual and eternal death.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Mt. 7:26-27).

QUESTIONS:

1. What happens when we hear the Word of God but do not do it?
2. Why is not doing something often a sin? How can you become more aware of the sins of omission?

SUMMARY:

Think for a moment: How often do we casually say, "Tomorrow, I will do this or that," even though we have no promise of even one more breath? Scripture is very direct. We are utterly dependent upon God, completely helpless without Him. For this reason, we must acknowledge that God is our true sufficiency. And for this reason, we must be sure that the Lord is at the center of our planning. We must never forget:

1. Self-sufficiency is planning without God.
2. Self-sufficiency is failure to recognize the uncertainty of life.
3. Self-sufficiency is failure to acknowledge God.
4. Self-sufficiency is boasting, bragging, and showing arrogance.
5. Self-sufficiency is sin.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES:

(Reflection and Response)

1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Prayer of commitment:

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Hope for a Heart of Stone

—by Kathryn Hoover

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

When Jesus died on the cross, He nullified the Old Testament laws and the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Temple was torn from the top to the bottom, opening the way for whoever wanted to come to the Father. The veil was estimated to have been four inches thick. No longer were sacrifices or all kinds of rituals needed. Instead, Jesus in His teachings, deals with the heart issues of man. He no longer emphasizes just the keeping of the laws on the outside. He now lifts the bar higher. No longer can we meet the requirements.

Our hearts are deceitfully wicked and only God is capable of changing a stony heart into a soft heart.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel. 36:26).

Jesus died on the cross to take our place so that we can be set free of all the outward things and come to Him so that He can change our hearts. For whosoever will. The sick. The hurting. The lonely. The poor. The struggling ones. The rich. The strong. All humankind. No one is exempt. All are welcome to come (John 10). How can I say that? Because I came to Him the best I could figure out and He turned my life around and kept me from taking my own life. Now I can say there is hope - not in traditions or religious rules, but rather because of Jesus. He is the reason I am still alive today.

END

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

(1 Corinthians 10:31)



I read an article about a ball player who was being applauded for declaring that he would tithe. He had signed a five year contract for 125 million dollars. He said that he would give 12.5 million dollars over 5 years. Two and a half million each year, which is a bit over \$48,000 each Sunday, is definitely a lot of money!

As good and generous as this seems, I doubt that it will be discussed and marveled at two thousand years from now. However, people still read and ponder the poor widow who put her money in the offering basket two thousand years ago.

What was so special about her offering? Certainly not the size of her contribution. It was a paltry amount, really. Two mites is way less than two cents. What was marvelous, and Jesus clearly brought it out, was that she gave all that she had. Not because she had to. No, she gave because she wanted to.

Now let's answer the above question, "Does a Christian have to tithe?" Tithing was the law during the Old Covenant. What about us who are part of the New Covenant? My answer to that is, "No." To tithe is to be put under a law.

We are free from the law. We are not bound to a paltry ten percent when it comes to giving. We are free to give any amount, although ten percent is a good starting point.

Tithing, in all honesty, really puts a damper on the Christian in the New Covenant. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

Giving, (time, effort, prayers, and money), is a vital part of a Christian's life. A child of God who does not give, is like a runner who does not run, or a ball player who does not play ball.

As this widow so clearly demonstrated, it is not the amount that is important. For that poor widow to give two mites, was way more in the eyes of God than the ball player who puts in a \$50,000 check every Sunday.

God is more interested in what is left, than He is in what is given. It is not wrong to make a lot of money. Today, in our country, it is relatively easy to accumulate wealth. I do not believe it is wrong to make a lot of money, but it is wrong to KEEP a lot of wealth. If we purpose in our hearts to give, 2 Corin-

thians 9:8 says, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you." In other words, if we give to God, we will not lack. He will make His grace to abound. When we give to God and His work, we lay up treasures in heaven. By giving cheerfully, we prevent our hearts from becoming attached to the treasures on earth.

Many (someone said over 50%) of the parables that Jesus told were about money. I never counted, but I am sure that Jesus knew that the love of money, or the desire for riches, was a snare. He stated plainly, "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10).

