

## March Questions / Answers

*\*The following questions are taken from emails and are printed below exactly as I received them. Names and contact information have been removed. The answers are in note form (sorry for any of my grammar errors) to be studied through. You'll have to examine each Scripture below to see the points. Please be mindful that there are often circumstances and details to every question that could potentially change the answer (there are generally no blanket answers to Bible questions).*

1. "We are setting quarterly goals for our church. We have set a budget. We have set a mailing goal for courses to inmates. We are having some debate over our growth quota. What is a reasonable goal for baptisms for a quarter in a midsized congregation?"

- I perceive, from the terminology you have used in your question, that you do not understand very much about the church, our Lord, and the Scriptures. So, let's start with some simple things before I even get to answering your question:
  - \* The church belongs to Jesus Christ (**Matthew 16:13-18** and **Hebrews 3:1-6**).
  - \* Jesus is the sole head of the church (**Ephesians 1:22-23** and **Colossians 1:12-18**).
  - \* The church is subject to the authority of Christ (**Ephesians 5:24**).
  - \* The church is made up of those whom have heard, believed, and obeyed the Gospel of Christ (**Acts 2:37-47**). Meaning, the church is the people of our Lord (**I Corinthians 1:2; 12:27**). That conversion process includes much more than I just cited. That is another study in itself.
  - \* Regarding both the work of the church and our individual lives outside of the assembly, we are to do all things by the authority of Christ (**Matthew 28:18-20** and **Colossians 3:1-17**).
- With some of that information in mind, let's proceed. Who gave you authority to "set quarterly goals" for any congregation? Such a practice is an addition to the Scriptures. That is a costly error (**Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, Galatians 1:6-12, and Revelation 22:18-19**).
- Why are you referring to the church as "our church"? Is that unwise wording or is it because you believe you have ownership in the church? Again, the church of Christ belongs to Christ (**Ephesians 5:25-27**).
- What do you mean by a budget? How can there be so many things you are doing with the Lord's money? The church may spend the Lord's money by supporting faithful evangelists/preachers (**I Corinthians 9:1-14, II Corinthians 11:8, and Philippians 4:10-18**), aiding truly needy saints (**Romans 15:25-27** and **II Corinthians 8:4; 9:1-14**), supporting widows indeed (**I Timothy 5:3-16**), and supporting qualified (**I Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9**) elders (**I Timothy 5:17-18**). What else is there to budget for? Outside of that, there are just a lot of question marks. Congregations can get into trouble stretching things like spiritual edification (**Ephesians 4:16**) into various works. Another thing to consider, in regard to a budget, is that you would likely influence members to give to a budget instead of giving to the Lord. Consider **II Corinthians 9:6-7** which is in the context of giving with the contextual purpose of aiding needy saints (**II Corinthians 8:1-9:14**).
- What in the world is mailing goals for courses to inmates? If you have brethren that are imprisoned, you should be physically looking after them rather than mailing anything (**Matthew 25:31-46, Philippians 1:7; 2:25-30, and Hebrews 10:34**). If you think mailing bible courses to people in prison is evangelism, you need to think

again. Alien sinners were NEVER taught via correspondence courses. If it were a good idea, an authorized idea, it would have been written (**II Timothy 3:15-17**). Consider the Ethiopian Eunuch's conversion in regard to the thinking often employed by sending courses to people (**Acts 8:26-39**). Real teaching requires conversation.

- What is a "growth quota"? Again, an unscriptural idea!
- A reasonable goal for baptism is: ZERO. While sinners must be baptized to be saved (**Mark 16:15-16, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-6, I Peter 3:20-21**, etc.), the focus of faithful Christians is teaching rather than baptizing (**I Corinthians 1:10-17**). Think about Jesus here (**John 4:1-2**). Baptism is a response to teaching and part of the conversion process. Baptism is upon the hearer of the Gospel, not the teachers of the Gospel (**Acts 8:12-13** and **Acts 18:8**). Therefore, there can be NO GOAL.
- The resolution to debate is to allow the Scriptures to be the standard and to walk accordingly (**Philippians 3:16**; cf. **Amos 3:3**).
- What is a "mid-sized" congregation? Where are you getting all of this terminology? It sounds like a business in action, with sales goals, not a congregation belonging to the Lord. Learn to speak as the oracles of God (**I Peter 4:11**).

