

Back To Basics

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Is DRINKING A SIN?

Johnie Edwards

Every once in awhile, a member of the church can be seen drinking alcoholic beverages. They may try to justify it by saying, "I don't believe in getting drunk, but see nothing wrong drinking socially!" So, we take a look.

1) **DRINKING IS A SIN.** A casual study of the Scriptures will soon tell us that getting drunk is a sin. Writing the Corinthians, Paul recorded a long list of sins, including "drunkards," and said these shall not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul told the Galatians that "drunkenness" is among the "works of the flesh." He then penned, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

2) **DRINKING IS AN OLD SIN.** Soon after Noah left the ark, the Bible says, "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered in his tent" (Gen. 9:20-21). Drinking led the ark builder to have no shame, being naked.

3) **DRINKING BRINGS ONE TO POVERTY.** All of us know of those whose drinking leads them to the bar on payday and get home with little or no money for their family needs. The

wise man wrote, "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty" (Prov. 23:21).

4) **DRINKING IS HABIT FORMING.** Want to read a Bible description of a drunk, when it gets the best of him? Read Proverbs 23:29-35. If you don't think it's habit forming, note: "when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again!" Did you read? "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

5) **DRINKING IS A DECEPTIVE SIN.** "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Drinking makes one think he can whip the world, and that all of his life's problems are forever gone. He only awakens to face his old problems plus those new created ones!

6) **DRINKING SOCIALLY IS A SIN.** After writing about "excess of wine" or "drunkenness," Peter refers to "banquetings" which means "drinking parties" (1 Pet. 4:3, NKJV). Those who think social drinking is okay, take note of this passage. Regardless of how men try to justify it, social drinking is a sin!



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."

THEY THAT WERE READY

Introduction

1. Read Matthew 25:1-13
2. The Scriptures place emphasis on being ready.

Discussion

I. **READY TO HEAR**

- A. Ecclesiastes 5:1-2
- B. James 1:19
- C. Ready to hear Christ (Mt. 17:5). He hath the words of life (Jn. 6:63, 68).
- D. Ready to hear the Word (Acts 13:7). Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17).

II. **READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL**

- A. Romans 1:15
- B. The gospel needs to be preached to every creature (Mk. 16:15).
- C. The gospel saves (Rom. 1:16), but it must be preached.

III. **READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK**

- A. Titus 3:1
- B. 2 Timothy 2:21

- C. The Scriptures furnish us unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

IV. **READY TO GIVE ANSWER**

- A. 1 Peter 3:15
- B. Colossians 4:6
- C. This emphasizes the importance of Bible study (2 Tim. 2:15).

V. **READY TO DISTRIBUTE**

- A. 1 Timothy 6:18
- B. Romans 12:13
- C. We need to be liberal in our distribution (2 Cor. 9:13).

VI. **READY TO DIE**

- A. Psalm 88:15
- B. Acts 21:13
- C. Death will come (Eccl. 9:5; 1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27). We must be ready!

Conclusion

1. "They that were ready went in with him" (Mt. 25:10).
2. Are you ready?

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IS EVERYTHING WORSHIP?

John Isaac Edwards

A preacher was heard to say that if he had to “dress up” for worship that he would have to wear a suit and tie all the time because everything we do is worship. When such statements are made, we obviously need to do some basic Bible teaching concerning worship.

1) **EVERYTHING WAS NOT WORSHIP FOR ABRAHAM.** Genesis 22 reports on God’s calling Abraham to offer his son for a burnt offering. Verse 5 records, “And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” If everything is worship, Abraham didn’t know it for he recognized that worship wasn’t being offered until “yonder.” If everything is worship, then Abraham was worshipping when he was rising up early, saddling his ass, cleaving wood, and going to the place of worship! Surely you know better than that.

2) **EVERYTHING WAS NOT WORSHIP FOR ELKANAH.** 1 Samuel 1:3 says of Elkanah, Samuel’s father, “And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.” I wonder why the Scripture plainly says that he went up out of his city to worship, if everything he did was worship? He wouldn’t have had to go, according to the thinking of some, because he would have already worshipped! The Scriptures often talk about folks coming and going to worship (Ex. 24:1; 1 Ki. 12:30; 2 Ki. 5:18; Acts 8:27). This shows that everything is not worship.