So purpose in your hearts to give. Ask God, "What do you want me to do in this situation," or, "What do you want me to do about this need?" Don't ever think that you can't give very much so you don't give anything at all. The little boy gave his lunch and thousands were fed, because God made all grace abound. He can do the same for us, if we give with a cheerful attitude.

It really is more blessed to give. Thank You Lord!

Our Way of Life

—by Al Fry

Greetings to all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Something has been struggling in my heart that I have been praying about for quite some time. It seems that we have many people, including leaders, who don't make the firm distinction between our salvation plan and our way of life.

Our way of life can be a great benefit to us as a way of community and sharing our bountiful blessings, but can also be a great stumbling block if we persist in

believing that people who aren't either of this order, or perhaps leave this order, are "the world."

The world, according to 1 John 2:16, is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Notice, in particular, the phrase "the pride of life."

Are we not being proud of our way of life if we convey the message that if you are not Amish, you are lost? We need to be abundantly careful that we

are not living in the mindset of a cult.

The gospel makes it clear in no uncertain terms that our salvation can only come from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and other forms of self-righteousness are pride. Our works should be a result of our faith, and should never be confused with our way of life.

Let us pray for faith, forgiveness, grace and deliverance of the Holy Spirit to our hearts and minds.

Tyndale and Luther turned the world upside down in the 1500's. William Tyndale was precisely the man that God needed in England to see His Word get into the hands of the people.

He had a burning desire to see to that every plowboy would be able to have, read, and understand the Scriptures. His mastery of language allowed him to introduce English words in translation that are still being used around the world today!

For these translations to happen, God had to lay the foundation for these men to work on. A man named Erasmus helped do that by compiling

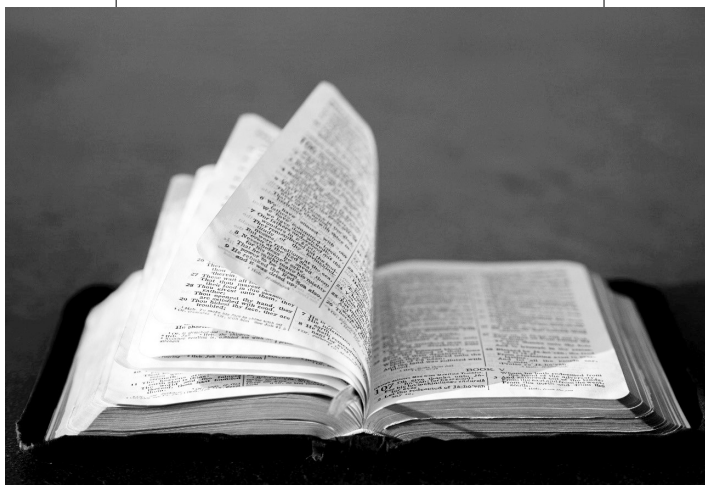
and composing a Greek edition of the New Testament. Luther took that text and translated it into German. Many say Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it. If this was the case, I would like to propose that Tyndale made scrambled eggs of it and fed millions!

Tyndale was God's man for this job. He had a God-given desire to translate Scripture. He could also speak seven languages and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. He had a pastor's heart and ministered to the people of England regularly.

It did not take long, however, to realize that this endeavor would not be favorable to the King or those in authority. King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and Sir Thomas More, among others, were furious. "It was," said More, "not worthy to be called *Christ's Testament*, but, either *Tyndale's Testament* or the testament of his master, Antichrist."

Needless to say, like Luther, William Tyndale had to go into hiding to finish and revise the New Testament and begin working on the Old Testament. His finished books would be smuggled

out by friends to the people of England. Many were fearful to read or take them, unsure of what the fallout might be. Tyndale would comfort each of them with these words, "Let it not make thee



despair, neither yet discourage thee, O reader, that it is forbidden thee in pain of life and goods, nor that it is made breaking of the King's peace, or treason unto His Highness, to read the Word of thy soul's health—for if God is on our side, what matter maketh it who be against us, be they bishops, cardinals, popes."

When the authorities realized the English Bible was spreading from region to region, they knew they had to do something. They came up with a genius plan to pay people for their copies. Tyndale realized that this was not a curse, but could be used as a blessing in disguise. His "distribution team" went around and gathered up all of the Bibles which they previously distributed. They collected the ones that needed revisions or had errors, took them to the King, and the King graciously paid them, and then burned the old copies. They used the funds from the King to print new improved editions! God save the King!

