

Back To Basics

Volume 3

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LET EVERY MAN BE...

Johnie Edwards

James calls upon every man to be four things in James chapter 1.

1) **SWIFT TO HEAR.** James wrote, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear...” (Jas. 1:19). Jesus described some in this fashion, “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mt. 13:15). Instead of being dull of hearing, we should be swift to hear. As one is swift to hear, he must be swift to hear the right things. We should be swift to hear the truth and not so swift to hear false doctrine or gossip.

2) **SLOW TO SPEAK.** James continued in James 1:19 by saying, “Let every man be slow to speak.” There are those who speak without putting their brain in gear! There are some things we need to think and study about before we speak. A lot of preachers speak before and without study; and this gets lots of them in trouble. Thinking before we speak will help us say words described by the wise man: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Prov. 25:11).

3) **SLOW TO WRATH.** James concludes in James 1:19 by telling us, “Let every man be slow to wrath.” We must not get angry quickly. Solomon said, “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly” (Prov. 14:29). How many of us have said things in anger that we wish we could recall? It’s about like trying to pick up spilled water. No wonder Paul told the Ephesians, “Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Now notice the next verse, after being told about wrath, “Neither give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27). There must be some connection between being angry and giving place to the devil!

4) **A DOER.** “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22). A lot of folks hear the word of God, but few become doers of the word. Jesus exclaimed, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 7:21). Thus, it is not enough to just hear the word of God; we must put some action with the hearing. Have you obeyed the Lord? If not, why not do so today, as you look into the mirror of God’s word?



THE SOWER'S SEED

Basic Sermon Starters

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH AND WEEPETH, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED, SHALL DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH REJOICING, BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM."

HAPPY IS THE MAN

Introduction

1. The people of God have always been a happy people (Dt. 33:29; Ps. 144:15).
2. We make use of the phrase "Happy Is The Man" to describe the happy man.

Discussion

I. WHOM GOD CORRECTETH

- A. Job 5:17
- B. Proverbs 3:11-12
- C. Hebrews 12:5-11
- D. The Scriptures are designed to make us happy - "for correction" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

II. THAT HATH HIS QUIVER FULL

- A. Psalm 17:3-5
- B. Children can add an element of happiness to the home.

III. THAT FEARETH THE LORD

- A. Psalm 128
- B. Psalm 112:1
- C. Discuss what it means to fear the Lord.

IV. THAT HATH GOD FOR HIS HELP

- A. Psalm 146:5
- B. God has always been a help to those who put their hope in Him. Notice examples:
 1. Moses (Ex. 18:4).
 2. Asa (2 Chr. 14:11-13).

V. THAT FINDETH WISDOM

- A. Proverbs 3:13-26
- B. Wisdom is found in keeping God's commandments (Dt. 4:5-6).

VI. THAT CONDEMNEH NOT HIMSELF

- A. Romans 14:22
- B. The context concerns authorized liberties, where every man is to be fully persuaded in his own mind (v. 5).

VII. WHO ENDURES

- A. James 5:11
- B. First Peter teaches endurance (2:19-20; 3:14; 4:12-16).

Conclusion

How do you measure up with the happy man?

Back To Basics

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THE FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE #2

John Isaac Edwards

It is not enough to just limit our teaching and practice to the doctrine of Christ. 2 John 9-11 shows we are not even to receive those outside the fellowship circle. And, with many, this is where the rub comes!

1) **IF THERE COME ANY UNTO YOU, AND BRING NOT THIS DOCTRINE.** Verses 9 and 10 go together. *Any* (v. 10), used to indicate one selected without restriction, has the same meaning as *Whosoever* (v. 9). *This doctrine* (v. 10) is *the doctrine of Christ* (v. 9). It makes no difference who it is (your college professor, your best friend, or your daddy's uncle) - if he does not bring the doctrine of Christ, he is not to be received. Some may be in keeping with verse 9 (as they limit their teaching to the doctrine of Christ), but be in violation of verse 10 (as they extend the right hand of fellowship to those who teach things outside the doctrine of Christ). And one is just as bad as the other! The character of the doctrine-bringer, in this case, has nothing to do with determining whether or not he is to be received. The truthfulness of a man's teaching and his right to be received is not determined by his character, but by his teaching; just as the apostles would be declared false witnesses, not by dishonesty or insincerity, but by the accuracy of their testimony (1 Cor. 15:15).

