

Article Title— “A Party Game”

Article Category— The Visible Church

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Why do Atheists and Secular Humanists and Occultists believe what they believe about the Bible and Christianity? Why do Moslems and Buddhists and Hindus and Jews and Catholics and Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons and Pentecostals and Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians and Lutherans and Episcopalians believe what they believe about Christianity and the Bible? Why do you believe what you believe? Do you teach others?

Quick! How many different children’s party games can you recall? Ever play the one called “Gossip?” If so, the following description of it will amuse you all over again. If you are not yet familiar with it you may catch up on loads of fun and gain some valuable human nature insight, to boot. Read on for a brief description of the fascinating children’s party game called “Gossip.”

With the children lined up single-file, an adult leader explains the game’s simple rules and its two objectives. She might say, “The important thing is (A) to listen very carefully, so that you’ll be able (B) to whisper the message, accurately, to the next person in line. Then, from the last player in line, we’ll learn how well you’ve all listened and how accurately you’ve delivered the original message, as a team.” After reading a short written message, the first player gives it back to the game leader and the game begins.

More players mean longer games. Longer games always yield hilarious distortions of the original messages. Remember that, please—and this, too: Throughout most of the 2,000 years since Jesus walked here, literacy was the exception. Today, it is the civilized norm. Still, though, millions of Believers trust “experts” to interpret scripture for them, as if they can’t read with understanding. The people they trust with all their hearts, their preachers, trust denominational theologians. Those theologians hold one another accountable to...well, their respectively franchised “what ‘we’ believe” platforms. What could have possibly gone wrong with that scenario over a period of 2,000 years? Suffice it to say that Satan is surely ecstatic. The gates of Hell have observably prevailed against the visible church.



You may know that there are shocking contrasts in the interpretation of critical scriptures among the denominations. Our professionals, the religious elite, have been playing multiple separate games of “Gossip” for. Those 2,000-years-long games have predictably distorted God’s original message, even in our mainstream denominations. That’s no surprise, of course, but there’s great news: We still have God’s original message—in writing! Shouldn’t we throw out all the new stuff? Some of it is hilarious.

> “Today’s new time religions masquerade with remarkable success as old time religion.”

Our self-assured teachers often seek to bedazzle us. Assertively, they utter things like, “What this scripture means is...” And when they wish to project exceptional spiritual credibility they say things like, “God showed me that this scripture means...” Parishioners who think their clergymen are “special” in God’s eyes nod faithfully in blind agreement. If that statement perplexes you, please click on the following link to read the Intro to our current Online Bible Study series:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_8970c599df804293ab8f4ae48c00f549.pdf

Often, when a discerning parishioner questions an interpretation of Scripture, a self-serving teacher will respond cleverly (like a politician) with something like, “In matters like this, dear sister, you just have to have faith.”

That’s an awful lot of *Faith Equity*™ to invest in other human beings; don’t you think? To have that much faith in God and his sensibly interpreted written word would be the smart thing to do. But these are those last days, when people won’t endure

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.
I knew what my denomination believed and that’s what I taught.
Yes, I should’ve checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn’t I do that? Well, maybe I didn’t do that for the same reason that you haven’t really checked out what your denomination teaches.

“In religion and politics, people’s beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination.” —Samuel Clemens



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sound doctrine. Popular doctrines somehow feel more “religious” and “spiritual”...and they’re more comfortable and convenient, too, you know. It’s just that Human Nature (i.e.: the Sin Nature) is like water; consistently and predictably it follows the course of least resistance. That profound insight prompted the apostle, Paul, to write his bombshell messages about using our minds and not our hearts when it comes to rightly dividing of the word of truth:

- > “Change the way you think!” —Paul, at Romans 12:2, sensibly paraphrased
- > “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” —Paul, at Philippians 2:5
- > “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” —Paul, at 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- > “God has given us the spirit of a sound mind.” —Paul, at 2 Timothy 1:7, sensibly paraphrased

The prophet, Jeremiah, was clearly acquainted with the folly of thinking with one’s feelings:

- > “The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?” —Jeremiah 17:9

Proverbs 28:26 renders that scriptural wisdom with a lot more *umph*:

- > “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...”

You can do this! Your own literacy and intellect can get you the original truth. The written message of truth is actually rather simple and easy to understand—for those who will learn to study God’s written word as-if-no-one-had-ever-explained-what-it-means. Those who would have you believe it is too complex and difficult to understand seek to preserve their employment and income security. For multiple centuries, members of the clergy were delighted that parishioners couldn’t read.

The lofty, intellectual, Pharisee-like theology and all that “deeper meaning” stuff can surely wait long enough for us to put an end to the 2,000-year games of “Gospel Gossip.” We can do that by getting the very basic critical stuff straight, first. (One of my favorite quotes is from Vince Lombardi: “Gentlemen, this is a football.”)

There are critical differences between sincere Believers and fruitful Disciples. The visible church has done a respectable job of making Believers...

Many, including clergy, may not consciously know why they believe whatever they have come to believe about the Bible and Christianity. It is likely that most have passively subordinated their personal understanding to one of the theologically elite societies, each of whom claims a divine monopoly on scriptural interpretation. Observably, many of the uninformed have simply defaulted to the doctrine to which they were respectively first introduced; e.g.: “Momma was a saint! Her religion’s gotta be the right religion!”

In 2006, I organized a group of multi-denominational friends for some serious Bible study. Jointly and severally, we have been prompted to reexamine our own respective beliefs on several important Bible topics. In the process of following through on that objective, we have gained compassion for others who will feel compelled to embark on their own active (as opposed to passive) searches for original truth. Might that include you?

- > “...(God) is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. ”

Each must acquire truth, for himself. Active searching for truth is effective. **Passive searching** is more comfortable, **but it can only yield confirmation of denominational dogma.** While denominational theologies may feature elements of Bible truth, their foundations are typically constructed of collections of derivative works[^]. The www.Link1.info site can help you learn why and HOW to search effectively and efficiently for God’s 1st-Century truth.


- [^]Follow this link to info on that topic: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_b3f6d1f0bdb2476585fc8b3b7808dc9b.pdf

You are literate. You are intelligent. You have no rational reason to think the religious elite have a greater ability to interpret the really important parts of God’s word for you. Yes, many of them have studied for “deeper meaning” and we should admire that quality in them. But, if they are fellow servants of God they will be delighted to learn that you have decided to begin a new study of critical scripture, this time as-if-no-one-had-ever-explained-what-it-means.

My Bible study colleagues and I have discovered that much of what we had respectively been taught in our various church experiences is simply not true. Some of it is dangerous. Our teachers were educated and sincere, just like yours. So were their teachers...and their teachers ...and their teachers! Yes, we were disappointed to learn that they all gained most of their understanding of Scripture from OTHERS. Those good people you trust, who do they trust?

“Gospel Gossip.” Gotta stop that game! But don’t make up your mind about any of this until you’ve done what those more-noble Bereans did, at Acts 17:11. You may want to re-examine that verse in several different versions of the Bible. Here’s a refresher—


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- > The Thessalonian and Berean Jews were both extremely skeptical of the Gospel message. The Thessalonians quickly *poopoo'd* it and went on their blissfully ignorant way. By stark contrast, the Bereans went home with their still-fresh questions about that message and started digging into their own scriptures...to learn if what they'd just heard just might be true. *That's* why they're called "more noble" at Acts 17:11.

—T. C. Newsome 

PS: To participate in Bible discussions about articles like this one – or to just read and enjoy them – join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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