A plot was finally put into place that would "end" the work of Tyndale. (End

is in quotations seeing that seventy-five percent of the King James Old Testament and eighty-five percent of the New Testament is William Tyndale's work.) Henry Phillips, a crook and thief, was paid by the King to go undercover as a follower of Tyndale and to expose him and his writings. After building a friendship and earning Tyndale's trust, Phillips was allowed the privilege to see the works and the press. Much like Judas, Phillips sold out Tyndale in 1535.

One year later, on October 6, 1536, William Tyndale was chained to a stake in the middle of the town square and burned for his work. Before the flames could quench him, he cried out, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

That prayer was answered two years later when King Henry VIII ordered that the Bible of Miles Coverdale was to be used in every parish in the land. The Coverdale Bible was largely based on William Tyndale's work. In 1539, Tyndale's edition of the Bible became officially approved for printing.



TAKEAWAYS from William Tyndale:

- 1. If God has laid a purpose on your heart, don't let anything stop you!**
- 2. We all are to be subject to those who rule over us, but when that rule is contrary to God, we must obey God rather than man.**
- 3. Just because you have not seen an answer to your prayer, it does not mean that God is not going to answer. It might not happen until after you are gone!**

Hypostatic union is the term used to describe how God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature, yet remained fully God at the same time. Jesus always had been God:

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

“I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

At the incarnation Jesus became a human being.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The addition of the human nature to the divine nature is Jesus, the God-man. This is the hypostatic union, Jesus Christ, one Person, fully God and fully man.

Jesus’ two natures, human and divine, are inseparable. Jesus will forever be the God-man, fully God and fully human, two distinct natures in one Person. Jesus’ humanity and divinity are not mixed, but are united without loss of separate identity. Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity:

“Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour” (John 4:6).

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John 19:28).

At other times, He operated in the power of His deity:

“And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43).

“He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and

brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children” (Mtt 14:18-21).

In both operating within the limitations of His humanity and operating in the power of His deity, Jesus’ actions were from His one Person. Jesus had two natures, but only one personality.

The doctrine of the hypostatic union is an attempt to explain how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time. It is ultimately, though, a doctrine we are incapable of fully understanding. It is impossible for us to fully understand how God works. We, as human beings with finite minds, should not expect to totally comprehend an infinite God. Jesus is God’s Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit:

“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

But that does not mean Jesus did not exist before He was conceived. Jesus has always existed:

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

“I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

When Jesus was conceived, He became a human being in addition to being God:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begot-

ten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Jesus is both God and man. Jesus has always been God, but He did not become a human being until He was conceived in Mary. Jesus became a human being in order to identify with us in our struggles:

“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17).

More importantly, He became a human being so that He could die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

In summary, the hypostatic union teaches that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, that there is no mixture or dilution of either nature, and that He is one united Person, forever.

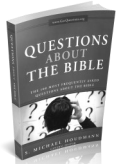
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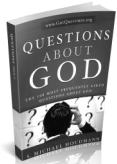
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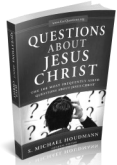
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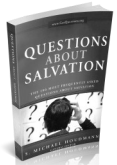
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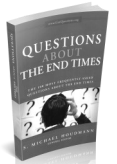
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Wait

—by Russell Kelfer

Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried;
Quietly, patiently, lovingly, God replied.
I pled and wept for a clue to my fate,
And the Master so gently said, "Wait."

"Wait? You say wait?" my indignant reply.
"Lord, I need answers, I need to know why!
Is Your hand shortened? Or have You not heard?
By faith I have asked, and I'm claiming Your Word."

My future and all to which I relate
Hangs in the balance, and you tell me to wait?
I'm needing a 'Yes,' a go-ahead sign,
Or even a 'No' to which I can resign.

You promised, dear Lord, that if we believe,
We need but to ask, and we shall receive.
And Lord I've been asking, and this is my cry:
"I'm weary of asking! I need a reply."

Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate,
As my Master replied again, "Wait."
So I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut,
And grumbled to God, "So I'm waiting for what?"

He seemed then to kneel, and His eyes met with mine . . .
And He tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
I could shake the heavens and darken the sun.
I could raise the dead and cause mountains to run.