2) **RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE, NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED.** Just as Lydia was judged faithful when Paul and Silas entered her house (Acts 16:33), the false teacher is separated as unfaithful when brethren close the door to him. And there are those, even among "the churches of Christ," who are opening the door to false teachers. When "Christian College" pro-

fessors and "Christianity paper editors" say, "There should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who differ on...whether funds can be used from the church treasury to support orphan homes; whether the Lord's supper must be taken every Sunday, or whether instrumental music is used in worship," and "the bounds of Christian unity include contradictory teachings and practices on important moral and doctrinal questions," we need to get back to basic Bible teaching about fellowship! The bounds of "Christian unity" are circumscribed by the fellowship circle.

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PHOEBE

Melba Edwards

Paul wrote, “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you, for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also” (Rom. 16:1-2). So much is said about Phoebe in these two short verses.

1) **PHOEBE WAS COMMENDED.** She was a person of worthy character who Paul introduced to the Romans.

2) **PHOEBE WAS SPOKEN OF AS OUR SISTER.** What a special relationship we have when we are Christians. Paul recognized this relationship with Phoebe as he did with many others in the Scriptures. He wanted the Romans to “receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you.” Her character was such that she deserved to be received and assisted.

3) **PHOEBE WAS A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.** In this text, a servant is one who ministers (Mt. 22:13; 23:11; Mk. 9:35; Jn. 2:5, 9; 12:26). Phoebe spent her time taking care of the needs of her brothers and sisters in Christ. Women today can be servants like Phoebe. We can minister to others when they are sick by sending cards, making phone calls, visiting, taking food, taking them to the doctor, running errands, cleaning, doing laundry, etc. To those who have lost a loved one, we can send a special card, call to see what we can do to ease

their pain, be there to comfort, take food or even serve the food and wash the dishes and see that they get back to their rightful owners. Let’s not forget the shut-in, for they are often neglected. We can visit, call, send a note of encouragement, run errands, take food, etc. As well, we can minister to those who are less fortunate financially. One of the reasons of working with our hands is so we can give to him who has need (Eph. 4:28). Phoebe was one the church could depend on whenever there was a need. Can that be said of us?

4) **PHOEBE WAS A HELPER OF MANY.** *Helper* here carries with it the idea of being a protectress. It is a word of dignity indicating the high esteem with which she was regarded, as one who had been a protectress of many (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*). Her responsibilities may have been seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were without civic rights. It also has the idea of being an assistant. Women can assist elders, deacons, preachers, and others in their work. One real need today is for women being helpers to new converts. They have many questions, concerns, and even changes they are making in their lives in which they may need direction. Many times, new converts just slip through the cracks.

We could all take lessons from Phoebe. Sometimes women just sit around wondering what they can do. Phoebe knew what she could do and did it. The church needs more women like Phoebe.

WHEN I SIN

David Eldridge

Psalm 51 was written by David after being confronted about his sin by the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1-13). As David pours out his heart before God, we see several noteworthy truths concerning sin, forgiveness, and restoration.

1) **I MUST ACKNOWLEDGE MY SIN.** After Nathan's parable, David said what sometimes seems to be the hardest words to say, "I have sinned" (2 Sam. 12:13). In Psalm 51:3, David writes, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." Too many will never receive the forgiveness of God because, like the Laodiceans, they say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," while failing to see that they are "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). As David, I must acknowledge my transgression before God.

2) **I MUST PLEAD FOR MERCY.** David pleaded, "Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions" (Ps. 51:1). Many seek to have God simply overlook or ignore their sin, but we must plead for mercy to be saved (Ti. 3:5). When I sin, I must look for the mercy of God which He is willing to give (Ps. 86:5).

3) **I MUST REPENT OF MY SIN.** David noted, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart – these, O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:17). My heart should be broken, realizing that I have sinned against God, as David wrote, "Against You, You only, have I sinned" (Ps. 51:4). This contrite heart is the heart full of Godly sorrow that is willing to truly repent (2 Cor. 7:10).

4) **I MUST SEEK FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION.** David realized his sin had separated him from God and he sought to be restored (Is. 59:1-2; Col. 1:21). He said in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation." Restoration comes only after we have been forgiven of our transgressions (vv. 7-9). Upon being forgiven, God welcomes us back; not with ridicule, but in loving kindness.

