

GOD CARES “HOW”

David Halbrook

God preserved the Old Testament to help us understand who He is. That knowledge is lacking today, evident by those who think “God does not care about how we do things, as long as we do them for Him.” Is that true? Ask:

1. Nadab & Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2) These priests offered incense *before the Lord*, but they used fire which “God had not commanded” and were punished. God paid attention to “how” they offered incense.

2. Moses (Numbers 20:7-12) God told Moses to speak to the rock (to provide water for Israel). Moses went to the rock but hit it, and God punished him. God paid attention to “how” Moses used the rock.

3. David (1 Chronicles 13, 15) God permitted Israel to move the ark and taught them “how” to do it (15:2). When they moved the ark in a different way, tragedy struck causing David to ask “How can I bring the ark of the Lord...?” Later he learned, *the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order* (15:2, 13).

Learn to seek God’s permission before you act. God cares what you do and how you do it.

-- *Editor’s Note:* A lack of knowledge of the Old Testament leaves us void of an understanding of the character of God. Use our article in *Arkansas Weekly* to help someone to understand this part of God’s character. This is laying some groundwork for upcoming articles.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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“LORD, IS IT I?”

Connie Adams

And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? (Matthew 26:19-22). The succession of events was rapidly unfolding. The dreaded hour of which Jesus had told them hovered over them like an ominous cloud. What would be the end of these things? How could Jesus even think that one of them would betray him into the hands of enemies. The question they raised, one by one, was as if each one were saying “Lord, please say I am not the one to do such a terrible thing.” Verse 25 shows that when Judas said “Master, is it i?” then Jesus said unto him “Thou hast said.” This indicates that each of them asked him privately, or out of the hearing of others. Soon after that, Judas left them with the others not knowing what he intended to do.

None of us was present that night. None of us made the evil bargain with the Jewish rulers. None of us put the money in his pocket. None of us led the temple guards to the garden to arrest Jesus. None of us placed the betrayer’s kiss on his cheek. And yet, it is possible that any one of us could have done it. Was Judas the last man in history to sell his soul for money? The Hebrew writer spoke of those who “fall away” and who refuse to be renewed again “unto repentance” and said they “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6). The same writer described the willful sinner “who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29).

To this may be added the warning of Paul “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12) Peter cautioned “beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. (2 Peter 3:17). Peter said “Judas by transgression fell” (Acts 1:25). What about us?

There are practical implications of the question, “Lord, Is It I?” It is not, “Lord is it George, or Bill, or Susan or Ellen?” Let every one examine self to see if he be faithful (2 Cor. 13:5).

“THE CHURCH IS NOT GROWING AS IT SHOULD.” “Lord, is it I?” Am I the reason the church is not growing as it should? “Well, we need more elders, deacons, teachers, preacher.” Are YOU willing to qualify and serve? Are you willing to be the helpful companion to one who wants to serve? How many men have been hindered from such work because of wives who were not in subjection and children who were rebels? “Yes, but we are just not baptizing as many as we should.” The Lord said the taught are to be baptized (Matt. 28:18-19). How many have YOU taught? How many have you ever handed a gospel tract? How many have you ever invited to study in your home? How many have you invited even to gospel meetings? “Well, the community does not know this church exists.” Is the church no made up of people? Do these people have no influence? Do they not all work somewhere? Do not some go to school in the community? Are not Christians engaged in businesses in the community? Is all of that light under a bushel? “Lord, is it I?”

“THE PEOPLE ARE NOT FRIENDLY” “Lord, is it I?” Am I the one who turns and looks the other way to keep from speaking to someone? Am I the one who quickly slips into a tight-knit circle of family or friends and ignores the rest? Am I the one who races for the door when it is over?

“WE ARE NOT EVANGELIZING THE WORLD?” That may be all too true. “Lord, is it I?” Can You go? Will you go? If not, can you encourage and support someone who will go? Elders, are YOU doing what you can to encourage young people to give their lives to gospel work? Does the teaching program give emphasis to such needs? Have you put the congregation in the banking business with huge accounts accumulated with no plans for their use? And parents, what if your son wanted to go to Indonesia, Nigeria or Brazil to preach the gospel, AND TAKE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN? And what if you daughter should marry such a nut? Would you dare to even plant the thought yourself? The world is NOT being evangelized as it should be. While we have worshipped at the shrine of materialism, doors of entry have been closed in nation after another. There are still some doors

open in nations where there are millions of people. Will we wait until those doors are closed too? “Lord, is it I?”

“WE ARE LOSING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.” Thank God, we are not losing all of them. But we are losing MANY of them. We have slept in the same house, eaten at the same table, traveled in the same car, and grown apart morally and doctrinally. How did it happen? While we have been busy making a living, seeking entertainment, climbing the ladder of sues, “finding ourselves,” our children have been listening to humanism at school and to music which encourages lust, rebellion, witchcraft, suicide and you name it. They have watched the ever-sliding standards of the television and movie industry. Meanwhile, we have been too busy to read the Bible together, or pray together, or to keep in touch with what is going on at school. We offer them thirty minutes of “quality time” every third Wednesday and can’t understand why they won’t talk to us on schedule! We get them to ballgames, band practice or camp in the summer, but see no reason to help them cultivate friendships with young people of “Like precious faith.” Those who are lost to the Lord were not lost all of a sudden. It was gradual—day by day. What a shame that it could happen without parents even suspecting what was taking place. “Lord, is it I?”

It was our Lord who said “Grow in the grace and knowledge of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” It was our Lord who said the taught should “Commit...to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” It was our Lord who said fathers should bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Do we betray him when we ignore these things? Our Lord also said “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Lk. 6:46). “Lord, is it I?” (*Searching the Scriptures*, Oct. 1985, p3-4)

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. Psalm 15