"I could give all you seek and pleased you would be.
You'd have what you want, but you wouldn't know Me.
You'd not know the depth of My love for each saint.
You'd not know the power that I give to the faint.

"You'd not learn to see through clouds of despair;
You'd not learn to trust just by knowing I'm there.
You'd not know the joy of resting in Me
When darkness and silence are all you can see.

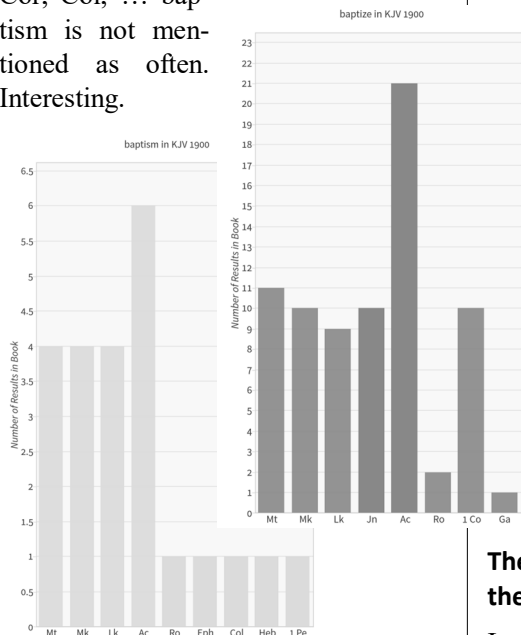
"You'd never experience the fullness of love
When the peace of My spirit descends like a dove.
You would know that I give, and I save, for a start,
But you'd not know the depth of the beat of My heart.

"The glow of My comfort late into the night,
The faith that I give when you walk without sight.
The depth that's beyond getting just what you ask
From an infinite God who makes what you have last.

"You'd never know, should your pain quickly flee,
What it means that My grace is sufficient for thee.
Yes, your dearest dreams overnight would come true,
But, oh, the loss, if you missed what I'm doing in you.

"So, be silent, My child, and in time you will see
That the greatest of gifts is to truly know Me.
And though oft My answers seem terribly late,
My most precious answer of all is, 'Still wait.'"

In the New Testament, the word *baptism* is found 23 times. The words *baptize* and *baptized* are found 74 times. Together, these numbers total 97 times. The following charts show which books of the Bible that baptism, baptize, and baptized are found in. Notice that much is said about baptism in the book of Acts, which we know as the beginning of the church age – the age in which you and I live in. Notice also, that once we get past the book of Acts and further into the church age ... Rom, Eph, Cor, Col, ... baptism is not mentioned as often. Interesting.



Baptism does seem important when we consider that Jesus, right before leaving earth, commanded it.

*“Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).*

The New Testament records 14 baptisms:

The baptism of 3,000 (Acts 2:41), the baptism of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:38), the baptism of Saul (Acts 9:18), and the baptism of the prison keeper (Acts 16:33). The full list of occurrences of baptizo in Acts is: Acts 1:5; 1:22; 2:38, 2:41; 8:12, 13, 16; 8:36 & 38; 9:18; 10:37, 10:47 & 48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 18:25; 19:3-5; 22:16.)

From the information thus far, how important do you think baptism is to God?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Very important

I would guess that your answer is the same as mine. Very important! Why would Jesus command it if it were not important? Why would the authors of the New Testament talk about baptism nearly one hundred times, and not think it was important?

Before we get too much deeper in our study on baptism, let’s consider that water baptism under *John the Baptizer’s* ministry does not mean the same thing that baptism meant in the book of Acts and following. In fact, it seems clear: those who were baptized under John’s ministry and were still alive after Jesus’ resurrection, got re-baptized. More on rebaptizing in a minute; but first, let’s consider the *two different purposes* for getting baptized during New Testament times.

The purpose of baptism during John the Baptist’s ministry:

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptizer mentions the purpose of his baptism: *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.”* Paul affirms this In Acts 19:4 by saying that John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance and told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. John’s baptism of repentance was a symbolic representation of changing one’s mind and going in a new direction. *“And [they] were baptized of him [John] in Jordan, confessing their sins”* (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one’s sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God’s law, while anticipating the arrival of the Messiah.