3) **EVERYTHING IS NOT WORSHIP FOR US TODAY.** Worship is spiritual. Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). In order for

everything to be worship, everything would have to be spiritual. The fact that we do some non-spiritual, physical things proves everything is not worship. Otherwise, I’m worshipping when I’m shaving, showering, eating, fishing, golfing, going to the bathroom – you name it! Come on now.

4) **SOME QUESTIONS.** Would this be true of vain worship? If you’re in a band and everything is worship, then are you using mechanical music in worship?

This is a drop in the bucket as to all that could be said about this. Need I say more?

Is Drinking A Sin? Johnie Edwards.....	1
The Sower’s Seed They That Were Ready.....	2
Is Everything Worship? John Isaac Edwards.....	3
Basic Commands For Wives Melba Edwards.....	4
Why We Believe Joe Corley.....	5
“Faith Only” Texts In Context Franklin T. Puckett.....	6
Interview With Head Of Episcopal Church David Halbrook.....	8
Practical Lessons From Genesis Donnie V. Rader.....	9
Is All Of Life Worship? Kevin Kay.....	10
Like A Tree Brian Wood.....	11
Dressing For Worship Harry Osborne.....	12
Kids Activity Page Aleisha Edwards.....	14
Bible Questions And Answers.....	15

BASIC COMMANDS FOR WIVES

Melba Edwards

The Bible gives some basic commands for wives. They may not be real popular today, yet they are commands from the Lord. From time to time, we need to be reminded of them. As a wife, I need to know what the Lord expects of me.

1) **WIVES ARE TO BE HELPERS.** In Genesis 2:18, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” *Help meet* simply means a helper suitable for man. Wives need to be helpers to their husbands. Remember the worthy woman in Proverbs 31:12. Shes does her husband good, not evil, all the days of her life.

2) **WIVES ARE TO RENDER DUE BENEVOLENCE.** We read this in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5. The NKJV uses the word *render the due affection*. The reason given is to avoid fornication. We don’t need to give our husbands any reason to look elsewhere for the affection that is due them.

3) **WIVES ARE TO SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS.** Wives are told to submit to their own husbands as unto the Lord (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). In Ephesians 5:24, wives are subject to their own husbands in everything, as the church is subject to Christ. *Submit* and *subjection* mean to set in array under. Christ, as the head of the church, does not expect us to do anything beyond our power or anything ridiculous, nor should our husbands. Colossians 3:18 reads, “as it is fit in the Lord.” *Fit* means to come up, be becoming, suitable. Certainly, God would

not expect us to submit to anything that would not be becoming or suitable to Him. Note also the phrase, “as unto the Lord.” Husbands are not perfect like Christ. But if I have this attitude of submitting as unto the Lord, it makes this command easier to fulfill. Note again wives are to be subject to their *own* husbands. In Titus 2:5, wives are to be obedient to their own husbands. If I am being the wife God would have me be, if I have an unbelieving husband, perhaps I can win him to Christ (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

4) **WIVES ARE TO REVERENCE THEIR HUSBANDS.** The wife is to see that she reverences or respects her husband (Eph. 5:33). We have an example of this given by Sarah in Genesis 18:12 and 1 Peter 3:6. She gave Abraham the respect due him. Wives need to respect their husbands as the head of the family.

5) **WIVES ARE TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS.** This is recorded in Titus 2:4. The best description of love is given in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Much time should be spent studying this Scripture and putting it into practice, especially in our marriages.

Many wives are in difficult situations that make it very hard to fulfill these commands. This ought not to be with Christians. Perhaps if we do these commands as wives, it will make it easier for our husbands to do the commands given them by the Lord. In Romans 12:18 we read, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

WHY WE BELIEVE

by
Joe Corley

In our first article, we discussed the true God as opposed to the many gods worshipped today. In this lesson, we will discuss why we believe in God.

Where did it all begin? How can we account for the universe and for life itself? Is it the product of chance? Some say it all started with a big bang. But what was there to explode and where did it come from? What caused it to explode, if such did happen?

