



"There can be no peace between you and Christ while there is peace between you and sin."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

08-Nov-19

Is It Salvational? (Part Three)

The "Is it salvational?" approach can be dangerous in two ways. The first is the obvious risk of misjudging a matter, declaring something to be minor that [God](#) considers to be major. The wretched cancer of [sin](#) entered [the world](#) when Adam disregarded what God said and instead heeded his wife in the "minor" matter of food ([Genesis 3:6](#), 17; [Romans 5:12](#)). Similarly, mankind believes that which animals they eat to be unimportant, yet God declares it a matter of [holiness](#) ([Leviticus 11:45](#)). Holiness and unholiness affect the relationship. Nadab and Abihu were careless in their service, and it cost them their lives ([Leviticus 10:1-3](#)). [King David](#) ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be moved in an unorthodox way, and when Uzzah reflexively tried to steady the Ark, it cost him his life ([II Samuel 6:3-7](#)).

This series began with a man's observation that whether one keeps the seventh day holy or not is not salvational. Yet the [Sabbath](#) is not merely the seventh day; it is *the time* the Creator God personally blessed and sanctified ([Genesis 2:3](#)). Dedicated time is foundational to any relationship, and God has consecrated a regular space of time each week when He desires us to set aside all other ordinary and temporal cares. He reserved a time protected and dedicated to the spiritual things—to the relationship.

Despite God's commandment, the Catholic Church boasts that it has the authority to change God's schedule, and the Protestant churches have followed without protest. They say that any time will do, as the day of worship is not salvational. Yet, if they cared about what their Creator thought, Ezekiel 20 and 22 would impress and sober them: God divorced Israel because she disregarded their unique relationship, and Sabbath-breaking was second only to idolatry in God's charge against her. Sabbath-breaking was a direct cause of Israel's destruction. Protestants claim, though, that God changed and no longer cares about His holy time. To them, it is a minor thing.

[Acts 5:1-11](#) tells the story of Ananias and Saphira, who, to make themselves look better, shaded the truth to the church leadership. Some might consider that to be a minor thing, but Peter said they lied to God. Ananias died on the spot. Peter offered Saphira the chance to recant, but she instead stuck to their story. She had the choice of which relationship to be loyal to but chose the wrong one. She, too, died on the spot.

We see these records of swift justice, but because we rarely witness the hammer fall in the normal course of life, we may think that God is not concerned—that hardly anything really matters. Thus Solomon says in [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#), "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Coupled with this misjudgment about how God thinks is misjudging our standing with God. That is, we may assume that we have a good relationship, and so, we can just keep living as we are. The [letter to Laodicea](#) provides a well-known but powerful example. The people's judgment of themselves is completely contrary to the evaluation of the Judge at the door ([Revelation 3:17-20](#)). It shows how easily we can assume that the relationship is fine, while [Jesus Christ](#) considers it to be just about over.

Another example of this misjudging and assuming appears in [Matthew 7:21-23](#):

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the [kingdom of heaven](#), but he who does the will of My Father in

heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

When Jesus returns and judges, it says *many* will be prohibited from entering the Kingdom and apparently surprised! They will recount their prophesying, casting out demons, and doing other wonders in His name. These *seem* like evidence of a good relationship—yet Jesus says He never knew them. His testimony is that they are practicing lawlessness. They think they know Him, yet really, they are just using Him to make themselves important. There is no relationship because they refuse to abide by His Word. Unconcerned about His instructions, they are thus practicing sin.

In addition to the risk of misjudging, a second danger in judging matters as either salvational or not salvational is the long-term effect on our character. Our minds adjust to our habitual thoughts, and those thoughts become our character. Little things matter. We dare not make a habit of dismissing things in God's Word simply because they do not seem all that important to us.

If this approach takes root, it becomes continually easier to explain away instructions and examples that our God gives for our benefit. Our conscience will adjust, and the gravity of God's words on us decreases with time. The danger is willful sin because, with time, we will train ourselves not to care what God says. Eventually, that most valuable of relationships will hold no value to us, even though eternal life is on the line.

God declares in [Isaiah 66:2](#) that the person He will look upon favorably is the one "who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word." Therefore, we must reverence His Word and try to live by all of it because of from whom it came. We must cherish what He tells us, even if it makes us feel uncomfortable and perhaps restricted.

From time to time, matters will crop up that we do not want to ask God about because we suspect we will not like His answer. Perhaps we fear that He will point out our spiritual nakedness and shame. But if we esteem and treasure

that most vital relationship, we will choose it above whatever we have to sacrifice, even if the matter does not *seem* salvational to us—because it very well could be.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Sabbathkeeping \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Keeping the right days on the calendar is no guarantee of attaining a right relationship with God. How and why a person keeps the Sabbath determines whether this test commandment is really a sign between God and His people or an idolatrous act of futility. The Sabbath could metaphorically represent a date between God and His affianced bride, a special 24-hour time to become more intimately acquainted, the actual courtship stage before marriage. Letting worldly concerns enter the Sabbath is like committing adultery or flirting with other lovers. When we take time to know God, we become refreshed, strengthened, and actually liberated from worldly entanglements.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[It's Not Our Time](#)

by David C. Grabbe

We live in a society that is increasingly concerned about ownership. We have a proclivity to assume ownership over things we find in our grasp. David Grabbe considers this principle in relation to the Sabbath. Who owns it—and how does the answer to this question affect our keeping of it?

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