The purpose of baptism, beginning in the Book of Acts:

Baptism in the Book of Acts, and following – even to our day in 2022, is viewed as one desiring to associate himself with Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection. When a believer in the early church, and in our day, chooses to be baptized, he is simply saying: I want the world to know that I identify with Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. Consider the following scriptures.

*“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are **buried** with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was **raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”** (Rm 6:3–4).*

*“**Buried with him in baptism, where-in also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead”** (Colossians 2:12).*

Before we move too far, let’s look at Acts chapter 19. In this scenario, we are told in the context that about 12 people got baptized the second time: once under John’s ministry and again in Jesus’ name.

“And he [Paul] said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:3–5).

The gospel books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are considered an extension of the Old Testament. People living in this time period continued to live under the Old Testament law. It is not until Jesus was resurrected from the dead and went back to heaven that the church age began (in the Book of Acts). Today, we are still living in the church age.

Christians have always acknowledged that the church was birthed in Acts 2:1-4. By the time we get to verse 41 of the same chapter, we are told that 3,000 believers in Jesus Christ were baptized the same day. The text does not say, but I suspect that many of these 3,000 people had already been baptized once, under John's ministry.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Why did 3,000 people get baptized?

There is only one good answer. They suddenly realized the importance of identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and did so by immediately being baptized. All 3,000 believers got baptized the same day. Age and status did not matter. These 3,000 souls included businessmen, housewives, church leaders, farmers, dads, moms, grandpas, grandmas, and most likely older children who surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ and immediately desired to be baptized as an outward display of their identification and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

A Second Example

Let's look at another example in the early church. In Act's chapter 16, a certain prison keeper suddenly realized that all of his prisoners, including Paul and Silas, had been freed from their chains and prison cell. As the prison keeper was preparing to fall onto his own sword and commit suicide, the apostle Paul cried out, *"Do thyself no harm: for we are all here."* Had the prison keeper fallen onto his sword and died, he would have gone straight to hell. He was not yet born again.

In Acts 16:30, the prison keeper calls out in desperation, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* Paul and Silas responded, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"* (Acts 16:30-31). Verse 32 says, *"They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."*

The prison keeper and his entire household (dad, mom, and children) heard the good news of Jesus. That same night they believed and were born again. Wow! What a glorious night that must have been! Acts 16:33 says:

"And he (prison keeper) took them (Paul and Silas) the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his (family), straightway."

Just like the 3,000 who got saved in Acts chapter 2 and then followed in baptism, so the prison keeper and his entire family got saved and then immediately followed in baptism.

A Third Example

When the Ethiopian eunuch (meaning, one who had been castrated) was traveling through the dessert in Acts 8, preacher Phillip suddenly showed up and began to preach Jesus unto him (verse 35). The two men must have also talked about baptism. Verse 36-37 says: *"...they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"* Phillip responded: *"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."*

Note: Just like the apostle Paul, Phillip wanted to make sure that the Ethiopian eunuch understood that baptism should only take place *after* one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ.

"And he [Ethiopian eunuch] answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

Now that the Ethiopian eunuch was a believer, he was ready for baptism. We are told in Acts 8:38 that preacher Phillip, *"Commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."*

Now that we have looked at some baptismal examples, let's talk about a few other facts.

1. For 2,000 years, churches around the world have baptized millions and millions of people.

2. During the Anabaptist movement, as many as 4,000 men and women were drowned, beheaded, and burned at the stake for believing in adult baptism.
3. Some churches baptize babies within the first week of being born. The Amish put baptism off until their children turn 17-20 years old. Others will baptize as soon as the person is mature enough to understand salvation and they become a believer in Jesus Christ – this could happen as early as age 5, or any-time thereafter.
4. Some believe sprinkling water on a head is the correct mode of Baptism. Some pour small amounts of water on the person's head. Others believe the correct mode of baptism is to immerse or bury the person's body completely under water.
5. Some churches believe that a person must (1) believe and (2) be baptized before they are truly saved. Others teach that salvation, or the new birth, is in no way connected to baptism; this group believes one can place their faith in Jesus Christ, die, and go straight to heaven without ever being baptized.
6. Some teach that you must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Others teach you must be baptized in Jesus' name only.

Who is right? Is everyone right?

