

## March Questions and Answers

Franklin Church of Christ  
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PM Worship

### Introduction:

During this lesson we will cover several questions submitted by members of this congregation.

### Discussion:

- I. Can we, as Christians, take advantage of college grant money from the Tennessee Lottery?
  - A. The Bible clearly demonstrates that covetous activities such as the Tennessee Lottery are sinful. The next question many have asked is, can we Christians receive government benefits that money from the lottery is used to provide?
  - B. First, we need to understand the practical side of government and our money. While the Tennessee government has sold the state on the idea of lottery by talking about how the funds will be used for educational grant money, government and money do not work in such a simple way. When our government establishes a budget, they will not look at where the money came from to decide where it is going. Instead, they will look at the amount of it they expect to get from all the various sources and then budget it.
  - C. Further, as we examine this question closely we realize that it is only a surface question that will lead to many more. Can a Christian store owner accept money from a person who won the lottery to buy goods in the store? Can a Christian hold a job in which the salary comes from the "sin tax" on alcohol? Can a Christian sell his car to a doctor who performs abortions or a man who runs a liquor store? All of these questions are really the same. Do we have to trace the money back to its original source and if so, how far back do we have to go?
  - D. The principle of **I Corinthians 5:10** applies in this situation. The only consistent rule to avoid funds that originated under questionable means would be to go out of the world. God does not expect us to run a background check on every bit of money that comes our way.
  - E. Finally, just as paying taxes to our government does not mean we endorse everything our government spends money on, neither does accepting money from the government mean we endorse every way in which our government receives money. Therefore, while I certainly want you to live within the bounds of your conscience on this matter (**Romans 14:23**), I believe you can allow your children to accept educational grant money from the state government.
- II. How can single women "ask their own husbands at home"?
  - A. We noted in our last question and answer session that the scripture teaches women are not allowed to hold authority over men within the church (**I Timothy 2:12**). Paul further explained that women are to be submissively silent in the church (**I Corinthians 14:34-35**).
  - B. However, in **I Corinthians 14:35**, Paul explained that the women, if they wanted to learn, could ask their husbands at home. The natural question from many today is what do single women do? They do not have husbands to ask. Does that mean unmarried women were allowed to speak and have authority over men in the church assembly? No.
  - C. **I Corinthians 7:1** demonstrates that Paul was addressing questions that the Corinthians had put to him. We are not privy to those questions. But we can be assured that Paul answered them correctly (**I Corinthians 14:37**). When Paul makes his statements in **I Corinthians 14:34-35**, he is not limiting the principle of **I Timothy 2:12** to married women, rather he is addressing whatever the specific problem was in Corinth. The specific problem there was answered by telling the particular women causing the problems to remain silent in the assemblies and ask their husbands at home.
  - D. While Paul did not deal with any other specific situations than the one at Corinth, I believe we are can apply the principles we learn hear to other specific situations. Unmarried women cannot ask their husbands at home, but **I Timothy 2:12** still applies. They can ask their fathers at home or the elders outside the assembly. This course of action would still fulfill scripture.
- III. Can a woman teach a boy who has obeyed the gospel?
  - A. **I Timothy 2:12** says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Since a woman cannot teach a man or have authority over him in the church, can a woman teach a Bible class that has young Christian males in it?

