

119

MINISTRIES

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Answering Your Questions (Paul’s Name, Hunting & Fishing, Dancing, Call No Man Teacher, etc.)

NOTE: This teaching contains several references that parents may not wish for their children to hear. Viewer discretion is advised.

119 Ministries receives thousands of emails a year. And as you would expect, many of those emails contain questions. Quite often, we repeatedly receive various forms of the same questions. Ideally, we would like to have a teaching available for every question we receive, however, some questions can be answered rather briefly, and do not require a regular length teaching to serve as a response. That’s the purpose of this teaching series, to offer an easily available vehicle to answer your common questions.

In this teaching series, we will read a collection of hand-picked questions that we have received via email. Then, for whatever it is worth, we will offer a brief response, hopefully leading those interested in the right direction to find the answers that they are seeking.

So, let’s get started.

Question 1: When and why was the apostle Paul’s name changed from Saul to Paul?

Answer: It wasn’t. The apostle Paul had a Hebrew name, *Shaul*, which is translated into English as “Saul,” and he also had a Greek name, *Paulos*, which is translated as “Paul.” We see in Acts 13 that he went by both names:

Acts 13:9

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him...

In first-century Israel, multiple languages were spoken, including Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. It was not unusual for people in first century Israel to have different names in different languages. Besides Saul/Paul, we see multiple names for some of the other apostles as well. Barnabas is one example:

Acts 4:36

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus...

“Joseph” comes from the Hebrew name *Yosef*, but *Barnabas* is an Aramaic name. So, Barnabas had a name in Hebrew and a name in Aramaic. Simeon also had two names:

Acts 13:1

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger...

“Simeon” is the English translation of the Hebrew name *Shimon*, but “Niger” is a Latin name. Again, he had names in multiple languages. Finally, we see that Thomas had two names as well:

John 21:2

Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin)...

“The Twin” in Greek is *Didymus*. “Thomas” comes from the Aramaic name *Ta'ma*, which also means “twin.” So, Thomas had an Aramaic name and a Greek name, Simeon had a Hebrew name and a Latin name, Barnabas had a Hebrew name and an Aramaic name, and Paul had a Hebrew name and a Greek name. Paul’s name was never changed from Saul, but like other people in his day, he had different names in different languages.

Question 2: Is it a sin to consume caffeine or sugar? They are both addictive substances, so shouldn’t they be avoided?

Answer: It is not a sin to consume caffeine or sugar. The Bible does not prohibit the consumption of caffeine or sugar, nor does it say anything about addictive substances. However, both caffeine and sugar can cause health problems if large quantities of them are consumed. Too much caffeine can cause sleep disorders and headaches, and too much sugar can cause a number of problems, most notably type 2 diabetes. Since God gave us our bodies, we should not destroy them for no good reason. So, while it is not a sin to consume caffeine or sugar, we would advise that you do so in moderation, so that they will not make you sick.

Question 3: Are ducks clean to eat? What about turkeys?

Answer: Yes, both ducks and turkeys are clean to eat. The birds that are unclean are listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Leviticus 11 says:

Leviticus 11:13

And these you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are detestable...

This verse is followed by a list of birds that are unclean and not allowed to be eaten. Neither ducks nor turkeys are on that list. Deuteronomy 14 says much the same thing:

Deuteronomy 14:11-12

You may eat all clean birds. But these are the ones that you shall not eat...

Again, this verse is followed by a list of birds that are not to be eaten, and again, neither ducks nor turkeys are on the list. Since neither ducks nor turkeys are prohibited, they are clean, and are therefore permitted.

Question 4: Is it a sin to dance?

Answer: It is not a sin to dance. Nowhere does the Bible prohibit dancing. In fact, the Bible speaks positively about dancing in many places. For example:

Psalms 149:3

Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

Jeremiah 31:13

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

While dancing itself is not a sin, this does not mean that dancing is always good. The dances described in Scripture were mostly ones that celebrated and glorified God. There are many dances, however, that do not serve this purpose, but instead are designed to arouse sexual attraction. Sexual attraction between a husband and wife is good, but it's a sin to have sex with someone whom you are not married to. Consequently, we would advise that you not engage in those kinds of dances unless it is with your husband or wife.

Question 5: Is it a sin to use a hook to catch fish?

Answer: No, it is not a sin to catch fish with a hook. The Bible does not give any instruction on how fish should be caught, killed, butchered, or cooked. The only instruction we are given about fishing is on which fish are clean to eat, and which are not. Those instructions are found in Leviticus 11:9-12 and Deuteronomy 14:9-10. So, you can use a hook, a net, a trap, a spear, or pretty much whatever you like to catch a fish.