We know that **something is**. We also know that **something cannot come from nothing**. Therefore, we must conclude that **SOMETHING ETERNALLY WAS!** What was that something? Was it a supernatural Being called God or something else? We believe everything began with **GOD!**

1) **THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNIVERSE ARGUES FOR AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR.** “For every **effect** there must be an adequate **cause**.” The existence of a house, car, or watch argues for a maker. We don’t have to **see** the maker to know such exists. The universe is here. How came it to be here? There are three possible explanations: (1) *It made itself*. Yet, this cannot be, for then it would have to exist before it existed! (2) *It is eternal*. Scientists have shown that the universe is expanding and running down. The laws of thermodynamics prove that all motion in the universe tends to slow down until it stops. If it were eternal, it would have already run down, for eternity is surely sufficient “time” for such to happen. That leaves us with the last explanation. (3) *It was made by a force external to itself*. That force we call

God. This explanation offers the only adequate **cause** for the **effect** we see.

2) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIVERSE POINT TO AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR.

A) **Design**. The universe shows intelligent design. Everywhere we look we see design – in the sun, moon, stars, and in the earth itself as it is perfectly suited for life. There is design seen in all forms of life, including the human body. **A design argues for a designer!**

B) **Law and Order**. The universe is governed by law and order. The behavior of planets above and of atoms and electrons beneath our feet are calculated by precise laws. There are laws relative to life and its procreation. **Law and order argues for a lawmaker!**

C) **Life**. The existence of life itself argues for a **living** Creator. The law of biogenesis that “life comes from life” proves this fact. How could life begin from non-life? Such would be nothing short of miraculous because it conflicts with natural law.

3) **RESULT OF CHANCE?** Chance alone cannot explain these things. The chances that the universe exists as a result of accidental occurrences is even less than if a beautiful well-styled and well furnished house accidentally resulted from an explosion at Home Depot or Lowe’s!

It is not our purpose in these articles to discuss the weaknesses of the theory of evolution, though much could be said about that. This we know: evolution cannot explain origins and it certainly cannot explain away God. In fact, it takes more faith to believe in the general theory of evolution than it does to believe that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

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"FAITH ONLY" TEXTS IN CONTEXT

Franklin T. Puckett, "Dead Yet Speaketh"

Martin Luther was a Catholic monk in Germany at the beginning of the 16th century. When John Tetzel came into Germany selling indulgences, Luther raised his voice in protest. The controversy gained heat as the days went by, and Luther finally nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Catholic church in Wittenberg, and challenged any Catholic anywhere to meet him in an open discussion of the same. Naturally, this brought down on his head the wrath of the Roman hierarchy. He was called before the dignitaries of the church, both civil and religious, and given his choice of recanting or being excommunicated.

Confronted with this choice, Luther made reply, "It is evident that the pope and the councils have frequently erred; and unless I can be persuaded by the text of scripture, or by the clearest reasoning therefrom, I cannot, I will not, recant." He stood firmly by his convictions, and was ultimately excommunicated from the Roman Church.

1) "**FAITH ONLY**" DOCTRINE BEGUN. So intense was Luther's hatred for Catholicism and everything connected with it that

when he was excommunicated, he swung to the other extreme, and began to emphasize the doctrine of salvation "by faith alone." This was in rebellion against the Catholic doctrine, of salvation by works. Determined to oppose and overthrow this doctrine, Luther let his prejudice blind him to the actual teaching of the scripture. He even went so far as to insert the word "alone" in his translation of Romans 3:28, making it read, "We know that a man is justified without the works of the law, by faith *alone*." That word "alone" is simply not in the original. Luther added it himself. Being unable to reconcile James' positive statements on the subject of faith with his own ideas of salvation by "faith only," Luther declared that James was uninspired! He rejected the book of James as being non-canonical.

Luther's doctrine has come down to this day, and is taught in the creed of nearly every denomination. The Methodist Discipline has it in Article IX; the Baptist Manual maintains it in Section 5. Other creeds of nearly all major denominations have it in one way or another. Denominational preachers proclaim it constantly. It is simply

impossible almost to listen to a denominational sermon on the radio without hearing the doctrine taught. The listeners are told to "only believe; kneel beside your radio; give your heart to Jesus, and you'll be saved this instant."

2) THE SCRIPTURES USED.