To answer these questions, let's consider the following facts, taken from scripture. When the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the church of Ephesus, he wrote:

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." (Eph 4:4-6).

Do you see that? One baptism! Just like there is only one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one God, there is only one baptism.

What does Paul mean when he says, only ‘one baptism?’ Before we twist and complicate the matter, let’s just take it for what it says. The answer: Not everyone is right! Some are going to die and find out they were taught wrong on baptism.

What then is the one baptism that Paul writes about? The only right way to answer that question correctly and with real confidence is to understand what the word baptism means. Secondly, let us lay all teachings aside and look at examples in scripture. Romans 3:4 says, “...let God be true, but every man a liar...”

Understanding the Root Meaning of Baptize:

Most people know that the New Testament was originally written in Greek. That was the common language during New Testament times. In the original Greek language, baptize was spelled *baptizo*. When translators translated the Bible from Greek into English, they dropped the “o” in *baptizo* and added an “e.” In English, we now read and spell the word *baptize*. The root meaning of *baptizo* always means to plunge, fully immerse, fully dipped, put under, covered up.

Paul illustrates the true meaning of *baptizo* when he associated Jesus’s death and resurrection in his letter to the Romans (Rom 6:3 a & b and Rom 6:4). Paul says that we have been baptized into Jesus’s death in order to rise with Him. Paul uses the same image in Colossians 2:12, saying that we have been “buried with [Jesus] in baptism” and also “raised with Him through faith.”

Questions for each one of us:

1. Does the Bible ever hint anywhere in the New Testament that people were baptized by sprinkling water on someone’s head? No, never!
2. Does the Bible ever hint that some were baptized by pouring water on a person’s head? No, never!

Let’s look at some New Testament baptism meaning and mode:

Baptism Meaning:

*“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his **death**? Therefore, **we are buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was **raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been **planted together in the likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the **likeness of his resurrection**” (Romans 6:3–5).*

*“**Buried with him in baptism**, wherein also ye are **risen with him through the faith** of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).*

Baptism Mode:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water” (Matthew 3:16).

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized” (John 3:23).

“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38–39).

Let’s conclude with some important statements:

1. Only those who have been born again should be baptized.
2. The believer being baptized should be fully immersed, placed into, and identified with Christ in death. This is the believer's position in Christ:
 - (1) To have died in Christ's death.
 - (2) To be placed into Christ's death.
 - (3) To be identified with Christ's death.
 - (4) To be a partaker of Christ' death.
3. The believer is immersed, placed into, or identified with Christ in

His resurrection. God counts the true baptized believer as having been raised in Christ. God takes the believer's faith and counts the person as participating in Christ's resurrection. He counts and considers the person... (1) To be raised in Christ's resurrection. (2) To be placed into Christ's resurrection. (3) To be identified with Christ's resurrection. (4) To be a partaker of Christ's resurrection.

4. If someone asked you to go bury a dead cat in the ground and you went out back and laid the cat down on the ground and sprinkled or poured a handful of dirt over it, you could not honestly go back and say, I buried the cat. The only way to bury the cat is to completely cover it with dirt, so that the cat is no longer visible. You could now say, "I buried the cat in the ground."
5. Our forefathers and the Martyr’s Mirror are not our foundation.
6. Any books or teachings, outside of scripture, cannot be used as our foundation.
7. The Bible alone is our final authority and foundation.

Have you been born again? Have you been baptized?

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:35–39).

END

Conformity of dress is a subject that has been on my heart. I used to think that dressing a certain way would bring me closer to God or help me to find favor with Him, because that's what I had been taught and what was enforced. Suddenly, I realized that I was judging people based on their outward appearance without intending to do so. I started to wonder if what I was feeling was self-righteousness. Philippians 3:9 says:

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

I interpret this scripture to warn that if we make laws, it will cause us to be self-righteous, correct? Let's see what Scripture says about the outward appearance. 1 Samuel 16:7 says:

“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

In this verse, we see that the LORD looks at the heart and not on outward appearances as man does.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick

understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: (Isaiah 11:1-3).

Here we see a prophesy of Jesus as well as insight about how He will judge. As you can see, He won't judge after the sight of His eyes, nor from what He hears. What a great God we have!!!

