

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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SPIRITUAL NOT'S

John Edwards

The Bible is full of not's. The word “not” appears in over 5,500 passages and expresses prohibition — in no way; to no degree. I'd like to make us aware of six spiritual not's.

AVENGE NOT

YOURSELVES. The first inclination of many, when mistreated, is to get even. The Bible says, “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (Rom. 12:19).

LIE NOT. Colossians 3:9 records, “*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*” Many have a real problem telling the truth. God will not tolerate lying. Just ask Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10).

NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING. The Hebrew writer commanded, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...*” (Heb. 10:25). The word is not “assembly”, but “assembling”. This suggests continuous activity, and takes in every assembly of the saints. When we choose to not assemble with the saints, any time the saints assemble, we are guilty of forsaking the assembling!

SPEAK NOT EVIL. There is a real need for us to practice James 4:11, “*Speak not evil one of another, brethren...*” To speak evil one must think evil, “*for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*” (Mt. 12:34). Some seem to sit around and think up evil concerning their brethren. We are told that love “*thinketh no evil*” (1 Cor. 13:5). If you love your brother, you will think and say nothing but good about him.

SWEAR NOT. Many today, even among the people of God, swear and think nothing of it. We need to be reminded of the words of the beloved apostle, “*But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation*” (Jas. 5:12).

LOVE NOT THE WORLD. John wrote, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 Jn. 2:15). Worldliness has caused many to dress, talk, think and act like the world. Yet we are to “*be not conformed to this world*” (Rom. 12:2). To befriend the world is to make yourself the enemy of God (Jas. 4:4), and you don't want God as an enemy!

WORDS WITH MULTIPLE MEANINGS

John Edwards

Words often take on different meanings. The meaning of a word is determined by the context in which it is used. The first rule of Grammar states: “No word is a part of speech until it first appears in context.” This writing calls to our attention some Bible words with more than one meaning.

“FAITH.” Sometimes “*faith*” means to believe in something, like in Hebrews 11:6, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” Other times the word “*faith*” means the gospel. According to Galatians 1:23, Paul preached “*the faith*”. What did Paul preach, when he preached the faith? Galatians 2:2 says he preached the “*gospel*”.

“KINGDOM.” The word “*kingdom*” often has reference to the church as the Lord told Peter, “*I will build my church... And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom*” (Mt. 16:18-19). Sometimes “*kingdom*” refers to the heavenly state as Matthew 23:34 records, “*Come, ye*

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you..."

"HELL." "Hell", in the King James Version, sometimes means Hades, the realm of departed spirits, as in Matthew 16:18. Sometimes "hell" is used in reference to the abode of the wicked in Hades, like in Luke 16:23. And there are instances when "hell" is used to describe the eternal dwelling place of the wicked after the judgment (Mt. 10:28).

"HEAVEN." There are three heavens (2 Cor. 12:2).

"Heaven" can mean where the birds fly (Gen. 1:20), where the sun, moon and stars are (Gen. 1:14-18) or the dwelling place of God and promised eternal resting place of the saints (Rev. 21).

"ELDER." Many times the word "elder" just refers to an older man as 1 Peter 5:5 which says, "Submit yourselves unto the elder..." "Elder" is also used for an officer in the church (Acts 20:17). Words can even change meaning in the same chapter as in 1 Timothy 5 when "elder" in verse one means an older man and "elder" in verse nineteen refers to an officer in

the church.

False teaching and religious misunderstanding abound today due in part to a failure to realize that words often have different meanings. Let us carefully consider the context of a word to properly determine its usage.

WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO MARRY?

John Edwards

Not everyone has a Scriptural right to marry. Before one marries, he must make certain that he has the right to marry, and that the one he marries has the right to marry. So, who has the right to marry?

PERSONS NEVER MARRIED. Those who have never been married have a Scriptural right to marry as Paul said, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2).

PERSONS WHOSE SPOUSE HAS DIED. The Romans were

informed, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" (Rom. 7:2). If an individual's spouse has died, then that person has a right to marry.

PERSONS WHO PUT AWAY THEIR MATE FOR FORNICATION. According to the Lord's teaching in Matthew 19:9, when an individual's mate is guilty of fornication, the Lord gives the innocent party the right to put away the guilty party and marry another. If both parties commit fornication, then there is no innocent party.

PERSONS RECONCILING. 1 Corinthians 7 teaches, "Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband..." (vv. 10-11).

These are the only persons I remember reading about having the right to marry. Thus, for anyone else to marry is adultery! If you think someone else has a right to marry, who is it and where is the Scripture that grants that right?

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