

***From,***

***Answer Me This...***

***To***

***Let Me Tell You...***

***Bible Studies to help us think through some of the questions we ask***

***Bathurst Presbyterian Church***

## *I'm Free To Please...?*

Read Psalm 11 and Romans 6: 1-7: 6

*Why are we so prone to run anywhere but to the Lord?*

*...he (THE LORD) is on his throne, a judge of the rebellious and a refuge for the trusting.* (Michael Wilcock on Ps 11: 7) *Does this comfort or scare you?*

The important thing is *attitude*, not *location*. (Michael Wilcock on Ps 11: 1-3)

*What does Ps 11: 4a and 4b mean for your Christian faith?* (Read Hab 2: 19 after you answer)

Then discuss: *It is, again, not a matter of location, it is a matter of function.* (Michael Wilcock)

*What is the relation between Ps 11: 4c-6 and Rom 6: 1-7: 6?*

Discuss Joni Eareckson Tada's comments on Rom 7: 5-6: *Thank God, we have been released to serve the Lord in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. We serve Jesus; we don't serve a list of rules. This is exactly why we should stop using words like *victory* and *defeat* to describe our obedience. We are never *defeated* by this or that sin. Rather, we are *obedient* or *disobedient* to the Lord.*

*So how do we control sin in our lives?* (Rom 6: 12-14)

*Christian believers are identified with Christ Jesus in what ways?*

Then discuss:

*What is the purpose of?*

- *your being identified with Jesus?* (Rom 6: 4, 6; 7: 4)
- *your growing together with Jesus?* (Rom 6: 5)

*What is the result of?*

- *your being released from the law?* (Rom 7: 6)

*What are the ultimate purposes of this identification and union?*

Discuss how Christian believers bear fruit to God.

*If Christian believers are under grace, not law; are then Christian believers obligated to keep the Ten Commandments?*

*Why do the crises of life bring challenges to our confidence? Discuss.* (Based on thoughts by Peter Craigie)

***Dealing With Your Past***

Read Numbers 11: 1-9 and Philippians 3: 1-16

*Does intercessory or petitionary prayer always stop the Lord's judgement or actions?*

*If no; then why pray?*

*The weeping of Israel is a failure of faith in God.* (James Mays) Discuss.

*Why does the food of slavery seem better than the fare of freedom?* (Based on James Mays)

*Why do we complain even though the Lord provides salvation and everything we need?*

Discuss why it is that a murmuring, complaining, critical spirit renders us progressively incapable of rising to our divine calling. (Based on James Philip)

Then discuss why the Lord accepts our complaints such as in Ps 142: 2; but comes down so hard at other times as in Num 11: 1-3 (etc).

And discuss Phillip Budd's comment on the rejection of the manna: *...this is culpable discontent arising from what is judged to be a monotonous diet.*

*Why does Christian aspiration have the tendency to develop into either dismay (I'll never make it) or perfectionism (I've made it)?*

Read Philippians 3: 12-14 and discuss

- ◆ how it is possible to catch the One who has already caught you.
- ◆ the need for each believer to deal with their *past* in the sense highlighted in these verses
- ◆ why the *past* has such influence on their *present* and *future*

*Then, why is dealing with your past to involve you learning from, repenting of, praising the Lord for, and forgetting your past?*

Both passages highlight aspects of *memory*. Why are the *retentive, defective, and selective* aspects of so prone to sinful exploitation?

State what it means for you to learn that the *prize* you are to reach for, (Phil 3: 14) is your *gift* from the Lord and *awarded* to you because of Jesus not because of what you've achieved.

## *Just One Thing*

Read Psalm 27; Luke 10: 38-42

Why does the Lord make us focus on the *one thing*?

State why the Lord's being our *light and salvation* takes away fear. (Psalm 27: 1)

Why is Psalm 27: 4 the *best thing*?