- B. The word translated “man” is “Aner,” which simply means “man.” Interestingly, this term is different from a child. It is used in **I Corinthians 13:11** to talk about growing up, when a boy becomes a man he is to put away childish things. But that demonstrates that the term does not simply refer to maleness, but to adulthood among males.
  - C. The second thing we must ask is when do boys become men? The fact is, we do not know. The Bible never provides a line that is crossed in which boys become men. Some will suggest that if a boy is mature enough to become a Christian then he must be considered a man. But if that is the case, then why do we not push him out of the house and make him support his family? None of us in a real sense believes obeying the Gospel turns boys into men. It simply makes them Christian boys. Some may go to the Old Testament and see that God distinguished between the children and the adults at age 20 (**Numbers 14:29-31; 26:2**). But if we are going to make that case, how can we allow our boys to join the military before age 20? Some will say we start giving adult responsibilities at 16 when they start driving, some at 18 when they can vote. The fact is we cannot draw an absolute line.
  - D. The best we can do is decide what will be a safe course for ourselves and this congregation. My judgment on the matter is to make a shift in the high school years. While I believe there may be some room to allow women to teach high school boys even if they are Christians, I am pretty certain we are safe that we are not violating God’s principles. That is the most I can say.
- IV. Can Christians listen to “Contemporary Christian” music or gospel music that is accompanied by mechanical musical instruments? If not, why can we listen to “honkey-tonk” music but not something that helps us get our thoughts where they should be?
- A. As we begin the answer to this question, we must first note that this question has so many facets to it that no matter what I say, somebody will have a, “But what if...” question when we are done. I do not have every answer for every question or every song. In a very real sense, I have to leave some of the answers for various songs and groups up to the individual conscience of each listener. If you cannot listen with the faith that what you are doing is alright, then do not. Again, we remember **Romans 14:23**, whatever is not from faith is sin.
  - B. Additionally, we must note that while this question categorizes music into clear cut genres, it simply does not work that way in reality. In modern music there are groups which call themselves “Christian” whose songs are so veiled most people would never know what they are singing about. Further, there are some groups that refuse to be classified as “Christian” and yet wear spirituality on their sleeve for all to see. So we cannot answer this question simply by how the music is classified.
  - C. Further, we must recognize that the question asks one thing, when, in fact, the important issue is another. This question asks about listening, as though the act of hearing what might be classified as a religious song would be wrong. The Bible never addresses listening to music. Rather it addresses worshipping God with music. Regrettably, today, too many Christians have so focused on the assemblies they have missed that the Bible rarely differentiates between the assembly or individual when talking about music in worship and it is always singing. **Acts 16:24; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12** and **James 5:13** all mention singing, whether in the assembly or out of it. There is simply no authority to worship God with instruments of music either accompanying or in place of our singing whether in the assembly, in our homes, in our cars or at the concert hall.
  - D. I believe I can clearly say from scripture that to worship along with “Contemporary Christian” or “Southern Gospel” bands and groups is as sinful in your car as it would be in this building. If in some way you can listen without worshipping God, then I cannot say anything to you about it. Having been brought up in the Baptist church, in which this kind of music was staple for our youth groups, I was trained that even listening to this kind of music is worshipping God. So I have a hard time being able to understand how anyone can claim they are listening to and singing along with these songs and claim they are not worshipping. If, however, you believe you are listening without worshipping, allow me to give you some things to think about. First, if you claim that you are not worshipping you are simply using the music to help you get your thoughts focused on God, please explain to me what you think worship is. As far as I can tell, having our thoughts focused on God and using something to draw us to God is worship. Secondly, if you

are listening and singing along with these songs, if you are singing the name of God and speaking of spiritual matters with nothing more than a flippant notice of what you are singing, are you not treating holy things in a vain manner? Finally, having been raised around this kind of music and having been exposed to it in numerous ways because of my involvement in radio work, I have found that very few of the songs could actually put your thoughts where they are supposed to be because they are so full of error and false teaching on salvation, baptism, Christ's kingdom and church, the second-coming, miraculous gifts, etc.

- E. Finally, it seems that our questioner presumed that I would say you should steer clear of this modern form of music and also that I would say it is alright to listen to "honkey-tonk" music. That, of course, opens up a whole different can of worms. Can we listen to and be entertained by music that is not religious in nature. I believe we can. Jesus evidently recognized the uses of music outside of worship when He described how the people dealt with John the Baptist and Jesus by speaking of children in the marketplace saying "We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we mourned [or "sang a dirge"-NASB] to you and you did not weep" (**Luke 7:32**). Paul recognized the use of music outside of worship when he wrote about speaking with tongues of men and angels but not having love as being just like a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal (**I Corinthians 13:1**, see also **I Corinthians 14:7-8**). He knew that instruments could be and should be used together in harmony. When just used to make noise, they are useless. Further, Paul demonstrated that being involved in entertainments that are not strictly religious are perfectly fine when he demonstrated that he had read non-Christian poets in **Acts 17:28** and that he was well familiar with the games of his day in **I Corinthians 9:24-27**. However, does that mean we can listen or be entertained by secular entertainments indiscriminately? Absolutely not. I do not know much about honkey-tonk music, because frankly, I do not know how anybody can listen to that stuff anyway. But many of you probably do not know how anybody could listen to the stuff I like. I am a rocker. I love the driving beats and the heavy guitars. I listen to rock music as far back as Elvis and the Beatles on up to Creed and Evanescence. I love listening to 80's stations that play Def Leppard, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and I even like some AC/DC songs. But I tell you what I have learned. There is a whole bunch of it I simply cannot listen to as a Christian. Our questioner asked about songs putting our minds where they should be. I am very concerned about the secular songs that put our minds where they should not be. Not every secular song leads our minds into the depths of sin, but a great number of them do as they glorify drinking, sexual immorality and drug use. **Ephesians 5:11-12** is very clear. We are not to have fellowship with those sinful things. If it is shameful for us to speak about them, then it is shameful for us to listen to them, sing along with them or watch them in the videos. Can you listen to and be entertained by secular music? Certainly. But be careful that you are not fellowshiping with sinful things by what you are singing along with.

### **Conclusion:**

That's it for March's Questions and Answers. I hope it was helpful to you. Remember, you can submit your questions at any time by filling out one of the forms on the phone stand outside Edwin's office and submitting in the appropriate box that is also right beside the office.