Nearly all the preachers who contend for the "faith only" theory of salvation go back to the personal ministry of Jesus to find their proof texts. The healing of the centurion's servant (Mt. 8) is a favorite. Concerning the faith of the centurion, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel...Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." A careful reading of the whole story is necessary to see exactly what happened. The centurion had come to the Master because his servant was grievously ill. He had desired that his servant might be healed. And in response to his request, Jesus said, "...so be it done unto thee." So be what done? Why, the thing he had requested – the healing of his servant. That is the thing he had asked, and that is what Jesus granted. There is not the

slightest hint that conversion, or remission of sins, or eternal salvation, is even hinted at in the passage. He had wanted his servant healed of a physical illness. And on the basis of the centurion's faith (not the servant's!) the miracle was wrought. Hard pressed indeed must be the man who will try to find the doctrine of "salvation by faith only" in such a passage!

Another favorite text is that which tells of the healing of the woman who had had an issue of blood for 12 years (Mt. 9). When the woman had pressed through the crowd, and had touched the hem of his garment, Jesus turned and said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Denominational preachers pounce upon this as a strong text in favor of the "faith only" idea, declaring emphatically that this woman was saved by faith, and by nothing else. But look at the text: this is a case of *physical healing*, not of salvation. Furthermore, even in this case the person was not healed by faith alone. She pressed through the crowd; she touched the hem of his garment. Her faith had expressed itself in an overt act. It was a faith that acted, that found an expression; hence, not "faith alone."

The story of blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10) is often used in an effort to uphold the "faith only" theory. "And

when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort; rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Those who read into the story an example of "faith only" fail to read verses 49 and 50. These verses plainly declare that the man (1) cast away his garment, (2) rose, and (3) came to Jesus. The blessing he received was not on the basis of faith alone, but was on the basis of a faith that obeyed, that acted. And even then, it was physical healing that he received, not salvation from sin.

Cases of this kind might be multiplied. And they are multiplied by denominational preachers. There is the palsied man of Mark 2. In this case there was involved the forgiveness of sins – but it is of small comfort to the "faith only" advocates, for the man who was healed and blessed received his blessing on the faith of his friends – the four

men who had carried him to Jesus, letting him down through the roof. For the record says, "And when Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Again, there is the ruler of the synagogue, whose story is told in Luke 8. His daughter was raised from the dead, but her resurrection was on the basis of her father's faith, not her own!

In all of these cases the pattern is much the same – men and women received physical healing or blessings of one kind or another, sometimes on their own faith, sometimes on the faith of others. But in every instance, when faith was involved, the blessing came after faith had expressed itself.

That is exactly the plan of salvation by which alien sinners are saved. They are saved by faith when faith expresses itself in obedience.

**DO NOT MISS
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INTERVIEW WITH HEAD OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH USA

David Halbrook

In the July 17, 2006 issue of *Time Magazine*, Jeff Chu interviewed Katharine Jefferts Schori, who is the Presiding Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church of the USA. Below are a few of the questions that she was asked, her answers, and some comments to consider.

1) WHAT WILL BE YOUR FOCUS AS HEAD OF THE U.S. CHURCH? *“Our focus needs to be on feeding people who go to bed hungry, on providing primary education to girls and boys, on healing people with AIDS, on addressing tuberculosis and malaria, on sustainable development. That ought to be the primary focus.”*

What ought to be the primary focus of the church? 1 Timothy 3:15 says the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Should empty stomachs, diseased bodies, or lost souls be the primary focus? Jesus did many things during His life on earth, but as Head of the New Testament church, what was His primary focus? “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). Free from what? Hunger, physical illness, and underdevelopment? John 8:34-36 answers, “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

2) WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON INTELLIGENT DESIGN? *“I firmly believe that evolution ought to be taught in the schools as the best witness of what modern science has taught us. To try to read the Bible literalistically about such disinvites us from using the best of recent scholarship.”*

Do we take Genesis 1:1 too literalistically if we believe that in the beginning God created

the heavens and the earth? Was Moses too literalistic when he taught the children of Israel “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Ex. 20:11)? Do we take Matthew too literalistically about such issues as Jesus’ virgin birth, death, and resurrection? Do we take Jesus too literalistically about such issues as salvation by teaching, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16)?

3) IS BELIEF IN JESUS THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO HEAVEN? *“We who practice the Christian tradition understand him as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully small box.”*

Let us ask Jesus, “Lord, do we put God in an awfully small box to say that salvation is only in You?” “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6). “Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Lk. 13:23-24). Did Peter “put God in an awfully small box” when he said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)?

Paul’s spirit was provoked in Athens, “therefore he reasoned” with the lost (Acts 17:16-17). Does this error make you angry? Then, do something – teach someone the truth!

