

## QUESTIONS FOR JESUS: "LAWFUL?"

**THESIS:** Do God's Will

**TEXT:** Mark 2:23—3:6

**OPEN:** What does it mean to do God's will? Is it such the mystery some people make it out to be? In **Mark 2:23—3:6** let's discover what it means to do God's will any day.

**Mark 2:23-24** "One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. <sup>24</sup>The Pharisees said to Him, 'Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?'"

**Historical:** When the grain in the wheat field has passed the "milk stage," and has begun to harden, it is considered delicious to eat raw. The Mosaic Law had a provision in it to help take care of the poor in connection with the grain harvest (*Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, p. 179). The Pharisees did not complain that the grain was picked, but that it was gathered on the Sabbath (*Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 349). According to Jewish tradition, harvesting—which is what Jesus' disciples technically were doing according to the tradition of the Pharisees and teachers of the law—was forbidden on the Sabbath (*Archaeological Study Bible*, p. 1626).

**Historical:** The **Sabbath** (Greek: *sabbaton*) means to abstain from, interrupt, or the observance of the seventh day of each week. This holy rest day was also a day of assembly when the principal synagogue service was conducted. Family and friends shared a common meal together (*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p. 441).

**Exodus 20:8-11** "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

**Illustration: Benjamin H. Spalink: "I Used To Think I Don't Have To Go To Church"**

"I used to think I don't have to go to church to be a Christian. I was confident that nowhere in the Bible did it say I should go to church. However, I read Ephesians 4:11-12 'It was He (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.' Then I wondered if Christ gave pastors and teachers to prepare me for works of service, shouldn't I use them? Then I read Heb 10:25 'Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' I realized that being together with other Christians is how God intends to encourage me to do what is right. Then I read Matthew 16:18-19 where Jesus says, 'On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.' I discovered that Christ built the church—He owns and protects it. I also read Matthew 18:20 'For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them.' I learned that when His followers gather to worship Him—He joins them. I was convinced that Christians should go to church, but how could I convince my friends? Some were bothered by how some church people behave. I was also hurt by things other members did. However, I remembered Ephesians 4:32 'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.' Another of my friends said to me: 'I don't need others to have a relationship with God. I can be a Christian by myself.' I showed him 1 Corinthians 12:12, 21, 27 'The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ...The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you'...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' My friend's final objection was the biggest: "Sunday is the

only chance we have to relax.” Then I remembered what Jesus says about priorities: “Seek first (God’s) kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

**Mark 2:25-28** *“Jesus answered, ‘Have you never read what (King) David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? <sup>26</sup>In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.’ <sup>27</sup>Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup>So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’”*

“Have you never read?” The root problem of the Pharisees and teachers of the law was they did not know Scripture and thus—the will of God.

**Matthew 22:29** (regarding Sadducees disbelief in the resurrection) “Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.’” **Hosea 4:6** “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.”

**Illustration:** True or False: The Bible specifically says that “God helps those who help themselves.” True or False: The Bible specifically says that “money is the root of evil.”

**Application:** (*How to study the Bible and pray*)  
**Bible Study Approach**

1. Ways to enhance your Bible reading & study:
  - A. Begin your time in the Scripture with prayer.
  - B. Take notes on what you read. Write down your questions and discoveries.
  - C. What is the main subject of the passage and key verse?
  - D. Memorize a verse or phrase that encourages you.
  - E. Cross-reference key words (go to concordance in back of Bible or in the margin).
  - F. Make an action plan and do what Scripture says.
2. Select a passage or chapter in Scripture then answer the following as you read/study:
  - A. Is there a commandment to obey?
  - B. Is there a sin to repent of?
  - C. Is there a promise to claim?
  - D. Is there a praise of God?

**Mark 3:1-6** *“Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. <sup>2</sup>Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath. <sup>3</sup>Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, ‘Stand up in front of everyone.’ <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus asked them, ‘Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’ But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. <sup>6</sup>Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”*

**Historical:** The Herodians were influential Jews who favored the Herod family dynasty, meaning they ultimately were supporters of the pagan Roman government. The Pharisees detested the oppressive Roman Empire, but their hatred of Jesus and the will of God was greater.

**v4** *“Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’ But they remained silent.”*

Do not remain silent – do good every day of the week in the name of the Lord. Express interest in the eternal salvation and the daily well-being of others.

**Application:** Pray about and make a “Do Good List.” Assign a deadline by which to accomplish these blessings. Check it off as you accomplish them and look forward to feeling better. Also, list and pray for those you know who need to believe in the Lord and be baptized and obey His Word.

**John 7:16-18** “Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not My own. It comes from Him who sent Me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but He who works for the honor of the One who sent Him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about Him.’”

**Illustration:** Last November Vera Lesley’s daughter Debora emailed her a photo from the Bible Museum in Washington, D.C. Debora said in her accompanying communication: “I never knew this about Vincent van Gogh. Definitely changes some of the Impressions that I had of him.” A display quote from Vincent van Gogh in a letter to Theo van Gogh in 1877 reads: “I cannot tell you how much I sometimes long for the Bible. I read it daily, but I would really like to know it by heart and to see life in the light of that phrase, ‘Your word is a light for my path and a lamp for my feet.’”

**CLOSE:** Let’s see that light of life—do God’s will by doing good every day of the week and thus experience the joy of the Lord.

