

Learn Your Bible

Lesson #12

We have journeyed through the scriptures noting both the comfortable and the uncomfortable subjects indiscriminately. We have seen the followers of God at their best and at their worst.

The obvious intent of studying the scriptures is to learn the ways of God and better our lives by application of this knowledge.

How may we answer the questions of life and godliness that may come up in the future? The times and seasons do change, as do the fine points of the questions before each generation. I note the “fine points” because the underlying basic questions remain the same.

We live in a time that society as a whole is paying the price for experimenting with, (rejecting) the laws of God. Often the results are interlocking. For example... it is illegal to teach that God created the world. Our children are taught in the schools that they are in the image of an ape. The result? A generation has arisen that believes they are animals, so they act like it! Discipline is also out of style (lesson 13). We didn't lock up enough criminals...therefore it wasn't long before we were unable to build prisons fast enough for the ones we (suddenly) recognized needed to be locked up.

Many churches have lost faith in the appeal of gospel (salvation from sin). Now many promote their childcare above their worship. The prowess of their sports team is promoted above the level of their Bible study.

The church has been torn by a group of people deciding to go beyond scripture... If God didn't forbid them outright to do something they charge full steam ahead! We will soon be having sermons picturing Jesus hanging on the cross and dying for the sake of our children. That sounds great doesn't it? Dying to establish free childcare and a Church of Christ ball team!

No it doesn't sound good... This behavior undermines the seriousness of sin and the incredible price paid to establish the church. Today conservative Christianity is ridiculed on all fronts... That's ok, “if God is for us who can be against us?”

Note the incident below. David came up with a good idea in the service of God. He wanted to build the temple. God asks David the questions we should also ask. The ones David didn't ask or forgot to ask.

Let's see... Should the church have a drinking fountain, a parking lot, a choir, instrumental music, a central organization, a pope, head elder, women preachers or elders, baseball team, garage sale, fund-raiser, schools, day care, operate like a bank, business, etc. A local Christian church had a carnival recently! Pick any subject and make the choice... you can answer with tradition we've always done it, what **you** want, or what **God** wants.

The Episcopalians have decided to have "gay" priests because it's what **they** want. Can we say anything if we make our decisions in the same way (albeit on a smaller scale)? Do you have the courage to ask God's questions? It's somewhat difficult to take issue with the list of questions below... **if** you believe that the Bible is the word of God.

Let's ask the questions God asked... and see if we have the courage to implement the answers before our great grandkids ordain "gay" elders in the Church of Christ!

2 Samuel 7

1. Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies,

Note, this has always been the time of greatest danger for the people of God... during times of rest, with no defined enemy. That's when we have always had the big ideas and better ways to serve God.

2. that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."

This really is a good idea, and sound reasoning isn't it? How can David keep a straight face and dwell in a house of cedar? How is it a good thing that God doesn't have the same things going for Him that the people of the world have?

3. Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you."

This is not a question of the godliness of the men involved. Two godly men have evaluated this "good idea" and it sounds great! Sound familiar? This is how the church got a ball team! This is how we got an organ! And if we keep on, it is how we'll embrace homosexuals... right now it's offensive but if we keep on "not judging" what God has judged... we'll soon arrive!

4. But in the same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,

The crucial mistake here is that both men forgot to **ask God for His opinion** before they decided this was a good idea! Did your church ask God before they built a kitchen? (I Corinthians 11:22 “What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.”) God has given His opinion! He has also given his opinion on women preachers, and elders (I Timothy 1:12. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.)

5. "Go and say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?"

When did we decide the church shouldn't ask this question? God obviously wants us to ask, “Is this the church's job?” Should the church have a hospital, ball team, choir, or an “in-house” restaurant? Sometimes the answer is yes... Sometimes no. God demands that we ask!

6. "For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle.

