



Don't Claim The Bible Says It ... - Part 2 by Gerald Cowan

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

DON'T CLAIM THE BIBLE SAYS IT IF IT DOESN'T ACTUALLY SAY IT - Part 2

We continue here with a few more common misquotations and misapplications of what the Bible says, but doesn't. Some of these things may sound so good that people want them to be true, hope they are true, and will resent being told they aren't true. We must not use specious or invalid arguments to "prove" our points and lead others astray from God's truth. There's a lot of "chimney corner scripture" and "old wives (or tradition-bound Christian) tales" that need to be eradicated and erased from our preaching and teaching, especially those that pander to human desires and practices. There are more in this category than we have time or space to answer, but we are attending to some of the more egregious examples in this essay.

DOES THE BIBLE SAY THAT WHAT OTHERS DO AND BELIEVE IS NOT YOUR BUSINESS AND YOU SHOULD LEAVE OTHERS ALONE AND MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

The purpose of the promised Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into all the truth and enable them to guide all others into that same truth of God (**John 16:7-14**). The Holy Spirit would rebuke and reprove the world of sin and impress the necessity for righteousness and judgment, of the way to glorify the Lord while saving the souls of self and others seeking salvation. All Christians are charged with teaching what Christ commanded and what inspired persons disseminated in his name (**Matthew 28:18-20**; **1 Corinthians 2:12-15**). We are taught not to ignore the sins of others but to bring them to a knowledge of the truth so they can be saved (**Romans 10:8-15**). We are to preach and teach faithfully what has been taught and preached to us by such men as apostle Paul (**1 Timothy 4:1-4**; **2 Timothy 4:1-4**) so that in preaching the gospel we may in fact save some (**1 Corinthians 9:16**, **1 Corinthians 9:22b-23**; **Acts 20:27**). Those who have fallen away from the truth (which we are able to discern from their words and actions and way of life) are to be confronted and if possible led to repent and return and be restored to their place in and with Christ (**Galatians 6:1**; **James 5:16**). Sometimes a direct rebuke is required (**Luke 17:3**; **2 Timothy 4:2**). Our desire is not limited to accepting and being accepted by others but more in being right with God. Since we are often not able, or not willing, to see ourselves as we are we need others to be auxiliary eyes and helpers to our conscience. We should serve in the same way for them. Our business actually is first to save ourselves (**Acts 2:40**; **Philippians 2:12-13**) and then to save others by converting them from the errors of their ways (**James 5:19-20**).

There's no doubt that some will tell us, "Mind our own business and stay out of mine." I've been told often, you probably have too, "When I want your opinion I'll ask for it. Until then, keep it to yourself." It's true of many, their mind is made up and they do

not want to be confused with a presentation of facts that might contradict or change their point of view.

DOES THE BIBLE SAY EVERY PERSONS IS RESPONSIBLE ONLY FOR HIMSELF AND SHOULD NOT EXPECT HELP FROM OTHERS OR GIVE HELP TO OTHERS? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

This overlaps the previous paragraph about minding your own business. "If you are wrong and headed for punishment and torment it's not my problem, it's your own fault, not mine, so I'm staying out of it. Just take care of yourself in your own way and don't bother me with your problems." How does that callous and indifferent attitude sound? How would you feel if God said that to you when you ask Him for help with your problems?

Now, to the point: each person is responsible for himself. Not so much for the problems, tests, trials, and temptations confronting him but for the response he makes to those things when they appear. Others cannot choose for us; God will not choose for us. We are required to make our own choices, our own responses. We cannot shift the blame to others for choices or bad responses we make. We will give an account to God – no excuses, because there are none – for everything we have done, whether it be good or bad (**2 Corinthians 5:10-11**).

If we expect help from others when we are in trouble or in error, we must be willing to give the same kind of help to others. Some parts of one's burdens can only be borne by the person himself, but some parts can be shared by others (**Galatians 6:2, 5, Galatians 6:10**). Did you know that this principle applies with Christ too? We expect him to bear our burdens, our "cross," but he expects us to take up his cross and carry it with him – His cross becomes our cross too (**Matthew 11:28-30**). He works in us both to will and to do what pleases him (**Philippians 2:13**). The Lord is not a facility or place to dump our burdens, troubles, and problems and leave them for Him to resolve or dispose of or lift from us. Many of God's blessings are conditional: if we do not do our part He will not do it for us. Note for example: if you want mercy you must be merciful to others (**James 2:13**). If you want forgiveness you must be forgiving to others (**Matthew 6:14-15**). His requirements and commands are not burdensome, not impossible for us to bear (**1 John 5:3**).

DOES THE BIBLE SAY GOD LEADS US INTO TEMPTATION? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

Jesus does say, in the model prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13** that we are to pray that God will lead us not into temptation. Does that imply that God is leading us into temptation or will do so and we want Him not to do it, or to stop doing it? Be very careful what you accuse God of doing and what you blame God for. As we suggested in Part 1 of this essay (it might be helpful to re-read that before continuing here), people have a penchant for thinking everything that happens is by the sovereign will and decision and direct action of God. This leads to the common complaint: "God, why did You do that to me, why are you doing this to me?" So, "lead us not" or "stop leading us that way" would imply an attempted subversion of God's sovereignty and God's will by us.

To say God leads us into temptation or places stumbling blocks in our way is to charge that He does tempt us, allowing or forcing us to choose whether to do (even wrong things) or not. But that would contradict what is plainly taught in **James 1:13**.

God does not tempt us to do any evil or make any sinful response to temptation. We cannot tempt Him or persuade Him to do any wrong or sinful thing: *God cannot be tempted with evil* – He has no desire for and no inclination to accept or be persuaded by any improper thing, as James clearly states. But He does allow us to be tempted (by “the tempter, the evil one). He requires, that we who do desire and can be persuaded to seek and accept improper things, be faced with a choice. In this case the choice is a temptation, a test, a trial (the word **PEIRASMOS** in the text here has all those possible meanings). We seem to focus on temptation as an invitation and inducement to evil. That will never come from God, though He may allow it to come from others or from within ourselves. But God does in fact present us with tests and choices – He tested Abraham in that way (*God did tempt Abraham, Genesis 22:1* KJV, other versions say God *tested* Abraham). Making the wrong choice, based on personal lust – yielding to it and doing it – is sin, and the result is death (**James 1:14-16**). which is not God’s choice or His desire. But he makes a way to counter and conquer the temptation, pass the test, and escape the consequences of failure. That is the point we emphasized earlier: work with God, endure the test, trial, temptation, trouble or tragedy and take the way of escape He provides (**Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 10:13**).

A proper reading of **Matthew 6:13** really provides us with a proper understand of what Jesus says we should pray for. “*Lead us not into temptation but **deliver us from evil (from the evil one)***. Test us and prove us Lord, but give us a way to succeed; protect us from evil, let our faith in You and Your Christ and Your Holy Spirit and Your word be the shield that wards off and quenches all the fiery darts and missiles and tools, all the temptations of the devil (**Ephesians 6:11, 16**). God, please be our *way of escape* from all evil and from our own evil desires.” We should also ask God to help us resist and refuse to present improper tests and temptations to others (**Romans 14:13**). People who tempt and persuade others to fall, who put a “stumbling block” in the way of others are better and no closer to God that the ones who stumble and are led away by them – even if they themselves do not do the things they tempt and persuade others to do. Do not do to others what God does not do to you.

– ***This topic requires at least one additional segment, coming next.***

—- *Gerald Cowan, Personal Periodicals Number 660, July 28, 2021*