5) **I MUST DO BETTER.** David requested, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). This shows a need to continue true to your repentance in faithfulness. Upon receiving the forgiveness of God, one who has sinned should seek to do better in the future, with the help of God.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE MARRIAGE

Donnie V. Rader

Marriage is a serious matter. In fact, marriage is for life. It is permanent (Mt. 19:3-6). Most today who enter marriage don't have a clue how serious it really is. I know that those of the world talk about how important marriage is and how serious it should be taken. However, not many view it from the standpoint of the impact on your soul. If marriage ends before death, then someone has sinned (either the husband or wife or both).

We have all witnessed a marriage ceremony wherein a couple vow that they will stay together until death parts them. They pledge and promise to maintain the marriage. How many of those have we seen end within a few short years?

On the other hand, many marriages stay together. The couple never think of splitting up or even mentioning divorce. However, the marriage may not be what it ought to be. There may be years of unhappiness or to say the least many hours of frustration. These problems can possibly be prevented by asking a few questions before marriage.

To ask these questions requires honesty in answering them. To honestly answer these questions and then follow the wisdom that such answers demand will help insure years of happiness.

Let's consider a sampling of the kind of questions one should ask. Obviously, this list is not exhaustive, but give a person a sense of direction. You may think of more that need to be added to the list.

1) DOES THIS PERSON TRULY FEAR GOD?
This is far more than being baptized and going to

church all the time. The fear of God involves being afraid of displeasing God (Heb. 10:31; 12:29). It also involves having a deep awe and reverence for God (Lk. 7:16; Jonah 1:9). Those who fear will want to do just what God says, no matter what the consequences are (Gen. 22:12).

2) WILL THIS PERSON TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO FEAR GOD? What if he/she taught our children to be just like he/she is. Would that be all right with me? Would the children be walking in the fear of God?

3) WILL THIS PERSON HELP MAKE ME A STRONGER SPIRITUAL PERSON? Or will the spiritual strength of the family rest on my shoulders?

4) WHAT KIND OF HOME LIFE DOES THIS PERSON COME FROM? We are not suggesting that everyone who comes from a poor family life needs to be marked off the list of those who could marry. The point is that we often become just like the families we grew up on. The older we get we sometimes become more and more like the parents (or parent) who raised us. Does this person come from a home where respect is shown for God? Does this person come from a home where there is respect for one another? Does this person come from a home that is utter chaos? What if your home turns out to be just like the home he/she comes from? Would that be okay?

5) WHAT IS HIS/HER CONCEPT OF A HUSBAND, WIFE, FATHER, AND MOTHER? Do you even know? Wouldn't it be good to ask? What if he turns out to be the kind of husband and father that meets his concept? What if she turns out to be the kind of wife and mother that is like her concept?

6) **DOES HE HAVE INITIATIVE OR DRIVE TO BE A DILIGENT WORKER AND MAKE A DECENT LIVING?** Or, will I have to help with making the living or even see that the family is supported?

7) **WILL SHE BE A GUIDE TO THE HOUSE, A KEEPER AT HOME AND HANDLE THE CHILDREN AS SHE SHOULD?** Or, will I have to make the living and keep the house and handle most of the matters for the children?

8) **WILL HE/SHE BE DOMINATED BY HIS/HER FATHER, MOTHER OR PARENTS?** Will one of the parents seek to control him/her or our marriage? Many homes have been troubled because of in-law interference.

9) **WILL I BE MARRYING THE WHOLE FAMILY?** Certainly our attitude should be that as described by Ruth when she told Naomi that your people shall be my people. However, it is a legitimate question to ask of whether you will be marrying someone who has a family or will you be marrying the family. When we are married, will I feel that I am married to him/her or him/her and his mother or father?

10) **HOW WILL HE/SHE TREAT QUESTIONS THAT WILL ARISE WHEN TEACHING AND TRAINING OUR CHILDREN?** What will he/she do about letting the children go to the prom? What will he/she do about letting the children miss church services for sports or school related activities? How will he/she address the problem of modesty? Will he/she allow the children to do things that I would not want them to do?

11) **WILL HE/SHE HINDER MY SERVICE TO THE LORD?** Will he/she help me be more dedicated and devoted? Will I be helped to walk in the fear of God? Or, will he/she pull me back in my service?

12) **DOES HE/SHE TRY TO CHANGE IN**

AREAS WHEREIN I HAVE TALKED TO HIM/HER ABOUT IMPROVING? Have we discussed problem areas and yet he/she makes no effort to improve?