2. "Does Psalm 9:15-16 mean that when evil people seek to do us harm they always end up falling in their own traps as the righteous escapes?"

- There are some words that we should be afraid to use often. "Always" is one of those words. While there are some things that are "always", time and chance change many things very often (**Ecclesiastes 9:11**).
- **Psalms 9:15-16** should be understood in the context it is in. The next verse shows when they end up reaping what they've sown: "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*" (**Psalms 9:17**).
- When you study Scriptures that bring about questions like this (i.e. **Psalms 7:15-16; 35:8; 37:15; 57:6**, etc.), you can use some deductive reasoning to know what is not being taught. Ask yourself, did all people in the Scriptures who set traps for the righteous fall into those traps and the righteous escape? The answer to that is, NO (**Genesis 4:1-10, II Chronicles 24:18-22, Jeremiah 5:26-28, Matthew 14:1-12, Matthew 23:29-36, Matthew 26:1-5, Matthew 26:57-27:56, Acts 6:8-7:60**, etc.).
- Another point to consider is that if you reach a conclusion that certain passages mean what you asked, you have to be sure it is consistent with other Scriptures. The idea that the righteous always escape is contrary to many Scriptures (**Matthew 5:10-12, John 16:1-3, Romans 8:36, II Timothy 3:12, Hebrews 11:32-38**, etc.).
- What **Psalms 9:15-16** is teaching is the principle of you reap what you sow. That is a consistent message throughout the Scriptures (**Job 4:8, Job 34:11, Proverbs 1:31, Proverbs 12:14, Proverbs 14:14, Proverbs 24:12, Isaiah 3:10-11, Jeremiah 2:19, Jeremiah 4:16-18, Jeremiah 32:19, Ezekiel 22:31, Hosea 7:2, Hosea 8:7, John 5:28-29, Romans 2:4-11, II Corinthians 5:10, and Galatians 6:7-8**).

3. "Are you aware if the man names Silvanuos in the scripture was he faithful? Also was Silas faithful?"

- I cannot assure that Silvanus was faithful until his death. What we do know is that he was faithful in all that we read about him (**II Corinthians 1:19, I Thessalonians 1:1, II Thessalonians 1:1, and I Peter 5:12**).

- We can read a little more about Silas. Again though, I cannot say for sure he was faithful until his death. What we can read is that he was faithful in the Scriptures that mention him (**Acts 15:22-40, Acts 16:11-40, Acts 17:1-15, and Acts 18:5**).

4. “where was Jeremiah when Jerusalem was conquered?”

- *“So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken” (Jeremiah 38:28).*
- See also: **Jeremiah 32:2, Jeremiah 34:1**, etc.

5. “My question is about healing. I read Proverbs 4:20-22 that says My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don’t lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. What sayings do I need to read every day for it to work?”

- From what I can tell, you are using the New Living Translation. The preface of the perversion of the Scriptures you are using says this: “...The resulting translation is easy to read and understand, while also accurately communicating the meaning and content of the original biblical texts. The NLT is a general-purpose text especially good for study, devotional reading, and reading aloud in worship services. We believe that the New Living Translation—which combines the latest biblical scholarship with a clear, dynamic writing style—will communicate God’s word powerfully to all who read it. We publish it with the prayer that God will use it to speak his timeless truth to the church and the world in a fresh, new way” (<https://biblia.com/books/nlt/article/NOTE>).
- \* You are using a commentary instead of a translation. The people who published the NLT tell you that they are telling you what they think God meant in the original text instead of translation it word for word. I use the KJV because it is as close to a word for word translation into English that we can find today. Consider this study as something to consider regarding translations: [http://www.wordsoftruth.net/WhytheKJVOvertheNIVNASBorESV\\_handout.pdf](http://www.wordsoftruth.net/WhytheKJVOvertheNIVNASBorESV_handout.pdf)
- \* Changing God’s word is sinful (**Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, Galatians 1:6-12, and Revelation 22:18-19**).
- \* Do not look for “easy to read”. Learning the truth takes time to study and dig into the Scriptures (**John 5:39**).
- The word translated “healing” in the NLT is translated “health” in the KJV, ASV 1901, NKJV, etc.). The point of **Proverbs 4:22** is that the words of the Lord, the wisdom of God, is healthy for people who adhere to them (**Proverbs 3:1-8 and Proverbs 16:24**).
- \* So, how does the word of God help someone be healthy? Consider how that sorrow, worry, evil doing, etc. destroy one’s health (**Proverbs 12:25; 15:13; 15:15; 17:22, and II Corinthians 2:7**).
- \* On the other hand, the word of God brings comfort, joy, hope, and all things good to the obedient (**Jeremiah 15:16, Romans 15:4, and I Thessalonians 4:13-18**).
- \* Thus, rather than being weighed down and destroyed by the cares this world brings about; those who allow the word of God to work on them are at peace (**Philippians 4:6-8**).