Question 6: Is it a sin to go hunting?

Answer: No, it is not a sin to go hunting, nor is it a sin to eat meat from animals that have been hunted, provided that those animals are clean as prescribed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. There is no passage from the Bible that prohibits hunting. Not only that, but the Bible explicitly permits hunting in Deuteronomy 12:

Deuteronomy 12:20-24

When the LORD [YHWH] your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you crave meat, you may eat meat whenever you desire. If the place that the LORD [YHWH] your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the LORD [YHWH] has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your towns whenever you desire. Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, so you may eat of it. The unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life

with the flesh. You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

Verse 22 says, “[just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten](#).” Gazelle and deer were not domesticated; they were wild animals that had to be hunted. YHWH tells us that we can eat animals from our herd or flock just like we can eat animals that we hunt. This means that we can eat hunted animals. The only stipulation is that we must not eat the blood from the animal, but we must pour it out on the ground.

Question 7: Is it a sin to hunt on the sabbath?

Answer: On the sabbath, we are commanded to rest from our work. Some people may say that hunting is a restful activity, and so it is not really work. It is certainly true that sitting in a deer stand or a turkey blind can be very relaxing. However, anyone who hunts knows that once you have shot an animal, that’s when the work begins. Consider what you have to do after you’ve shot a deer. You will likely have to track the animal, following the trail of blood for potentially hundreds of yards. When you find it, you will have to field dress it to remove its entrails. Then, you will have to drag the hundred-pound carcass out of the woods so that it can be refrigerated. It will need to be skinned, and depending on how much space you have, it may need to be quartered. This is all a lot of work; it is certainly not “resting.”

When we get down to it, the real reason people want to hunt on the sabbath is because, for many, the weekend is the only time they have to pursue that hobby. So, if they can’t hunt on the sabbath, then they won’t get to hunt much at all. To those people, we would say this: do you value your hobbies more, or God’s word more? Are you willing to work on the sabbath so that you can practice your hobbies? You will have to make a choice. It’s also worth mentioning that you can still go in the woods and relax on the sabbath. What you cannot do is all of the work that’s involved with catching and killing animals.

Question 8: Can illegitimate children get married?

Answer: Yes. The Bible does not require anyone to remain unmarried. The Torah does restrict certain people from marrying certain other people; for example, a priest cannot marry someone who has been divorced (Leviticus 21:7), and nobody is allowed to marry his own sister (Leviticus 18:9). However, nobody is commanded to remain unmarried. There are only some specific kinds of marriages that are not allowed.

So then, why is the question even asked? Why do people think that a child of an illegitimate marriage cannot get married? Well, this idea comes from traditions surrounding Deuteronomy 23:2, which says that “[No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD \[YHWH\]](#).” Some people think this means that children of illegitimate unions cannot get married, but this verse says nothing about marriage. As we explain in our teaching, [Excluded From the Assembly](#), this law has to do with being part of the leadership in the nation of Israel. It does not have anything to do with marriage.

Furthermore, we should consider that Abraham married his half-sister (Leviticus 20:12)—a marriage that the Torah considers illegitimate (Leviticus 18:9). If the descendants of “illegitimate” marriages could not get married, then no descendant of Abraham could ever get married. This, obviously, cannot be what God intends. For Abraham’s descendants to become as innumerable as the stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5), they would have to get married.

Now, there is a Jewish teaching that forbids Jews from marrying certain kinds of people, including those

born to partners who were not legally married (*Mishneh Torah*, Forbidden Intercourse 15:2). However, this teaching is based on the notion that the “assembly of Israel” is referring to people who are born Jewish:

“The congregation of converts is not considered as "God's congregation."”

- *Mishneh Torah*, Forbidden Intercourse 15:7 (translation by Eliyahu Touger, Moznaim Publishing. www.sefaria.org)

This premise is flatly contradicted by Paul, who says that converts are “brought near” by the blood of Christ, and therefore are part of the congregation:

Ephesians 2:11-13

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

So, this Jewish teaching is based on a false premise. Aside from the fact that Deuteronomy 23:2 doesn’t say anything about marriage, the “assembly of Israel” cannot mean only genetic Jews. This teaching is based on ideas that contradict Scripture, and so it can be discarded.

Our next question follows a similar line of reasoning:

Question 9: Deuteronomy 23:3 prohibits Moabites from ever entering the congregation of YHWH. Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4), and Yeshua comes from Ruth (Matthew 1:5). So how can Yeshua be the Messiah?