Note that God is not bothering to ask a question here... He is making a statement to the effect that you have no example. Based on this statement I would note that we should ask the question, **“Do we have an approved example to base our authority on?”** Did the church of the NT set up a central bank... Like the Roman Catholics have? Can one congregation hold the deed for (rule over) another congregation?

7. "Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' "

God is asking question #3. **“Did I ask for this?”** This is obviously the same as asking for a direct command.

Note the implied law of silence kicking in here. We could look further into Hebrews 7 for this to be spelled out. When God asks question #3 if the answer is “no...” doesn't it mean something? Doesn't it mean “leave it alone?”

8. "Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel.

9. "I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.

10. "I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly,

God is kind here. He loves David but the point is none the less clear... Be happy with the lot in life that God gave you. The church is not the government! It is not the world's welfare agency. It is not the family ("church must not be burdened, so that it may... I Timothy 5:18). Note that God is asking the same things anti's ask. This refusal to ask and answer God's questions... has allowed the churches to go in directions that have to be appalling to God. For example... entertainment, carnivals etc!

11. even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

David, you have been walking on God's turf... God wants to make a house for you, not you make a house for God. This reminds me of the apostle Paul's comment (For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:16). We find ourselves trying to lead or teach God rather than the other way around.

12. "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

13. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

14. "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

This is perhaps the most important reference for us in our day and time. God does want the temple built. It is a good work. These two godly men are right about seeing the need for the work. God

just wants someone other than them to do it. God is God! God has the right to make His decisions. Can we learn to be content with God's decisions? Can we learn to allow Him to lead? It is this question that led to all the division in the kingdom. It is the answer that we give to this question that has caused people to blindly follow along generation after generation, each moving further and further from the truth! If it is someone else's job other than the church who are we to question? Not every job belongs to the church!

15. but My loving kindness shall not depart from him, as I took {it} away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

16. "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.""

17. In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

Tragically gone are the days when men of God open their Bibles to answer all these questions. This principle is in fact how we find ourselves refusing to speak where God has spoken... Because we have refused to observe His silence where He was silent!

18. Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? (Indeed! Who am I? Or who are you? If God speaks, or doesn't!)

19. "And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.

20. "Again what more can David say to You? (Amen! What more can we say?) **For You know Your servant, O Lord GOD!**

21. "For the sake of Your word, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness to let Your servant know.

God has
let us
know



the critical question is whether we will listen. You can find the same principles of authority in Acts 15, although they are not spelled out as

clearly. This observation is important because we live under the NT. The underlying principles of authority in the service of another (God in this case) are timeless, however.

Good ideas (regardless of who comes up with them) must be questioned on a logical basis. 2) Are you (the church etc) “the one for this job (the one who should)? 3) Did the NT church do this (example) 4) Did God ask for it (speak a word)? 5) If the answer is no... be satisfied with what He has said! 6) God may want a good work done... by someone else (a bank for example). 7) When God has made His decision what more can we say... but thank God for letting us know!

“Come and eat our chicken in the fellowship hall” rather than “as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2).

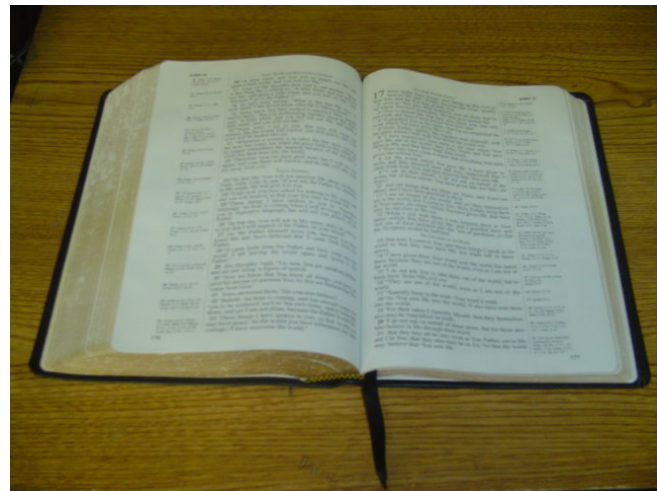
It is easy to throw rocks. We must avoid living in a glass house. “You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?” (Romans 2:21) Looking to the future, let’s make an incident from our past our focal point for this study. Please Read II Sam 7 & I Chronicles 17:1-18.