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PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM GENESIS

Donnie V. Rader

For me, a study of Genesis is a rich and profitable study. Seeing how God built a nation for His purpose is impressive. The principles we learn are applicable to our life under the new covenant.

1) YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT (GEN. 38). The story of Judah and Tamar demonstrates that your sins will finally come to surface. How surprised Judah must have been when Tamar presented his signet, bracelet, and staff!

2) HOW TO AVOID FORNICATION (GEN. 39). Joseph took several measures to prevent immorality in his own life. He said, "No!" (v. 8). He remembered someone trusted him (v. 8). He remembered that fornication is sin against God (v. 9). He watched his behavior with the opposite sex (v. 11). He literally ran from the place of temptation (v. 12).

3) HOW WE DRESS TELLS OUR CHARACTER (GEN. 38). The fact that Tamar took off her widow's garments and wore clothing that indicated she was a harlot tells us that the way we dress tells our character. Many today, including some "Christians," dress like harlots!

4) ONE WHO WILL COMMIT ONE SIN WILL COMMIT ANOTHER (GEN. 39). Potiphar's wife wanted to engage in fornication with Joseph. When that failed, she lied about how his coat was left in her house. I learn that one who is willing to do one thing wrong will willingly commit another kind of sin. People like that can't be trusted.

5) GOD IS WORKING IN HIS PROVIDENCE WHEN WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S

HAPPENING. God's providence will not be seen any clearer than in the case of Joseph going to Egypt. Though Joseph later comes to understand this is the working of God (Gen. 50:20), surely he didn't see this when his brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites. Likewise, God may be working things out with me in His plans, yet I may not realize what God is doing or why.

6) SOME BEHAVIOR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IS ONLY PROPER FOR A HUSBAND AND WIFE (GEN. 26:8-9). When Abimelech saw Isaac caressing Rebekah, he knew she was his wife.

7) MEN LIE OUT OF FEAR (GEN. 20 & 26). Abraham and Isaac both told that their wives were their sisters because they feared what Abimelech and those under him might do. Men lie when they are afraid.

In many ways, things have not changed a lot since the days of Genesis.

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IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?

Kevin Kay

That's what some are saying. In his book, *Unbroken Bread*, Mike Root says, "Worship is a life given in obedience to God. It's not a when or where proposition, but a what. It's what we are. You can't go to it or leave it, dress for it or from it, and you can't start it or stop it...it doesn't open and close with a prayer, and it doesn't have a human leader or a special day" (p. 115).

The New Testament clearly teaches that a Christian is to present his body as "a living sacrifice" to God (Rom. 12:1-2) and do everything in the name of the Lord (Col. 3:17) and to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). It is also true that a Christian can and should worship God apart from those times when the church assembles together (Acts 16:25; Heb. 13:15). Does this mean, however, that all of life is worship?

Just a few examples in the Bible clearly illustrate that all of life is *not* worship. Abraham told his servants that he and Isaac would "go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you" (Gen. 22:5). God told Moses to "come up to the Lord...and worship from afar" (Ex. 24:1). After the death of his son, David "went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house..." (2 Sam. 12:20). The wise men came to Bethlehem to worship Jesus (Mt. 2:2) and when they found Him, they "fell down and worshiped Him" (Mt. 2:11). John "fell at his feet to worship" the angel (Rev. 19:10; 22:8). The Bible clearly teaches that worship has a beginning point (Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mk. 5:6; Jn. 9:38; Heb. 11:21) and an ending point (Lk. 24:52) and that worship does involve a "when" and a "where" (Jn. 12:20; Acts 8:27; 24:11).

In light of this kind of evidence, from where does this "all-of-life-is-worship" concept come? The proponents of this concept hang their hat on Paul's statement, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your *spiritual service of worship*" (Rom. 12:1, NASB; ESV, NIV, NRSV). Other translations say "which is your *reasonable service*" (KJV, NKJV) or "which is your *spiritual service*" (ASV). Although the original word translated "spiritual service of worship" (*latreia*) can refer to worship (Rom. 9:4; Heb. 9:1, 6), it more generally refers to service (Jn. 16:2; Lk. 1:74). In fact, the verb form (*latreuo*) is contrasted with the usual word for "worship" (*proskuneo*) (Mt. 4:10; Lk. 4:8; Rom. 1:25), suggesting a difference between the two. This evidence indicates that while all of life is *service*, not all of life is worship.