How do you understand David's desire to

- ❖ dwell in the house of the Lord?
- ❖ gaze on the beauty of the Lord? and,
- ❖ seek him in his temple? (Psalm 27: 4)

Discuss why it is

- ❖ important to know and admit to your *prior* condition (John 9: 25)
- ❖ so easy to
  - forget this amazing truth... (Joshua 23: 14)
  - depend on what we've done and got (Mark 10: 17-23)
  - become so busy doing good we neglect to choose what is better (Luke 10: 41-42)

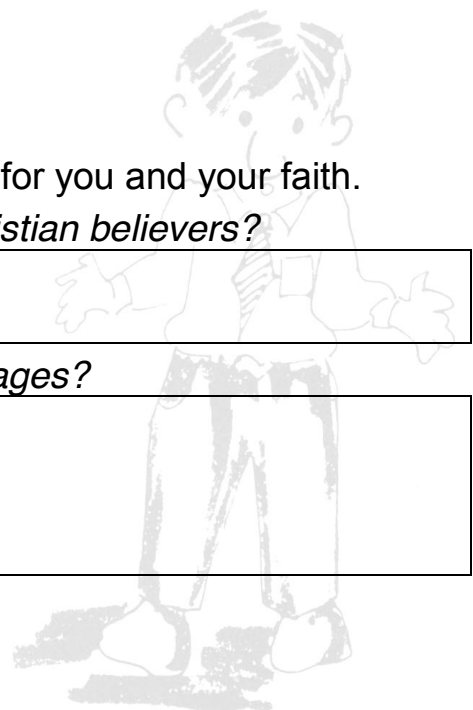
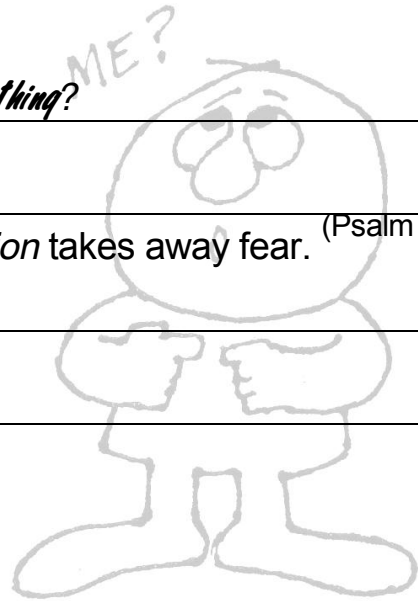
Don Carson writes that David sang this song because he knew **THE LORD** is my:

- *Light* (Psalm 27: 1-3)
- *Sanctuary* (Psalm 27: 4-6)
- *Direction* (Psalm 27: 7-12)
- *Hope* (Psalm 27: 13-14)

State what each of these characteristics means for you and your faith.

*Is Philippians 3: 13-14 a forlorn hope for us Christian believers?*

What have you learned for studying these passages?



***From The Greater To The Lesser***

Psalm 119:1-8 and Romans 8

*Is Romans 8: 17 any encouragement to you in the light of Hebrews 1: 2 and Revelation 21: 7?*

**Y**  **N**  *Why or why not?*

Discuss why, *She'll be right* is close to the truth of Romans 8: 28. (Based on a thought by David Seccombe)

*What evidences are there in your life, that by faith and progressive steps, Holy Spirit is making you obedient to the Truth?* (see Psalm 119: 5; Romans 8: 13). (Based on Charles Simeon)

The *undefiled* are described. (Psalm 119: 1-3) *Such a life is commanded by God in;* (Ps 119: 4) *is prayed for in,* (Ps 119: 5) *and with its attendant happiness is anticipated in,* (Ps 119: 6-7) *and resolved upon in.* (Ps 119: 8) Discuss. (C A Davis)

*Why is Psalm 119: 6 the honest response of the genuine Christian believer to Psalm 119: 1-3?*

Discuss why we need the *positives*, (Psalm 119: 1-3) as well as the *negatives*. (Psalm 1: 1) Based on Michael Wilcock)

*Why is it that redeemed men and women do not automatically, or perfectly, yield entirely to Holy Spirit's will?* (See Romans 8: 7-8) (Based on a thought by Jay E Adams)

How are we *to consider* and *to learn* the Lord's *commands* and *righteous laws*?

