



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Let the Dead Bury the Dead

by Mike Thomas

There are times when Jesus' teaching appeared heartless and uncompassionate yet were filled with love and profound insight. This was the case when He responded to a man who asked for permission to go bury his father. Jesus said, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22). What did our Lord imply in that statement?

Obviously, Jesus neither forbade funerals nor did He consider it a loss of faith to mourn the passing of a loved one. One of the most popular verses in the Bible is "Jesus wept" (John 11:35), which occurred when His friend Lazarus died. Lazarus' sister, Mary, was having an especially hard time, which "when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" (verse 33). The Son of Man was (and still is) moved with compassion by the suffering and emptiness that death brings us.

The point Jesus was making regarding burying the dead was that nothing is to come before following Him, not even human relationships. It is likely the man's father had not yet died, but would eventually, and the man was putting off following Jesus until that occurred. If so, it shows how people will let the slightest excuse keep them from obeying Jesus. There is always one more thing to do before giving their lives to the Lord; always one more matter to take care of before becoming a faithful Christian. "I'll go back to church when I don't have to care for my family." "I'll put the Lord first when I am older." "I'll obey the gospel after I quit this job." "I'll start studying the Bible again after ball season."

On and on the excuses flow, but that "day" of obedience never comes. There is always something more important coming up. Furthermore, they have convinced themselves that intending to serve God is just as good as actually serving Him, which is a lie. The prophet Samuel made that clear when he told a disobedient king (who thought he could disobey God as long as he made up for it in valuable offerings), "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

The sad reality is most people are dead spiritually and will remain that way forever, which is why Jesus said to let the dead bury the dead. They are "dead" while they live because of their devotion to sinful pleasure (1 Timothy 5:6). Consequently, everything they do in life, even as profound as burying a loved one, is of little significance and value. All of those "important" matters that had to be done will evaporate into oblivion when compared to eternity. Or as Jesus asked, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36) Unfortunately, most people will not realize that truth until they depart from this life – when it is too late to change (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Dear friend, be wise and find spiritual life today while you still "walk before the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalm 116:9). The day is coming when your time to repent will be taken from you. If you have not obeyed the gospel, you are still in sin and separated from Him (Acts 2:36-41). If you are a Christian in rebellion, you are bound by iniquity until you repent, pray, and confess to God (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Today is the day He has given you to walk by faith in Him. What in the world could be more important than finding eternal life? If Jesus would not let a man use the excuse of a funeral to keep him from obeying God, what could possibly be so important in your life to justify your disobedience? Meditate On These Things, April 2019 

# How to Answer When You Don't Know the Answer

- by Greg Gwin

No one likes to be 'put on the spot.' We dread the possibility of being asked questions that we can't answer. This is especially true when the questions are about religion.

Without a doubt, one of the biggest hindrances to spreading the gospel is this fear of being asked questions. Many Christians feel uneasy about their level of Bible knowledge. Thus, to avoid potentially embarrassing situations, they do their best to sidestep any discussion that might turn to religious themes. This is sad, because it keeps us from many 'open doors' for personal evangelism.

Since no one has ALL of the answers, it is important for us to know what to do when questions arise that 'stump' us. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Realize -- and be ready to explain -- that there are simply some pieces of information that we do not have because God has not supplied them. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29). But, we have "all truth" (John 16:12, 13), and "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). So, every piece of essential information has been supplied.
- 2) When you do not know the answer, it is best to simply admit it. This is much better than trying to 'bluff' your way through. Humbly say, "I don't know." But do not fail to add: "I'll find out and get back to you on that." Following this procedure will actually provide additional opportunities to teach. It keeps the door open to further discussions.
- 3) Study, study, study! You will feel less intimidated and more willing to engage in biblical discussions if you build your confidence level by increasing your Bible knowledge. Pay special attention to areas where you presently feel 'weak' in knowledge and understanding. Be well prepared to deal with popular denominational errors. Be ready to explain 'issues' that divide brethren.
- 4) Never shy away from a chance to talk about God and His Word. The more you do this, the easier it will become. Every such conversation serves as an opportunity for you to 'sharpen your sword.'

## God's Wondrous Creation

Genesis 1:21 "So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*."

One bird that God created is the Malleefowl. This bird must incubate its unhatched chicks between  $t 84.2^{\circ}$  -  $100.4^{\circ}$ . To achieve this constant range of temperature the bird builds a 3' x 10' hole in the ground, fill it with items to develop a type of compost. As the materials decompose heat is generated. The male Malleefowl using his bill and tongue will monitor the temperature of the heap of eggs laid at various states of the process. If the area is getting too hot, make changes to the nest by exposing the eggs to air, by layering sand on top to screen the sun. If too cool, the male will expose to the sun or cover at night to retain heat.

When the chick is hatched it spends hours lying on its back digging its way out of the hole. When it emerges, it is fully feathered and ready to fly and collect its own food. The parents give no further care and amazingly, they know just how to repeat the process of creating a nest and monitoring it.

Is this incredible example a product of random chance over the course of massive amounts of time or is it the design of an INTELLIGENT DESIGNER? I believe the latter, how about you? *Stacy Crim*