Brethren, some preachers are trying to affect radical change in the church as we know it today. The all-of-life-is-worship concept is a step in that direction. This concept, however, lacks divine foundation and must too be rejected.

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Special Issue:
Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage

LIKE A TREE

Brian Wood

Christians are described as several things throughout the Holy Scriptures. In the 25th chapter of Matthew, Christians are described as sheep. John 15 depicts Christians as branches. James 1 sets forth Christians as grass and flowers. But, in Psalm 1:1-3 we find that the Scriptures suggest that those who are righteous, striving to live the way Christ would have them to live, are described as trees. How are Christians like trees, one might ask.

1) **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE PLANTED IN CHRIST.** Romans 6:3-5 tells us how to be planted in Christ. Being baptized, buried with Christ, we have been planted, coming forth to live a new life, much like a seed planted, being buried, coming forth to live a new life, not as a seed anymore but as a tree.

2) **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE ROOTED IN CHRIST.** Trees have roots which run deep into the ground. The Holy Scriptures tell us that Christians must strive to be deeply rooted in Christ (Col. 2:7). It takes time for a tree to become deeply rooted in the ground. It also takes time for the Christian to become deeply rooted or established in the faith. Hebrews 5:12-14 shows us that the Christian life is a growing process that takes time.

3) **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE EVER GROWING IN CHRIST.** The Psalmist described a tree “planted by rivers of water.” That’s an excellent place for a tree to receive nutrients and grow. The law of nature demands that a tree planted in a place where it can receive nutrients must grow. God’s law demands that Christians must grow and desire to grow (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18).

If a tree is taken out of its native climate it will be very hard for it to grow. Christians are very much the same. It’s hard for some Christians to grow in certain environments (1 Cor. 15:33).

4) **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE BEAUTIFUL THINGS.** Trees are beautiful year round. In the spring, they are filled with colorful buds. In the summer, lucious green leaves fill their branches; in the fall, their lucious green leaves turn many different beautiful colors; and, in the winter, beautiful white snow and icicles cover the branches. Not very many things in nature stay beautiful year round. But nothing is more beautiful than a Christian living a godly life. Christians are to strive for this beauty. Romans 10:15 tells us that there is nothing more beautiful than preaching, teaching, and living a godly life.

5) **CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE FRUITFUL.** Trees are fruitful things; bring forth fruit, leaves, and seeds. As God’s children, we should be bringing forth fruit to Him. Sadly, many are not striving to be fruitful. Christians must beware of being unfruitful. Matthew 3:10 tells of the end of unfruitful trees.

Christians are to strive to be like the tree in Psalm 1:3. This tree is planted by the waters in Christ and ever strives to be rooted and growing in Christ so as to become the beautiful and fruitful Christian He desires us to be.

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DRESSING FOR WORSHIP

Harry Osborne

In all aspects of life, we must reflect godliness in our conduct, showing honor and respect for God in every way. The Bible clearly states that our dress manifests either a godly manner of life that gives honor to God, or a conduct and character lacking such (1 Tim. 2:8-10; Mt. 22:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Ex. 19:10-13). Men and women are both responsible for dressing properly in daily living. This article will show that the Bible gives principles that further qualify our manner of dress in coming before God in worship. According to Scripture, ascribing unto the Lord the glory due unto His name is related to worshipping Him in “holy array” (1 Chr. 16:29; Ps. 29:1-2; 96:8-9). At least three principles help us understand the nature of that “holy array” related to showing the commanded respect for God:

1) **WORSHIPPING THE LORD “IN HOLY ARRAY” DEMANDS MODESTY IN OUR DRESS.** In 1 Timothy 2, the inspired writer exhorts all regarding acceptable prayer in worship to God. He ties with it an exhortation requiring men to lift up “holy hands” in prayer (v. 8). The point is not to mandate a posture or gesture for acceptable prayer, but to emphasize that acceptable prayer must come from one of proper *conduct* (represented by the word “hands”). The word “holy” defines the nature of that conduct. “Holy” conduct is a pattern of action that is “religiously right, holy, as opposed to what is unrighteous or polluted;...associated with righteousness” (*W.E. Vine, Dictionary of NT Words*). The very next verse begins to exhort women with the words, “in like manner” (v. 9). The *like* manner is obviously the manner of *holy conduct* that is equally incumbent on men and women who would worship God acceptably. In the case

of women, the holiness specified is dressing “in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety...which becometh women professing godliness” (vv. 9-10, ASV).