*What is the way Christian believers are able to do all things?*

*Who intercedes for Christian believers?* Discuss.

*Which part or parts of these sections is or are most striking and most helpful to you?*

Romans 8: 15, 16, 26, and 27, detail something of Holy Spirit's work for Christian believers. List the work (over the page) and discuss what it *all* means.

*What are the benefits of?*

- *Your love for the Lord God*
- *The Lord's love for you (and for all his people)*



Discuss why the *all things* we receive or may do, must come under the limitations appointed by the Lord: his word; will, ways, holiness, love, Truth and appointment. (Based on Arthur Pink)

*Do you agree that the all things of Romans 8: 32 is the all things of 2 Peter 1: 3?*

**Y**  **N**  *Why or why not?*

Some people will do bad and wrong things with deliberate intent because everything works for good. (Romans 8: 28) Discuss this fallacy.

Then discuss:

- ◆ *why only* those who love the Lord may be comforted by (Romans 8: 28)
- ◆ *God has not only given His own Son for His people to discharge their obligations, but He has also given Him to them (as the, with him clearly implies) to enrich them.* (Arthur Pink)

Let's get the ball rolling...



Ever heard a child say that? What's the basis for their gripe?

read John 13:1-17



investigate

1. How did Jesus show or demonstrate what "the full extent of his love" would be through washing the disciples' feet on that last night? (v1-11)

2. What challenge did Jesus then put onto the disciples? (v12-17)



think & apply

3. What does it mean to wash one another's feet today? Was Jesus setting up some kind of sacrament?

read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15



investigate

4. Why did the Macedonian Christians strike Paul as being such a great example of following through on Jesus' challenge of John 13? (v1-5)

5. How were the Corinthians dragging the chain? (v6-15) What were they forgetting?



think & apply

6. What causes us to forget today?

7. If time check out these parts of the Bible as well...

Matthew 6:9-13 Exodus 16:13-20 Colossians 3:17



think & apply

8. Any significance in Jesus' teaching about praying just for "daily bread"? How does this free us (including Church) to get on with the "kingdom (coming)"?

9. How does our hoarding today "begin to smell"?

10. Why is it such a shame that our wallets are often the last thing in our lives to get converted (or to come under "Jesus' name")?



prayer points

Pray in response to this...

\* for help to share in the Lord



through wk go over what you most need to mature in

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

Let's get the ball rolling...

Ever heard a child say that? What's the basis for their gripe?



investigate



1. Paul is pretty adamant about this "rejoicing" (v4-7) What does rejoicing actually entail? What or who is the important factor here?

read Philippians 4:4-13

2. Think about Paul's life. How did he have to practice what he preached? (v10-13) What did he rejoice in?

3. Is happiness what life is all about? (ie being happy with your lot, what you have) Why are we so tempted to think about that so superficially?



think & apply



investigate

4. How does Jesus help us to get past the superficiality? What does he put his finger on as to the core problem? (v19-24)

read Matthew 6:19-34

5. How does Jesus free us from being a slave to stuff? (v25-33)

6. What kind of things do the "pagans" (non Christians) "run after" today? How do Christians, particularly western Christians, justify very similar goals?



think & apply



investigate

8. *O what peace we often forfeit* (J Scriven—What a Friend We Have in Jesus, 19thC Hymn). What kind of stuff and thinking do we need to "wean" ourselves off?



think & apply

9. Why is it not just the affluent who suffer from addictions to "riches"?

10. What should make the Christian's 'bucket list', things to really do before you die?



prayer points

Pray in response to this...

\* for help to be content in the Lord



through wk  
2 Cor 8:1-15  
-id the baby  
behaviour

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# 'That's not fair!'

## Let's get the ball rolling...



Ever heard a child say that? What's the basis for their gripe?