13) **WHAT IS HIS/HER ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILDREN?**

14) **WHAT IS HIS/HER ATTITUDE TOWARD MY ROLE AS A HUSBAND/WIFE AND FATHER/MOTHER?**

15) **DOES HE/SHE SHOW REAL LOVE TOWARD ME?** Does he/she really care about me?

16) **HOW WELL DOES THIS PERSON COMMUNICATE WHILE WE ARE DATING?** Does he/she share true feelings? Does he/she clam up and not talk? Can he/she disagree without getting mad?

17) **IS HE/SHE SPIRITUALLY MINDED? DO THEY SHOW SIGNS OF BEING SERIOUS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS?** Or, is he/she more interested in having fun?

18) **AM I ASSUMING THAT I CAN CHANGE THIS PERSON AFTER WE ARE MARRIED?** Am I counting on seeing some serious changes in attitude and behavior after the wedding?

19) **DOES HE/SHE SHOW SIGNS OF DENYING SELF OR IS HE/SHE INTERESTED IN DOING WHAT HE/SHE WANTS?** Does he/she talk a lot about self - more than about you?

20) **IS HE/SHE QUICK TEMPERED? DOES HE/SHE GET MAD QUICKLY?**

Perhaps there are many more questions. Surely, these will be helpful to young people as they consider dating and plans for marriage in the future.

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ARE ALL RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS TRUE?

Mike Webb

Many people believe that all religious teachings are true; that everyone can simply choose what they want to believe. What does the Bible teach? Are all religious teachings true?

1) **THE WAY THAT LEADS TO LIFE IS A NARROW WAY.** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Mt.7:13-14). If all religious teachings were true, then the way to heaven would be wide and well traveled. Every man could choose his own way to get to heaven. The fact that Jesus calls it narrow refutes the idea that all religious teaching is true.

2) **PAUL CALLED SOME RELIGIOUS TEACHING A LIE.** In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Th. 2:11-12). John said that “whosoever loves and practices a lie” will be left outside of heaven (Rev. 22:14-15). If some teaching is a lie, then all religious teachings are not true.

3) **THERE IS A SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND A SPIRIT OF ERROR.** John warned that we should not believe everything that we hear. He wrote, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 Jn. 4:1). We cannot believe everything that we hear because there are men who teach

things contrary to the truth. We should compare what we hear to the word of God. If it is in harmony with God’s word, it is truth. If it is different, then it is error. “By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 Jn. 4:6). If there is such a thing as “the spirit of error,” then all religious teachings are not true.

4) **THERE ARE FALSE TEACHERS.** Peter wrote, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1). These false teachers brought in “destructive heresies.” They taught opinions and doctrines contrary to the truth and caused the truth to be blasphemed (2 Pet. 2:2). If there are false teachers, then all religious teaching is not true.

5) **IT IS POSSIBLE TO GO BEYOND THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.** John wrote to the elect lady, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 Jn. 9-11). John was warning about teachers that were teaching things different than the doctrine of Christ. Such teachers should not be received because they are not teaching the truth, but teaching error. It is clear that all religious teachings are not true.

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CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION #1

Allan E. Martin

In Acts 17:24-26, the apostle Paul taught, as a foundation of faith, that God “made the world and all things therein,” and that He “made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” Opposed to this Biblical teaching is the concept of materialistic, naturalistic evolution — that naturalistic processes have produced the universe and life in the universe. The doctrine has philosophical consequences. If we believe that God did not create us, that we are just an advanced form of an animal, then there is the tendency to act like an animal.

The biological term “evolution” is defined in Merriam-Webster in two senses: (1) the historical development of a biological group (as a race or species); (2) a theory that the various types of animals and plants have their origin in other pre-existing types and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations.

First, Webster applies “evolution” to the development of variety within kinds of God’s creatures — like a race (Caucasian, African, or Asian – all man-kind), or like a species (dog, wolf, dingo — all dog-kind), and says that this is history. Jacob recognized that variety could be developed within a created kind, and developed a strain of strong, spotted cattle from existing cattle (Gen. 30:37-42).

Second, Webster applies “evolution” to the development of new types or kinds of creatures from pre-existing types (like birds from non-birds and humans from non-humans) – no direct evidence for that and so it is called “theory,” and is referred to as the “General Theory of Evolution.”