But what is required for one to be clothed in “modest (decent or orderly) apparel” exemplifying “shamefastness” (a sense of shame rooted in character) “and sobriety” (sound mind and judgment, self-controlled, careful or cautious)? Are there clear principles that lead us to identify such clothing and its opposite? Or are we left with no way to discern such, leaving each person to be a law to himself in this realm? Careful consideration of New Testament instruction regarding proper dress, when examined in light of the background given in Old Testament principles “written for our learning” will help the honest student seeking holiness to see that God has given sufficient instruction for us to identify the difference between acceptable and unacceptable clothing (Rom. 15:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

When we sum up what the Scriptures teach regarding shameful nakedness, it is the result of having either the loins, buttocks, breasts or thighs uncovered (Gen. 3:10; Ex. 28:42; Is. 47:1-3; 20:4; Ex. 16:7-8). If we respect God’s teaching through the Word, we will not dress in shorts, midriff-bearing tops, plunging necklines and sleeveless garments that leave easy view of parts of the body which should be fully covered. The same is true of tank tops, miniskirts, skirts with high slits, shirts unbuttoned to reveal the chest or skin-tight garments that merely put a thin veneer on the bodily form – whether male or female. Since such clothing should never be worn by Christians that respect God’s will, they should obviously not be worn to approach God in worship.

2) **WORSHIPPING THE LORD “IN HOLY ARRAY” DEMANDS REFRAINING FROM A MATERIALISTIC SHOW IN OUR DRESS.** In the midst of the inspired warnings about “modest” and “chaste” clothing, the inspired writers condemn the “costly raiment” of opulence (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). Why? No doubt, part of the reason is that the costly apparel of the first century was the silk fashions which Pliny said “render women naked” and others called clothes “made of glass” (*Robert Collen, East to Cathay: The Silk Road, 44-46*). Such fashions were not only a problem with women, for Tacitus says in the reign of Tiberius a law was passed against “men disgracing themselves with silken garments” (*Annals, ii., 33*). Yet, their revealing nature is not the only thing wrong with such clothes. Even to worldly Roman writers, the waste and extravagance to such clothing was seen as an exhibition of self-indulgence. The many warnings of our Lord concerning the tendency of wealth to corrupt and take our minds off of spiritual things gives the divine basis for all to take heed of the same problem (Mt. 19:16-24; 6:19-33; Mk. 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30; 12:13-21; 16:14-15; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19).

3) **WORSHIPPING THE LORD “IN HOLY ARRAY” DEMANDS SHOWING PROPER HONOR AND RESPECT IN OUR DRESS.** While some suggest a meek and lowly spirit in worship can best be shown by wearing the casual dress of daily life, Matthew 22:11-13 shows otherwise. The one who came to the wedding in everyday wear, without a “wedding garment,” was condemned by the king. If the spiritual principle of the parable is to have any meaning, we must understand the physical truth that there is a difference between everyday clothing and clothing that shows a special respect or honor. Coming before God’s throne in worship should cause saints to show special honor to God (Is. 6; Rev. 4-5). The Psalmist’s plea to “ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto His name” is immediately followed by the

instruction, “Worship Jehovah in holy array” (Ps. 29:2). Reading Exodus 28 and Exodus 39 causes us to see that the “holy garments” in which the Levitical priests approached God in worship were not the casual clothes of everyday life. They were special garments showing respect and devotion to God. Sectarians wrongly use such passages to justify special garments for the clergy. But who are the priests in the gospel age? All Christians are (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). Our service in conduct and dress should exemplify our honor and respect for God today as well. Does this suggest we bind the exact garments that the Levitical priests wore? No, not any more than modest clothing binds the exact styles of those in Bible times to cover nakedness. But the principle taught must be respected.

When a man approaches the Lord’s table in tattered blue jeans and a rumpled T-shirt, does it exemplify the honor due God? When a woman approaches God in worship wearing the same casual dress she might wear at Wal-Mart, does it suggest a high degree of respect for God? Would either wear such to a wedding or to meet the President? While we should not write a dress code for worship, binding where God did not, neither should we justify laxness in dress that fails to show the honor and respect due God as we ascribe glory to Him. Respectful clothing need not be expensive to distinguish it from daily wear. Old farmers had their “Sunday-go-to-meeting” overalls that differed in cleanliness and wear from their everyday ones. They rightly understood and applied the principle taught – so should we.

