

Question Night - August, 2006
www.cvillechurch.com

Introduction: Questions can be profitable to cause us look anew at the Bible and make applications to this life.

A. As we discern we need to see the difference in good and evil. **(Heb 5:12-14)**

1. Satan does not label things as "sin" or "evil." If he does place a label it would be as "good," and "acceptable to God." **(Isa 5:20-21)**

2. We must make these judgments or experience the consequences!

B. In the last month I have received several questions from our website (www.cvillechurch.com) that I decided to use for our question night.

I. Questions on Hebrews 10:25

Does Heb. 10:25 include all services, or just the First Day of the Week? Some say that it includes all of the following: Sunday Bible Study, Regular Morning Worship, Sunday Evening, and Wednesday Evening, while others say it should include Ladies Bible Study, Men's Business Meetings, Congregational Meetings, all the days of a Gospel Meeting, or any time there is a "church" meeting of any kind.

Answer: Hebrews 10:25 is a general statement concerning assemblies of Christians.

1. How does a local church determine the kind and frequency of its assemblies?

2. There is a weekly assembly that is required by the Lord

(1 Cor 16:2; Acts 20:7)

3. All assemblies of Christians require some kind of decision making process, or, in other words, a leadership **(Heb 13:17).**

a. You cannot have an assembly without a place and time!

b. There are decisions that a leadership may make that obligate every member to obey.

c. A local leadership may have assemblies that are "required" and some that are "optional."

4. The best appeal to Christians concerns their heart and motives. **(2 Cor 8:1-5)**

Also, should missing Bible Study, Sunday Evening and Wednesday Evening be construed serious enough for disfellowshipping? If so, where is the scriptures for these meetings (there is no question about the morning worship on the First Day of the Week)?

Answer: Any sin that a person walks in without repentance can subject one to being "marked" by a local church. **(2 Thess 3:6).**

1. We also should make a distinction concerning how quickly we act

(Jude 22-23).

2. In the cases where I have been a part of such discipline, the individual had completely stopped attending and also recognized that they were in sin.

Also, are we putting ourselves in the same class of people as the Pharisees (making laws where God has not made) and using them as a test of fellowship?

Answer: Among the sins of the Pharisees was the making of man-made laws **(Mt 15:3-6, 8-9)**, but their greater sin involved the pride and blindness of their hearts

(Mt 23). There is a big difference between a local church making essential decisions concerning the edification of Christians (**Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17**) and the man-made laws of the Pharisees.

1. I have known of proud, hard-hearted “Christians” that proclaimed their “rights” to attend only the service that the Lord’s Supper was offered.
2. In this case, the one who called others “Pharisees” was actually the “Pharisee” himself.

II. Questions concerning steps to a compromised fellowship

1.) How do bad personal experiences influence a preacher to make steps toward a wider fellowship?

Answer: It is not just preachers that are affected by this. Bitterness, when allowed into the heart, will destroy faith over time (**Heb 12:14-15**)

1. In my experience this has been the primary cause of apostasy within those I have known.
2. Uncontrolled anger can indeed bring you under the control of Satan. (**Eph 4:25-26**)

Reactionary Apostasy

Here is a situation that isn't hypothetical. It is common, thus Worthy of our attention.

• In a local church where there is a history of objection to the sponsoring church arrangement and other unauthorized innovations, *war* breaks out. Brethren "bite and devour one another," and the ugly/ result is "envy and self-seeking . . . confusion and every evil thing" (Gal. 5:15; Jas. 3:16). There is a division, perhaps followed by another; snide, sarcastic remarks. Preachers are fired, elders resign, members are agitated and a cold sterile atmosphere takes hold.

In the midst of this turmoil, as impatience and disgust turns into bitterness there are some who just quit. They join a nearby liberal church, enter into the mainstream of Protestant denominationalism or entirely give up the matter of religion. Though I'm not altogether satisfied with this description, I'm going to call this: *reactionary apostasy*.

Reactionary apostasy is usually accompanied by a statement some thing like these: "I'm fed up with conservative churches of Christ," or "There has got to be something wrong with 'conservative church of Christ' religion." --- **Warren E. Berkley**

2.) What book would someone have read if they really thought the true practice of the 1st century Lord's Supper was a common meal that was shared during the service?