Answer: We address the proper interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:3 in our teaching, [Excluded From the Assembly](#). The reason that Moabites were excluded from the assembly is because of their attempts to sabotage Israel as Israel was approaching the promised land (see Numbers 22:1-6; 25:1-9). The Moabites turned the Israelites to idolatry and sin. However, Ruth was not sinful and idolatrous. She was a true convert to Israel. She was loyal to YHWH and to her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi. As she said:

Ruth 1:16-17

...For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD [YHWH] do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.

Ruth was not trying to sabotage Israel. She wasn’t trying to worm her way into God’s people so that she could corrupt them. In fact, she did not even pursue marriage with Boaz until Naomi prompted her to (Ruth 3:1-5). Even though Ruth’s parents came from Moab, she could still be included in YHWH’s congregation, because she was faithful. Paul rightly understands that a person’s faith is far more significant than his genetic lineage. As he says:

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with

lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

Boaz and Ruth were both believers, so they were equally yoked. She was not the kind of Moabite who would turn Israel to sin. So, it is not a problem for Yeshua to have Ruth in his family tree.

Besides this, according to the Scriptures, the Messiah *has* to come from Ruth. King David was Ruth's great-grandson (Ruth 4:13, 17, 21-22), and the Messiah comes from David:

Ezekiel 34:22-24

I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD [YHWH], will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD [YHWH]; I have spoken.

(see also: Isaiah 11:1-10; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Ezekiel 37:21-27)

So, Yeshua coming from Ruth does not disqualify him from being the Messiah. In fact, it is just the opposite. If he did not come from Ruth, then he could not be the Messiah. Having this strong woman of faith in his lineage is an honor, not a dishonor.

Question 10: What did Yeshua mean when he said, “call no man teacher”?

Answer: Here is what Yeshua said in Matthew 23:8-10:

But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.

Some people take this instruction literally, saying that we should not call any man by the words “rabbi,” “father,” or “instructor.” However, this cannot be what Yeshua meant. Yeshua calls men “fathers” in Matthew 19:5, 19, and 29, so if he meant that we literally should call no man “father,” then he would have violated his own teaching. Furthermore, there is a bit of a practical problem if one were to take this literally. What should you call a man with children if you cannot call him a “father”? What should you call someone who teaches if you cannot call him a “teacher”? It doesn't make much sense for Yeshua to prohibit the use of specific words, especially when those words are useful and descriptive. So, then, if he isn't saying to avoid the use of particular words, then what *is* he saying? To answer this, let's look at the context of this passage. This passage is part of a string of condemnations that Yeshua speaks against the Pharisees. Let's start in verse 5 and read forward from there:

Matthew 23:5-12

They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

In context, we see that the Pharisees love attention and honor, and this is why they love being called “rabbi.” Yeshua tells his disciples to behave differently, though: the greatest among his disciples should be a servant, and whoever tries to exalt himself will be humbled. His point is that his disciples should not seek attention and honor in the way that the Pharisees do. So, he is not saying that we should avoid the words “rabbi,” “father,” and “instructor,” but rather that his disciples should not seek the attention and honor that people who are called those things receive. God and Messiah should receive attention and honor; the disciples, on the other hand, should be humble servants.

Another element to this is that the Pharisees and scribes formed their own sects, where a lead teacher or rabbi would create his own system of doctrines and gain his own following. This is why there were groups like Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes in the first place. Each one of them had their own renowned leaders, and their own system of Biblical interpretation and practice. By telling his disciples not to be called rabbi, and that he alone is their teacher, Yeshua is telling them not to splinter into different sects in the same way. The disciples should remain united under Christ’s teachings; they should not split into factions, where each disciple has his own group of followers.

Paul echoes this idea in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua], that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul’s point here is that all Christians should be united under Christ’s teachings, not divided between those who follow “Rabbi Paul” and those who follow “Rabbi Peter.” After all, Christ was the one who was crucified for them. He should receive the honor. This seems to be the same point Yeshua makes in Matthew 23:8-10. So, the issue is not the names or titles that people are called by, but rather, the issue is whether those people are seeking undue honor. Are they creating their own following, and gaining their own prestige and honor, or are they teaching people to follow Christ, and giving him the honor? So, it is fine for someone to use the terms “rabbi,” “father,” or “teacher,” but it is not fine for someone to start his own cult following and try to compete with the teachings of Christ.

That’s all of the questions that we have for this teaching. As always, if you have questions for 119 Ministries, please use the [Contact Us page](http://119ministries.com/contact-us) offered on our website, <http://119ministries.com/contact-us>. If you do contact us, thank you in advance for your patience as our team works to respond.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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