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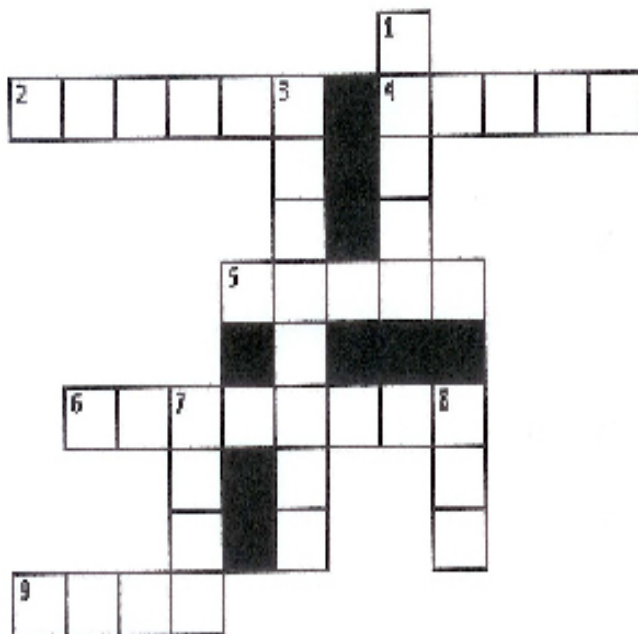
Aleisha Edwards

Two Faithful Spies

(Numbers 13 & 14)

Choose The Right Answer

1. Moses chose _____ spies.
A) 12 B) 10 C) 5
2. The spies went into _____.
A) Jericho B) Canaan C) Sodom
3. _____ spies brought an evil report.
A) 4 B) 10 C) 2
4. _____ brought back a good report.
A) Joshua & Caleb B) Palti & Geuel



1 Down "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the __ of it" (Num. 13:27).
3 Down "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are __ than we" (Num. 13:31).
7 Down "And Moses by the commandment of the __ sent them from the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 13:3).
8 Down "Send men to __ out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel" (Num. 13:2).
2 Across "And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of __" (Num. 13:23).
4 Across "Only __ not ye against the Lord" (Num. 14:9).
5 Across "And they returned from searching of the land after __ days" (Num. 13:25).
6 Across "If the Lord __ in us, then He will bring us into this land" (Num. 14:8).
9 Across "So they went up, and searched the __" (Num. 13:21).

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

Question: *“I hear some teaching that man already has eternal life here and now, and that he can do nothing to lose it. Does the Bible teach this?”*

Answer:

I wish I could tell you that this is true, but it is not. The Bible does not teach such a false doctrine. So, we take a look at what the Bible has to say about this subject.

1) **ETERNAL LIFE IS IN THE WORLD TO COME.** As Jesus discussed this He said, “There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; **and in the world to come eternal life**” (Mk. 10:29-30). Eternal life is not for the here and now, but is in the world to come.

2) **ETERNAL LIFE IS IN HOPE.** Writing Titus, Paul penned, “**In hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Ti. 1:2; 3:7). One who has obeyed the gospel has the hope of eternal life. Are you aware that we do not yet have that for which we hope? Paul told the Romans, “For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:24-25).

3) **ETERNAL LIFE IS IN THE FORM OF A PROMISE.** Eternal life was promised “before the world began” (Ti. 1:2). As Paul discussed profitable and unprofitable exercise, he stated that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having **promise** of the life that now is, and of that **which is to come**” (1 Tim. 4:7-8). The Holy Spirit said, “And this is the **promise** that he **promised** us, even **eternal life**” (1 Jn. 2:25). Eternal life is a promise yet to be realized.

4) **ETERNAL LIFE HAS BEEN GIVEN.** Men twist passages like John 10:27-29 to teach that men already have eternal life and cannot be lost. What about this passage? It is true that when men are in Christ, they have the hope and promise of eternal life (1 Jn. 5:11). Man, by disobedience, can lose that hope and promise just as the Hebrew writer warned in Hebrews 4:1. One will not perish **if** he will “continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel...” (Col. 1:23). Salvation is divided into two parts: salvation from past sins (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16) and “salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:5, 9).

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