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Mtt 23:25-28)

Here, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for appearing righteous on the outside; however, it was the inside (heart) that mattered.

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:18).

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

“For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to

answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart” (2 Corinthians 5:12).

Are we glorying in our appearance, or in our hearts?

“Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's” (2 Corinthians 10:7).

Paul is saying that just because someone doesn't look the same (outward appearance), it doesn't mean that they aren't the same in Christ.

So, whether it be color or style, are we looking at people and thinking, “That person can't be in Christ because of the way that they are dressed?”

“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God” (Acts 8:21).

“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ” (Galatians 6:12).

After reading all these scriptures, I was thinking about how we have to be careful that we don't hold our outward appearances so high that they become an idol (Hosea 13:2).

“That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols” (Ezekiel 14:5).

Let us all strive to keep our hearts in the right place, so that God can use us and bless us!

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July

Book of Romans (Romans 10-11)

Taught by Michael Pearl.

Put in the Fire for the Sake of Prayer

God can put His people through the fires of suffering to awaken our appetite for prayer. Message by John Piper.

How to Multiply Your Joy

The honeymoon is over, the glow is gone, and married life can seem pretty harsh after a while. Is there a way to connect with your mate in a way that rekindles the flame? Is there a way to change the way you communicate that helps you actually look forward to talking and spending time together? Join Chip Ingram as he shares a communication technique that helped save his marriage and has kept it strong ever since.

World Religions

What are the four largest world religions: One of the four might surprise you! Join Pastor John Marino as he gives a presentation to a local college on world religions and has the opportunity to share the gospel.

August

Book of Romans (Romans 10-11)

Taught by Michael Pearl.

Answers in Genesis

Pastor John Marino is joined by Patrick Kanewske from Answers in Genesis to discuss creation, evolution, the Ark Encounter, and the Creation Museum.

How to Multiply Your Joy

Chip Ingram shares what we all know about ourselves but are often unwilling to face or admit. The truth he brings has the power to shore up an unstable relationship, mend damaged souls that think there is no hope, and bring life back to a marriage that's been dead for years. If you think you are too far gone, Chip is going to tell you that you are not. There really is a way to find the joy and peace that you are longing for in your marriage.

The Design is Love

God loves you so much that He gave His Son for you. If you believe in Him, you will have eternal life. Message by John Piper.

September

Walking in the Spirit (part 1 of 2)

Pastor John Marino discusses the importance of walking in the Spirit as the strategy for Christian sanctification. If we are going to fight against our own flesh, we are going to need to be equipped with the right tools. We can't "pick ourselves up by our bootstraps." We need grace.

Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy

What's the secret of a 30, 40, or even 50 year marriage? In this message, Chip shares the newest volume in his ongoing series, "Keeping Love Alive." He emphasizes the importance of couples cultivating spiritual intimacy, which is the first of 4 biblical skills he will share in this series.

Free at Last: Miracle of New Birth

Message by John Piper

Is Jesus Still in the Foot Washing Business?

Throughout history, scholars have questioned the reason Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Many dismiss the spiritual significance. Dr. Vernon McGee answers these questions with a real and raw message that requires us to respond to this gentle act, just like the disciples did.

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The cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.75 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

Feedback and Response

1

To Whom it may concern: The piece "Born again and Amish" is not scriptural. The Bible says, "Avoid all appearance of evil...Flee from it..." That includes this paper and the TV. We don't want such material in our home. TV is not for the Christian. Many lies, impurity, shooting, etc. are on this box. It is not for the Christian!

You, as the writer, may be able to control what you watch, but do you expect all to have the same control or guidelines? Our children are human and will often do or watch and look at things behind our backs – I feel this is giving Satan a finger into our homes, and in the end he will take the rest of us!

Thank you. I pray the Lord will awaken you and help you to see the truth! —JP

Dear JP,

As followers of Christ, we must all do our best to decide what is right and wrong on issues that are not specifically addressed in the Bible. I admire you for wanting to protect your children from any potential evil that could be delivered into your home through a TV. No one can argue that there is much television programming that promotes evil. When our children were young and at home, my wife and I did not have a TV for the same reason that you do not have one. We didn't want our children to be exposed to any evil through television. However, we did have what was, at that time, called a "TV Monitor/Video Combination." It was a TV that could only play videos that we owned. We only owned Christ-centered videos that were spiritually edifying for our children. Most of them were Bible stories.