- There are no sayings or Scriptures that will heal you if you have ailments. A fact of life is that we are all going to die unless Christ returns first (**Ecclesiastes 9:11-12** and **Hebrews 9:27**). Even the Apostle Paul, who could through the Holy Spirit heal the sick (**Acts 19:11-12**) [these things have ceased today: **I Corinthians 13:8-13**], could not have his ailments removed (**II Corinthians 12:1-10**).

6. "I am not sure if I should ask you this question because you might consider me unlearned like you say on your contact page. That contact page is my question. How do you feel you are obeying 1 Peter 3:15 that commands us to give an answer to every question when you tell people that you wont answer every question? You even use 1 Peter 3:15 on that page so you know what it says. So answer this question on your monthly questions so you do not engage in a debate."

- **I Peter 3:15** (also **Colossians 4:6**) does NOT command anyone to answer every question. The verse says: "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always** to give an answer to every man **that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear***" (**I Peter 3:15**). Read the context of **I Peter 3:15** (**I Peter 3:8-4:19**). The context is NOT about biblical debating or arguing from the Scriptures. The context is about being able to explain the faith in certain times and situations of persecution (i.e. **Acts 22:1-28:31**).
- Did you read the Scriptures I referenced as to why I do not answer every question? <http://www.wordsoftruth.net/indexfiles/contactbrianayeager.html>
- That page says, in part: "I will not get into endless debates and discussions with people who already are set in their beliefs (I Timothy 1:3-4, I Timothy 6:3-5, and Titus 3:9-11)... I get many emails from people who want to "prove their point". 1. I will not engage in email debates (II Timothy 2:23)... If you ask me a question I am ready and will provide a Bible answer (I Peter 3:15; 4:11). It is your task to verify that my answer is right (Acts 17:10-11). If you study and conclude it is not, you should avoid me (Romans 16:17). If you have already come to a conclusion on what "you believe", don't waste my time or yours by asking a question (Proverbs 21:2)... Why are you about to email a minister of the Gospel of Christ? If you are really looking for answers (even if we may have several exchanges and you need time to see the truth), please contact me. I will, with much long-suffering, be willing to help you to know and obey the truth (II Timothy 4:2)."
- The word of God is the standard I live by (**Luke 4:4**, **II Timothy 1:13**, **II Timothy 3:14-17**, and **II Peter 1:3-4**).
- The word of God instructs, very clearly, that there are situations in which I MUST NOT try to teach or continue teaching. Here are Scriptures that PROVE this, in addition to what is quoted above: **Proverbs 9:6-9**, **Proverbs 23:9**, **Matthew 7:6**, **Matthew 10:5-15**, **Matthew 13:53-58**, **Matthew 15:1-14**, **Luke 20:1-8**, **Acts 13:13-51**, **Acts 18:1-6**, and **Hebrews 6:4-6**
- Regarding debates, many think such are good and profitable formats of teaching. There may be rare cases in which that could carefully be true. However, in most cases, Christians should avoid "debates". Paul feared finding this amongst the saints, yet it is celebrated by many (**II Corinthians 12:20**). Lest someone cite **Jude 3** to me. Do you know the context? The context is about those who HAD crept in unawares amongst the saints (**Jude 3-4**). We should be ready to defend the truth (**Philippians 1:17**). Teaching is about saving souls not winning debates (**Psalms 51:13**; **Acts 26:18-20**).