Answer: It would not be the Bible that encouraged that view. The scriptures teach the very opposite (**1 Cor 11:17-22, 34**)!

1. There are at least 2 popular books that teach these things, “**Come** to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper” by Mark Hicks and “Radical Restoration” by LaGard Smith. (See Terry Benton’s review of “Radical Restoration” at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheyPromiseLiberty/message/74>)
2. I believe that this and other faddish positions are a product of associations rather than careful Bible study (**1 Cor 15:33**)

3.) Should someone think a false teacher is only a person who has insincere motives in their teaching?

Answer: I believe that a false teacher commonly has both heart issues and doctrinal issues. Sometime the scriptures address both (**Jude**), and sometime just the doctrine is addressed (**Rev 2:14-15**).

1. We can have discussions about what the scriptures mean when we use the term “false teacher.”
2. We need to be clear about what to do when false doctrine is freely allowed to be taught under the banner of “openness.” That spirit is not openness by rather one of pride (**1 Cor 5:1; 2 Cor 11:1-4, 18-21**)

4.) Should we think that non-instrumental music in worship is a logical and natural conclusion from the N.T.?

Answer: I do believe that opposition to instrumental music is a natural outcome of an understanding of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the completeness of the scriptures (**Luke 6:46; Jn 12:48; Col 3:17**)

1. Please follow the outlines and discussion from our current study of the local church at: <http://www.uvachurch.com/WhatToExpect.htm>

5.) Considering men that have moved away from the faith, which you have known personally, what were the warning signs in their public preaching? I would like to call them veiled subtleties that leave you uneasy after hearing the sermons.

Answer: There are several symptoms that I have observed. All of these are a natural product of pride.

1. A magnifying and glorying over the faults of brethren.

2. Quickly writing off others as unworthy of study and therefore to be avoided.

When Satan's “grace” is involved, there will be quick judgments about others. Many are quickly labeled as unworthy of study, particularly if they have displayed a strong faith and knowledge of God's word. However, those who are struggling and separated from other Christians are often approached in private about these new views (**2 Peter 2:1**).

3. A lack of honesty concerning their true beliefs.

Those who are motivated by Satan's wisdom have learned to lie. They have as their goal to bring as many into their party as possible and in any way they can. If a false impression about their own beliefs would keep a knowledgeable Christian from questioning them and thus give them more time to work behind the scenes, then they will do that very thing. If they can misrepresent what another Christian believes so they can pull another Christian into their group, then they will do that too (**Gal 4:17**).

4. A heart filled with anger and bitterness.

We must know the difference between these philosophies. From my personal experience, I have found most that have used God's grace as a weapon have hearts that are filled with anger and bitterness. Sadly, if given time, they will fill their disciples with this same spirit. Keep your eyes open and see if it is God or Satan that is behind these teachings.

http://www.uvachurch.com/Articles/Article_TurningTheGraceOfGodIntoACarnalWeapon.htm

III. Questions about denominational baptism

Yet I do think it is possible that there are those Baptists who believe baptism to be a part of salvation -- even if the preacher who is baptizing them doesn't. Does the "baptizer's" heart have anything to do with the one being baptized's salvation?

- A. Before one can be baptized one must:
 - 1. Have heard the word of the Lord. **(Acts 16:31-33)**
 - 2. Have believed in Jesus as the Son of God. **(Mark 16:15-16)**
 - 3. Have repented of their sins. **(Acts 2:38)**
 - 4. Have confessed with the mouth that Jesus is Lord. **(Rom 10:9-10)**
 - 5. If even one of these steps are left out the one being baptized has gotten wet. He has yet to receive scriptural baptism.
- B. I do not know of any requirement for the one doing the baptism.
 - 1. How I can know for sure what is in one's heart?
 - 2. There are human doctrines in denominations that make it impossible for one to know that they have a scriptural baptism (Ex. Apostolic succession and an "authorized clergy)

I do realize that all the examples we have in the New Testament are of believers doing the baptizing. Is that a necessary inference?

- A. These are examples that we should attempt to imitate. I would only seek out a Christian, but, as we have already noted, we cannot know for sure!
- B. I personally was baptized in the Baptist church and later concluded that it was insufficient **(Acts 19:1-5)**

Conclusion: Let us place our focus upon God and not upon men.
(Rom 3:4; Gal 1:10)