Evolution (the General Theory) is accepted and taught by many as “fact,” and is so stated to the public in dogmatic terms. Dr. Hermann J. Muller, Nobel Prize winner, says regarding the General Theory (the tree of life theory): “There are no hypotheses, alternative to the principle of evolution with its ‘tree of life,’ that any competent biologist of today takes seriously. Moreover, the principle is so important for an understanding of the world we live in and of ourselves that the public in general, including students taking biology in high school, should be made aware of it, and of the fact that it is firmly established even as the rotundity of the earth is firmly established.”

But there is another side to the issue, recognized even among evolutionists, that the public doesn’t normally get. Pierre Grasse, a famous French zoologist, wrote a book entitled “Evolution of living organisms.” In it he says: “Their success among certain biologists, philosophers, and sociologists notwithstanding, the explanatory doctrines of biological evolution do not stand up to an objective, in-depth criticism. They prove to be either in conflict with reality or else incapable of solving the major problems involved.” Theodosius Dobzhansky, a famous geneticist, said regarding Grasse’s book: “Now one can disagree with Grasse but not ignore him. He is the most distinguished of French zoologists... his knowledge of the living world is encyclopedic.” So, evolution is definitely not fact as some are saying.

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Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3).*

Seven Churches of Asia

John begins the book of Revelation with the Lord’s message to seven churches, known as the “seven churches which are in Asia” (Rev. 1:11). Read Revelation 2-3, find the names of the seven churches of Asia, and circle them below. Cross out the other names.

LAODICEA

SARDIS

COLOSSE

CHICAGO

JERUSALEM

SMYRNA

**7 Churches
of Asia**

BEERSHEBA

THYATIRA

EPHESUS

BABYLON

CORINTH

PERGAMOS

PHILADELPHIA

THESSALONICA

*“Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).*

Q

&

A

Bible Questions & Answers

Question: “Did God authorize the law of Moses, or did Moses just write his own opinions?”

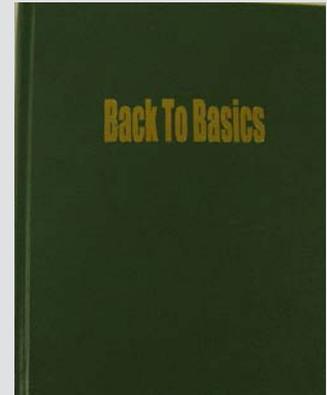
Answer: In regards to Matthew 19:7-8, some have concluded that Moses said this without God’s permission. The reference, in Matthew 19, is to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Do you mean to tell us that the words of Deuteronomy 24 are not of God? Look at them: “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Dt. 24:1-4). When the text says, “Moses suffered you to put away your wives,” some have concluded that Moses was just saying this without God’s sanction. Not so! God gave the law of Moses and Moses gave the law of God. Moses was the lawgiver. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17). God gave Israel the first covenant by Moses, as He gave the second, by Jesus Christ. Both are of God!

The law of Moses is the law of God. In regards to giving the law, it is said, “And God spake all these words, saying” (Ex. 20:1). Moses was just the “mouth” (Ex. 4:11-12,16) or prophet/spokesman for God as God chose Aaron to be the “mouth” for Moses; and he was called a prophet (Ex. 7:1-2). There is absolutely no difference in the law of God and the law of Moses, as some try to make a distinction. Please take a careful look at these references: “This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the *law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given....*” (Ezra 7:6). You see, God gave the law of Moses; it was not of Moses’s designing! David charged his son, Solomon: “And keep *charge of the Lord thy God*, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, *as it is written in the law of Moses*, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself....” (I Kgs. 2:1-3). Was this just the saying of Moses or was it from God? One reason folks make a distinction in the law of God and Moses is to try to get around God’s teaching concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage.

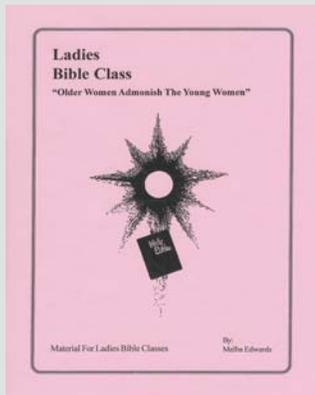
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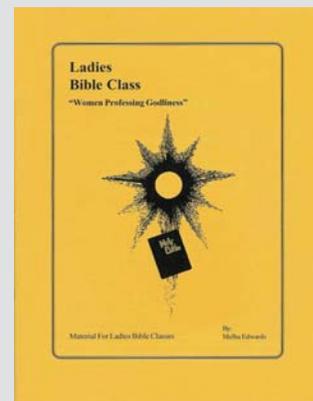
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