### read Matthew 20:20-28



1. What was asked from the mother of Zebedee's sons? (v20-23)

investigate

2. How were the other disciples hardly mature either? (v24-28)



think & apply

3. Think of a time when you have been overlooked. How does Jesus' lead here help defuse that kind of frustration?

### read Ephesians 4:1-16



investigate

4. What things does Paul mention that encourage the Ephesian Christians to "keep the unity of the Spirit"? (v3)

(v13)

5. Why does it hinder us "*(becoming) mature*" if we whinge over the gifting of another?



think & apply

6. Most of us are sophisticated enough to disguise our infant behaviour, at least a bit. How do we give it away though, that we are being "*tossed back and forth...blown here and there...*" (v14)

7. If time check out these parts of the Bible as well...

*Psalms 84:10*

*Job 27:1-6, 40:1-14*

*Romans 8:28*



investigate

8. Is there a task at Church or wherever you are (given wherever we are is now the Temple of the Holy Spirit) that you think is beneath you?



think & apply

9. What about when gross injustice happens in life like Job experienced? What is crucial to apply to our thinking there?

10. How does thinking about Jesus just 'literally nail it' every time?



prayer points

## Pray in response to this...

### \* for help to just love and serve God



through wk  
Philp 4:4-13  
-i.d. the baby  
behaviour

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*



Let's get the ball rolling...



Ever heard a child say that? What's the basis for their gripe?

read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5



investigate

1. What do you reckon these Corinthians hankered for with the sermons or talks at their Church?

2. What did Paul say really matters in our meetings?

3. How do you measure the helpfulness of a Bible Talk at Church today? What about the music? The fellowship?



think & apply

read Acts 8:9-24



investigate

4. Why do you think Simon wanted to be able to dispense the Holy Spirit? (v18-19, compare v9-13)

5. What was he gravely missing? (v20-23) Note that the 'show' in v14-17 was to make it clear that not just Jews could be saved and know Jesus and therefore the Spirit.

6. What makes the Christian life exciting for you? What kind of things do we need to see past and why?



think & apply

7. If time check out these parts of the Bible as well...



*John 6:1-71 (Yes, I know it's a long chapter)*  
*Acts 20:17-38*

8. When is it hard work to get to know Jesus better, to "accept" his "teaching"? Why is it so worth it?



think & apply

9. When is it hard work to serve Jesus? Why is it so worth it?

10. Does the western Church's general 'fickleness of faith' go some way in explaining its minimal impact upon its culture, especially in comparison to other parts of the world?



prayer points

Pray in response to this...

\* for help to be excited about Jesus' agenda



through wk  
Matt 20:20-28  
-i.d. the baby  
behaviour

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# 'I don't want to go home!'



## Let's get the ball rolling...

Ever heard a child say that? What's the basis for their gripe?



investigate



1. How do you think Paul and co were "kept" and "not (allowed)" by the Holy Spirit from doing good things in themselves like "preaching the word" and "entering" a country for the sake of the Gospel at that time? (v6-8)

## read Acts 16:6-10

2. What do you think set them free from being frustrated? (v9-10)

3. What kinds of things does God close the door on today for no obvious reason? Talk about how we too can move on with a mature Christian mindset.



think & apply



investigate

4. What's the difference for Paul between making plans in a "worldly manner" versus a Godly manner? (v17—the clue's in v18-22, thinking about God's plans in Jesus)

5. What was the Godly reason for Paul to change his plans with visiting these difficult Corinthians? (1:23-2:4) Bring to bear the background from the 2 letters we have.

6. How do we sometimes not want to change plans for the wrong reasons?



think & apply



investigate

7. If time check out these parts of the Bible as well...

*Psalm 118:22-24*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

*Psalm 90:11-13*

8. How does knowing that Jesus has come, "the capstone", transform any day's events?



think & apply

9. Share an example where you can look back and see how God "(straightened) the path": How does that help to deal with frustrations in the future?

10. How are our relationships enriched at Church and at home when we learn to run with God's timing? Again, tease it out with some real life examples.



prayer points

## Pray in response to this...

### \* for help to learn to run with God's timing



through wk  
1 Cor 2:1-5  
-i.d. the baby  
behaviour

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

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# *'out of the playground'*

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Scripture gives us two contrasting images to ponder...

**"...unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."**

(Matthew 18:3)

And yet...