A TV can be used for good or for evil, just like a gun or a rifle. Your husband's rifle can be used for evil, to kill people, or it can be used for good, to feed your family by shooting a deer. We use our TV, not for evil, but for good and for what glorifies God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian TV programming has introduced millions of people around the world to Jesus Christ. I am sure that you will agree that is a wonderful thing.

My wife and I also led our children to faith in Jesus Christ at young ages, so

each of them were born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Because of this, they had a strong desire to obey Jesus and please God.

When the only reason that children (or adults) don't do evil is because their culture makes it impossible for them to do evil, then they aren't motivated to avoid evil because of their love for God or by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in them. They avoid evil only to maintain the approval of others who are watching them. That is why all such people (both children and adults) lead double lives. They have a public life in which they appear to be good, but they have a private life that is not near as good! When they can do evil without getting caught by their parents or their peers, they often yield to evil. This is true of all people who are religious but not born again, whether they are Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish or Amish.

As I have often said, you can take a pig, clean it up real nice, tie a bow around its neck, and sprinkle some perfume on it, but it is still a pig! If you let him out of his cage, he'll go right back into the mud! And that is why all of us need to be truly born again. Being born again dramatically changes us on the inside, and only then does the Holy Spirit actually live in us to guide us in the paths of righteousness. Born again people don't need cages to restrain them from evil. They are "new creations in Christ."

Again, I'm glad that you are a good mother who cares very much about her children, but I must ask you the most important question: Have you been born again? Have your children been born again? Jesus said that unless we are born again, we cannot see, or enter, God's kingdom! When you have the Holy Spirit in you, you can be an even better mother! And when your children also have the Holy Spirit living in them, it is easier to be their mother!

—David Kirkwood

Cont. from Page 13—Heart of the Matter

With all this being said, we are to make sure that we dress modestly.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1 Timothy 2:9).

I will close with the following two verses and with encouragement to please search the Scriptures daily!

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rm 10:9-10).

END

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My Children's Children and Beyond

—By Joe Keim

Lift your head my brother...my sister ... Lift your head and eyes above all your worries, frustrations, and failures. Are you able to envision the next generation of children in your mind? Now, look further. Look way out there past your own children. What do you see? Can you envision your children's children? What about your children's children's children? Look further. Can you envision ten generations?

Why is lifting our heads and looking past ourselves so important? Because how you and I are living life today will have a direct impact on generations to come even long after we are dead and gone. The choices that we make on this day will affect our children, our children's children, and beyond.

If money, houses, retirement, sports, ministry, Hollywood, hunting, fishing, and living in sin are all more important than Jesus and His Kingdom, then we should not be surprised when our children choose to follow the same idols that we worship and cling to. We should also not be surprised when our grandchildren and great grandchildren follow in the same footsteps.

In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus recounted the story of two men. Both men took time to build their own house. One built

his house on a rock, and the other built his house on sand. The man who built his house on the rock, undoubtedly worked harder and put in quite a bit more effort. It was important that his foundation was good, solid, and strong. The man who built his house on the sand did not want to put in long days. He by-passed all the sweat, perseverance, and hard work. My guess is that he moved into his house long before the

died down, and the sun came out, only one house was standing. The other was completely ruined and devastated. I would not be surprised if the man who lost his house was weeping and wishing that he had followed the man who had built his house on the rock. He probably lost many nights of sleep and felt like giving up. "If only," he thought, "I would have put more effort into building my house!"



other man did. He may have laughed and made fun of the other man and talked behind his back to his neighbors. You know how it goes - nothing new under the sun!

But then one day it got cloudy. A mighty storm rose from the west. It began to rain hard. The floods came, the winds blew, and they beat on both houses. When the wind and rain finally

My brother...my sister...Lift your head! Lift your eyes! Look over all your worries, frustrations, and failures. How important is it that your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren love the Lord your God with all their heart,

with all their soul, and with all their mind? How important is it that they love people like God loves people? How important is it that you get rid of your idols, forsake all, and follow the one true and everlasting Lord of all?

Keep building! Just make sure you are building on a good solid foundation. At the end of your life, only you will give an account for how you built your house. Amen and amen!