1) Today no one is openly persecuting Christians (in this part of the world) II Sam 7:1 How is this similar to our story? _____

2) What particular dangers do wealth and peace hold? I Chronicles 17:1

3) Were David and Nathan both godly men? _____ Were they seeking to do “great things” for God?

4) What “new thing” did **they** think needed done? _____



5) What does God actually **want** of us? Rom 12:1,2 _____

6) What did God say to them? I Chronicles 17:3-6 _____

7) When dealing with the future questions of life, is it appropriate to ask “did God say we **can’t**?” _____ Is it just as appropriate to ask “did God say we **should**?” _____ Did David ask whether **HE** should? _____

8) Is there a difference between the questions of “Can we” and “Should we”? _____

9) Previous to David and Nathan deciding to build the temple had God forbidden anyone to build a temple for Him? _____

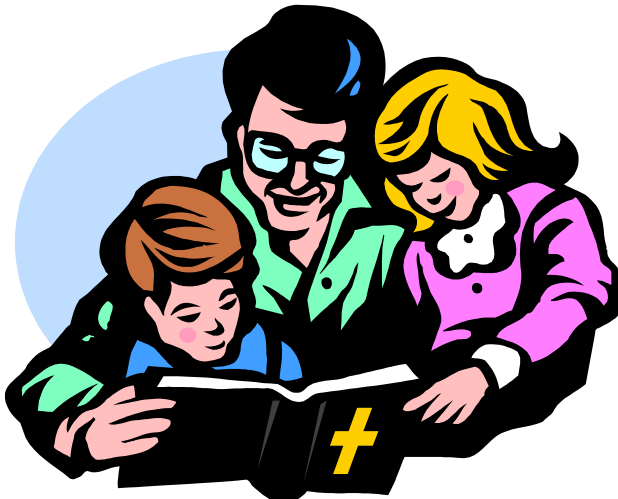
9a) When did God say **they** couldn’t build the temple? _____

10) When will our next revelation from God come? Jude 3, Revelation 20:11-15 , Revelation 22:18-19 _____

b) Can we afford to wait until then to find out if God approves of our actions and innovations? _____

11) What question does God himself ask of David & Nathan? I Chronicles 17:6, II Samuel 7:7 _____

12) What New Testament promise is made to us? II Timothy 3:16,17



b) Key in on the comment about scripture completely furnishing us. If we want to establish a “Church of Christ” daycare, where should we be able to find the instructions?

c) If those instructions are not found in scripture and we believe this is the work of the church and proceed anyway... What are we

saying about Paul's promise? _____

13) According to Jesus, (in the judgment) What will be the failure of the majority of those claiming the name of Christ? Matthew 7:21-29

14) Did God want the temple to be built? I Chronicles 17:11-14

15) Does God care about when things are done? Galatians 4:4

16) Does when it is done, affect whether God approves of it? Acts 19:1-5 _____

17) Does God care about who does a thing? _____

18) Is it appropriate to first ask if a thing needs to be done, then to ask who should do it? _____

19) In addition to being godly men & knowledgeable men, David and Nathan were also both _____.

20) What was their one failure in considering this matter? _____

Each generation must ask and answer the question of how may I best serve God and find the abundant life offered by Jesus Christ. (John 10:10) "If a man love me, he **will** keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23)

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my



Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, that your joy might be full." (John 15:10-11).

As we come to grips with all the unknowns that might arise we will do well to rely on Jesus' promise and warning "I am the way the truth and the life. No one cometh to the Father but by me." John 14:6

What is the will of God for you? In this life... "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work unto judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

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