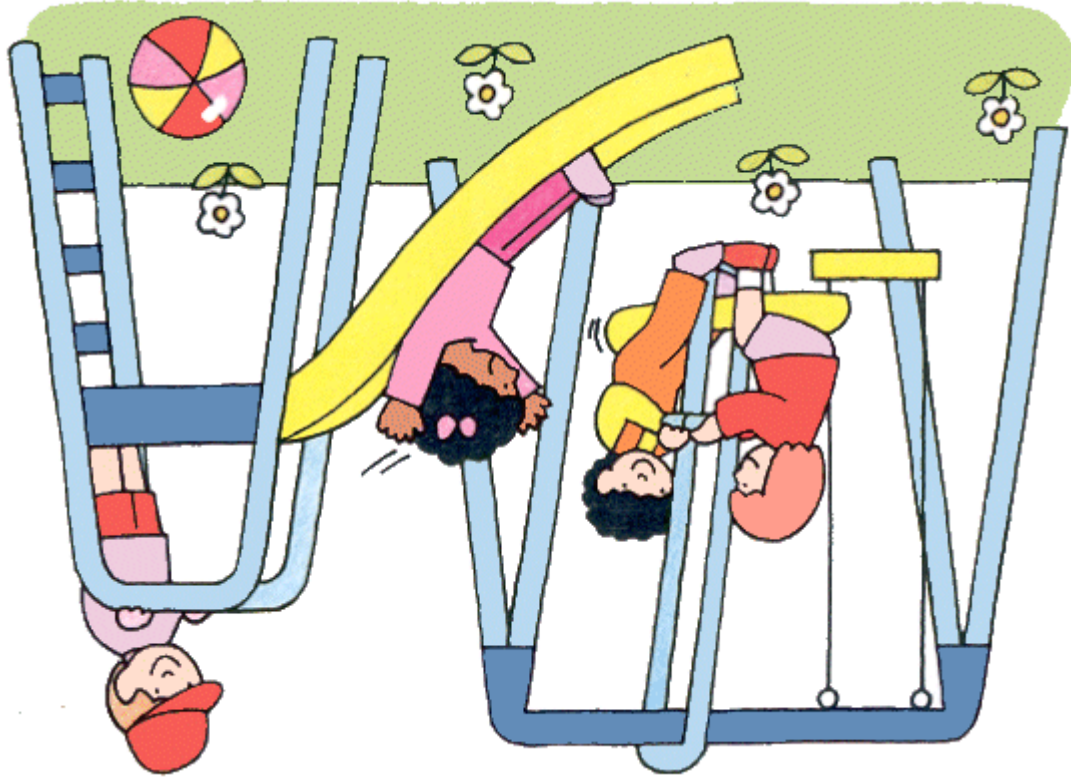
**"Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness."**

(1 Corinthians)

There's a call in the Gospel for simple 'child like' trust in God. But never a simplistic 'childish' one either. We need to grow up into maturity in Christ, never being content with the status quo until we see Jesus face to face. There is so much for us to get on with in Christ. But sometimes we opt for 'play ground behavior' and wonder why our relationship with God is going nowhere.

This series of studies follows the 9 and 10 30 Church talks in the second 1/2 of term 3. They are an attempt to get us to think about where we are at in our relationship with Jesus. Are we still throwing tantrums like a toddler or meandering about like a love sick teenager? How can we take some steps to really get our teeth into the meat of the faith?

**Hints for these studies – with each question, sometimes there's a follow up question or two included at the same number. This is to just help draw it out a bit more. You may get it with the first one so don't panic if you end up saying the same thing in thinking about the follow up question—so just move on. Also, don't panic if you can't quite see what a question might be driving at. These questions are not the Bible. Feel free to move onto the next one. The questions are just an attempt to help us get into the passage/issue. Let the passage drive things at the end of the day. The questions are of course still meant to be a lead in to what could be very important with what God has in front of us here. So at least think about it before moving on—it's good to dwell for a bit and often, it then becomes a little more obvious.**



# 'out of the playground'

5 topical Bible studies on Christian maturity



BATHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH