

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Strange Fire Panel Question and Answer, Session 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: TM13-17

Strange Fire Conference

PHIL: Welcome back to the second Q&A and I need to introduce the panel again. You know John MacArthur, I have to say this about John. People frequently ask me, you know, what is John like when he's not preaching? And my answer is, "He's exactly what you see in the pulpit." He is a remarkable man and one of the most amazing traits of John is, you know, and you know this from his preaching that he's a man of great passion. He preaches with passion. He has a passion for the truth. I've known him now for probably 35 maybe close to 40 years, I have never once seen the man angry...ever. And it's kind of frustrating, you know. (Laughter), you know. Sometimes I'd like for him to, you know, share my anger, and all he does is ever call me down, and I appreciate that, John. Everybody around me appreciates that as well.

Of course you know Conrad, we heard him this morning. Conrad, we love you and I'm so grateful you're here. I wish we could hear more of you. Your messages both have been a blessing to me personally. And several people have stopped me on the patio and said, "Where could they buy your books. And you need to write more.

CONRAD: Thank you...Thank you.

PHIL: Get an editor.

CONRAD: I'll think about it.

PHIL: Get an editor, that's what he did.

JOHN: But not my editor, Conrad.

PHIL: Speaking of editors, Nathan Busenitz here to my left is one of the most gifted editors and thinkers and preachers and teachers, an amazing man and I have a hard time thinking of him as a man because I knew him when he was a boy and he was remarkable even then. But I love Nathan and he has actually...he's the one and someone should say this...he's the one who did all the heavy lifting in the editorial process on Strange Fire. So as you read it, you owe a great debt to Nathan for its clarity and the way...(Applause)...and Nathan is the one I go to when I have a question for John MacArthur and he says, "I don't know," I can always call Nathan. I shouldn't have let that secret out,

should I?

JOHN: No.

PHIL: I'll give you his e-mail if you see me afterwards...

TODD: You know that 35-year thing you were talking about, I think you're pushing it. It could be the day. Just saying.

PHIL: Thank you very much. And Todd Friel, I think, is probably the hardest working man in Christian radio and television. I spent one day with him once in Atlanta and it was non-stop from the time we got up until finally I was able to go to bed. He does every single day a television broadcast, two hours of live radio and to me live radios is a frightening thought, but he does it every single day. And he's best in the world at it, Todd, take us away.

TODD: Thank you very much. (Applause)

Phil Johnson is a liar. I can prove it. Hey, Phil, do you want to come on the radio and host and because I get to take a day off.

No, I can do it. I can't, I just can't talk on things. Okay, so, Phil, I've got a question about superlapsarianism. Forty minutes later he's done. Mr. I can never speak off the cuff. I don't think you open up your mouth and something smart doesn't come flying out. I couldn't possibly do live radio, I wouldn't know what to say.

PHIL: My kids would correct your perception on that. Lots of times I open my mouth and stupid stuff comes out.

TODD: I do have a question for you, though. Why is there a teenager on the panel? (Nathan) So young, isn't he? Okay, let's get started, we've got a lot of ground to cover. This is where the rubber meets the road segment. And so, gentlemen, my encouragement to you is be pithy. I want you to bring this down because we're going to leave here, many of us are here because we wrestle with the issues at home, so I want practical, I want helpful so that we can go back to our churches and engage in a loving truth-telling sort of way. So we depart from here, we're loaded with great teaching and theology and wonderful expository preaching, and it's big, but these days with vines being six seconds long, I need short because people have short attention spans, I know, I'm one of them. How do I keep this all that we have seen, all that we have heard, how do I keep this from getting into my church?

TODD: That was pithy, that was very pithy, let's go on. We might be done soon. Should let the vendors know.

JOHN: Was that short enough for you?

TODD: Yes it was, really....What are the safeguards?

JOHN: Yeah, I will be obviously coming from it from a pastoral perspective. I would say, rather than create a groundswell at the level of your friends that raises distrust in the leadership, I think the right thing to do would be with a humble heart to go to the leaders, the pastors, your teachers, the pastoral staff that you know and sit down with them and share your heart and even give them a copy of the book. And I say that because the arguments in the book are in the form that God delivered His message, written down, black ink on white paper, frozen, you can analyze it, you can compare it, you can contrast it, you can memorize it, you can think about it. If you just take the impressions of this week, they might...they could be misrepresented. You could get caught up a little bit in the emotion and not be able to make the case. But that's why the book is so very important. And I would in kindness and with humility and patience, put the book in the hands of the leaders of the church, or the folks that are responsible for your pastoral care, and say this is what's on my heart. Could you read this and then could we talk about this? I think that's when...that's a way to give honor to those who are over you in the Lord, as we're instructed to do.

You know, the last thing that I would want is someone to leave this conference and go and overturn a church and become revolutionary and make life difficult for pastors and leaders in a church. And then I get the blame for that for, you know, creating havoc. I get enough blame for creating havoc anyway. I don't mind the havoc that the truth creates, but I think handling truth as we even heard again this morning with Paul's instruction to Timothy with great patience and instruction. And I think you want to start at the top: leaders, elders, shepherds, pastors and let them have the opportunity to read it and think it through and then dialogue with you before you invade the church like some kind of alien and shake things up.

TODD: My experience is a lot of pastors, they're busy studying, counseling and they perhaps, you know, I've got a lot of free time, and I can be on the Internet a lot, looking at stuff and you see all of this stuff going on and you get a sense of how big it is, how do I help the pastor, the elder to recognize this is something while it may not be entering the church in its blatant form is making its way through the cracks, or can make its way through the cracks...how do I elevate their understanding and potential concern over this?

PHIL: You first have to have a platform, a legitimate platform to do that with your pastor. If you're not someone who has encouraged him and come alongside him and got to know him, then you don't really have the good platform to do that. So you need to do that as a church member anyway, know your pastor, encourage your pastor, be a friend to him and then you have a platform to correct his theology. The worst thing that happens in churches is churches are filled with people who are on the

periphery, they attend and sit on the sidelines and only approach the pastor ever if they want to criticize. There's nobody in the world responds well to criticism like that. So...so, do unto others as you would have them do unto you and starting with your pastor, especially if you have a concern for him and want to criticize him, you need to do it in a way, as John said, honors his place as the man God has put in the teaching role in that church.

JOHN: And I think, Todd, just to add because this is where we're going today, there are a lot of pastors who don't know where they are on this and they haven't addressed it and they've allowed all kinds of things to come together in the church that they've never thought about it critically. And part of the reason for that is no one has dealt with it. Already on the Internet I'm being hit pretty hard because this is some kind of a fixation with me, this is some kind of a long-term sort of enduring obsession with me. And I remind people that we've had...we've had 40-some years at Grace Community Church and we have never had a conference like this, never. This is not an obsession and these criticisms started coming two days in. I think there are a lot of people just don't know what they think. Some of the leaders that you're going to talk about today and we're going to hear from in these video clips admit that they don't know what to think. They don't know what to do with this. So that's why the book is so important because it makes a very thoughtful, very sound biblical theological case and I think that's where you need to start. Put it in their hands. And if they don't have the desire to even read it, they have to face the fact that that's being irresponsible for the shepherding of the flock. That's why I think the book's aspect of it is so important.

TODD: Okay, in a sentence, again don't hit the pastor after church he's done preaching. "Hey, you really need to get on this Jesus Culture business and walk out the door." But if I had to say in a sentence pithily, what do I say to the pastor to say "I'm giving you this book because...."

What? Why am I doing this? Why am I giving them this book? That will get him to go, "I think I need to read this thing."

JOHN: You know the way I would approach it and I think it's pretty simple is this is a deep spiritual burden to me. This is a matter of prayer for the church around the world and for our church and for you and for the people in our influence. This is Psalm 16, "Zeal for your house has eaten me up. The reproaches that fall on You are falling on me. This is an ache in my heart. This is of deep concern to me and I'd love to know if you share that concern would you be willing to read this?"

TODD: Yes, great question...yeah, that's great...that's great. It's not, "You need to read this and believe this. Read it, tell me what it is. Excellent. All right.

I see some of this entering into my church, whether it's the music, prophesying, hearing from God, and I'm...I'm...I know that it's in there, is there ever a point where I can determine the church has crossed a line and it's time for my family to go elsewhere?

(Silence.)

TODD: Thank you for pondering that. Okay.

PHIL: That's a...that's a really complex question because every situation is different. And I would have to ask a barrage of questions,

TODD: Principle us...

PHIL: Before I would counsel anyone on that, starting with...what are the other churches in your area like? How did you end up in this church? How long have you been there? You know, tell me what specifically your concerns are and all.

In the broad sort of principle category, I would say any church whose leadership has shown a willful failure to follow Scripture as their authority, I'd be inclined to encourage you, probably to find a better church. If it's just that you don't like the taste of music, you know, that you think there's too much percussion in the songs, or whatever...I'm less likely to encourage you to move on. And a lot of it depends on, you know, what other churches in your area?

When people come to me with that question, my first thought is not, "You know, how do we get you out of this mess?" But what is there in your church right now that you could do to exercise your spiritual gift to try to take that church from where it is to where it ought to be. Because there aren't any perfect churches. If you're looking for a perfect church, you're going to be frustrated. And when you find that perfect church, don't join it because you'll mess it up.

So I mean those are the big principles. But my first question is and the way I wish people would think is, "What is there in my spiritual giftedness that I could do to start to influence this church in the right direction." And if that is an utterly hopeless cause, then we can talk about maybe you ought to leave that church.

TODD: All right.

JOHN: And I think there's a biblical model that has always been helpful to me. If you were in Asia Minor at the end of the first century and you were in Ephesus and Ephesus is a church that left its first love, where did you go? You had nowhere to go. That's the only church. Or if you were in any of those other churches, except Smyrna and Philadelphia, you had epic issues going on to the degree that the Lord was going to remove the candle and judge the church.

But repeatedly, the Lord said to the church, "Blessed are those who have not soiled their garments." I think there are times when you're there and you're there like a believer in a marriage with a

unbeliever. You're the source of divine blessing on that...the people are blessed through you because you're receiving the blessing from God because of the faithfulness. So I think...I think it's important to understand that there were most times in church history, people couldn't run from place to place, to place, to place, to place. That was not only in the New Testament era, but long after that. I mean, see yourself throughout the history of the church and ask where did the true believers go? I mean, it was not uncommon for them to be stuck even in Roman Catholicism, before there was a breakout. So, I think, you know, we can't treat this like consumers.

And another thing to add to that is this, leadership in the church these days changes very rapidly. I don't know what the average stay of a pastor in a church is, but it's probably two or three years. People who run under one pastor, may regret it when the Lord in His goodness gets them another one. You want to be sure that you don't run before the Lord makes a change that could be to your blessing and to your benefit. So I think patience in that situation, as Phil said, using your gift, realizing that God has you there for a purpose.

And then one other thing. The Lord still has those churches in His hand. If there are believers there, they belong to Him. And they're in His hand. And He has the best for them. Having said all of that, I would say if there's a more faithful church preaching the Word of God faithfully in sound doctrine, and God is blessing that church, go there.

TODD: All right. I go home and I see ten things...the music is hypnotic, they're calling down the fire, the pastor is telling the congregation on occasion God, you know, he really felt the nudging prompting liver-shiver, and you see a lot of things that are causing you to go, "Yikes." How do I begin to approach it each and every issue? Do I deal with every single person? What is the best way to approach it if I'm sensing my church is a bit of a mess?

You're doing it again, Mount Rushmore, we need some answers here, people.

CONRAD: Well perhaps let me break my silence to answer something. I think we need to appreciate the fact that ultimately the behavior is the fruit of the person's belief. So you've got the fruit and the root. Instead of simply beginning to fight the fruits, the behavior, it would be important for you to help with the understanding, to help with the doctrinal roots from which all this is coming. Another example is if you look at the Pauline epistles, it's...it's always he deals with the doctrinal and then says therefore, you know this is wrong, or therefore, this is the way you ought to live. And therefore the issue that was raised earlier on in seeing what your gifts are, participating positively, warmly in the context of the church, winning the right to be heard as you are helping people to understand the gist of what the Bible teaches, I think gives you a good enough platform to enable individuals to begin to think. Of course, depending on your position, if you're the church pastor, you have a longer stretch, big opportunity. If you honor the lead does, you are closer to the possible help with the changes. If you're further down the line, you really need a lot more patience. So that's what I would say.

JOHN: This is a very important point and I would just go so far as to say the most extensive doctrinal statement that I have ever seen is Grace Community Church doctrinal statement. It's the same doctrinal statement for the Master's College, the Master's Seminary, and Grace to You. I don't know how long...how long is it, Phil? Have you looked at it?

PHIL: It's a booklet and it...

JOHN: It's an entire booklet of what we believe.

PHIL: Yeah, 25-24 pages, something like that.

JOHN: I think it should be an absolute in a church that you have a highly defined doctrinal statement. You may even go back to the Westminster Confession, Shorter Catechism, may go back to a Baptist Confession, something like that. You know, and while we sometimes wonder about confessional Christianity, those confessions were the product as we heard from Steve last night of 1100 hours of diligent work by men who were scholars in the Word. And I think all churches should be able to go back to that. We're never at sea here because everything is defined in that doctrinal statement. And I think that becomes the anchor. That becomes the foundation that holds you. And I think so going to a church leader and say, "Pastor, I'm concerned about our doctrinal statement, have we really defined these things? What is the church's position on these things? Are we working on that? Are we thinking about that? Could we help with that? Could somebody take a look at that? Could we get some people together to talk about that?"

Whatever it needs to be. But I think he's absolutely right. You've got to back up to that because the temporary view of fitting into the culture forces people to disregard that and just follow trends. And if you follow the trends, you're going to end up in the Charismatic Movement.

PHIL: Let me back up even one step further and say, you need to ask yourself, what are you doing in this church in the first place? If you came to this church because they have a better youth program or you like the music, or whatever, and it's not the soundest church in your community, there's a church with better teaching, but they don't have the youth program or the music you like, or whatever. So you decided to go to the bigger church, you know, for business reasons, or something you liked better, even knowing that its doctrinal foundation was not as sound, what are you doing in that church? When you decide where you're going to take your family to go, you better choose the church with the best teaching, regardless of what, you know, their youth program...whether the youth program measures up to (applause), what the mega churches are doing.

TODD: If I could also say on behalf of Nathan, could I suggest if...I think we have a tendency to look at the church and go, "Oh, there's so much...and I want the whole ship turned around immediately."

Maybe fine, start teaching Sunday School, most likely they're not going to check on what you're teaching anyway, if it's that loopy goopy, and start teaching your group of six or eight and do what you can do to affect change. Maybe it's not correcting the whole ship, but it's at least getting involved with some folks to steer them rightly. Would that be wise? Good place to start?

NATHAN: I was always taught that children don't speak until the elders have spoken. So...just wanted to clarify that. You know, I think it's important to make sure that we're always bringing people back to the biblical text and that we're not allowing our own experiences, or their own experiences to be the authority but rather we are examining everything, our own thinking, their experiences, we're bringing it back to the text of Scripture. That's our authority. The reason we are cessationists is because we are convinced that that's what the Word of God teaches. And we then, we encourage people to go back to the text. And I think as long as we're bringing it back to the text, we're honoring the Spirit who inspired this Word. (Applause)

TODD: All right.

JOHN: Todd, I want to just add one note and I'll say more about this tonight. The contemporary evangelical church has very little interest in theology and doctrine. So you're going to have a tough sell. It's about style. It's about style. And style is the Trojan Horse that lets Charismatics in the church because once you let the music in, the movement follows because it all of a sudden becomes common. Now we sound like the Charismatics, we sing the same things they do, we start waving our hands the way they wave their hands, we're having the same kind of emotional feelings that they have, it's a small step from doing the same music to buying into the movement.

So I think...the tough thing is, you're going back to a church that's kind of thinking like that. It's hard to make sound doctrine the issue when style is much more the interest of the leaders in the church.

TODD: Yeah, I think that's going to be a lot of folks challenge when they leave here.

Gentlemen, what I'd like to do by way of rubber meeting the road here is I want to share with you some of the objections to this teaching, some of this objection to this conference because I suspect these things will be some of the things that we hear if we go back and try to incorporate these or bring these things back. So these were some of the comments that were made prior to the conference, and even during the conference through some tweeting, and I suspect these might be things that you also hear.

Some people have been tweeting based on some of the clips we shared yesterday. Some of the things that we saw with people writhing on the floor, the repetitive music, some of the things that seem to most of us to be pretty outstanding, that those are simply the fringe elements of the Charismatic Movement. That is not who we are, therefore knock it off.

NATHAN: Yeah, you know, part of what the *Strange Fire* book talks about is that what people think is the fringe is actually become mainstream. And we talk about a hundred and twenty million Charismatic Catholics, we talk about twenty-five million oneness Pentecostals. John T. Allen in his book *Future Church* talks about the fact it's based on the Pew Forum Research, that upwards of ninety percent, in some cases more than ninety percent of all Pentecostals in most countries around the world believe in the Prosperity Gospel. So when you just do the simple math, this is hundreds of millions of people who hold to a false gospel. It is the majority of the Movement.

TODD: But we don't do that. We're not falling on the ground. We're not trembling and Kundalini-ing so this has nothing to do with me. What do we say?

JOHN: But here's the problem. You're not doing in your church, but your kids are listening to Jesus Culture music, so when Jesus Culture comes into the sixteen-thousand seat deal and they go, they are falling down and they are doing that. And they're beginning to see those behaviors and join the mosh pit kind of mentality. And then it eventually it simply imports itself back into the church. You know there's going to be resistance to that kind of thing in some places. But it crosses over. I mean, look Hillsong is everywhere. Jesus Culture is everywhere. It is marketed, it has spread like wildfire. I don't know who was telling me yesterday that fourteen hundred young people come in to Redding, California to be trained for a year to spread this stuff everywhere in that Bethel Church. And so, they create events and they're in the name of Jesus and young people from your church go and they buy in. There's...you have to draw the line before you get to the entry point, I think, or you end up allowing that kind of behavior.

TODD: Let me if I could have the A.V. department cue up clip 007...007. We've been saying and I think rightly so that Jesus Culture and other bands like this are kind of the entry drug, if you will, into this movement. I would like to share with us, however, that they don't wait to teach people after the Jesus concert...Jesus Culture concert, there is indeed preaching and teaching that happens IN the Jesus Culture concert, not to mention the theology inside their music. So this is clip double 0 7. This is Kim Walker of Jesus Culture describing her encounter with God.

This is clip double 07. If your kids go to Jesus Culture, this is what they're going to get.

KIM WALKER: I can say that right now where...where I'm living in my life, in this moment, in this season, just being here right now. This is the fruit of that moment. Those many moments, actually, a long time ago of hours and hours of sitting and just waiting on God, and just pressing in, pouring out my heart, pouring out my heart, pouring out all that I can on Him whether or not I heard anything or saw anything, or had any radical encounter, I just kept saying, "I know, I know that I will live in the fruit of this moment one day." And I kept pressing in. These are like those...the two keys, okay? for this connection, fighting for that relationship. No offense in the heart. And pressing in knowing that one

day we'll live in the fruit of that moment. And I still do that to this day. Even now in my life, when I have those moments, I still tell myself, one day I will live in the fruit of this moment.

I just want to share a verse, we're going to go into worship here pretty soon. I love this, 1 John 3:18. "Dear Children, Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." Let us not love with just words on a screen, but with action with truth, with all that we are, let us pour out our love on Jesus, let's give Him all that we are and all that we have because isn't He deserving of that?

TODD: I'm going to ask the A.V. department to put a stop on that, if you'd be so kind. I'm not sure why it didn't get to the part of the presentation there, so let me just tell you where she is going to, this seems to have been recorded a little bit sooner. So we'll save everybody the pain.

She encountered God, Jesus appeared to her. She had a conversation with Jesus. She communed with Jesus. He held her. This was her...what really launched her was her encounter with God. No, she said it doesn't happen all the time but it has happened throughout her life. And that was just a part of her presentation, her encounter with God.

So leaving the critique of it aside, they're getting theology...they do teach, they stop and open up a Bible and they do teach at the concerts.

PHIL: And it's bad theology. I've seen that. One of my sons showed me that whole clip that goes on for an hour and a half. That's an hour and a half long video and she's talking...what she's saying is that she lives basically from encounter to encounter. It's not about the Word of God, or the truth of God, it's about her experiences and how she...she lives between these experiences, and she's definitely teaching...you said theology, I'd say deplorably bad theology...and you're right. That...that is the entry level for a lot of young people.

Jesus Culture was the music group this year at Louie Giglio's Passion. John Piper was a speaker there. So this is not some far-off extreme out on the fringe. This stuff is bleeding into the mainstream of our churches.

TODD: Right.

JOHN: You know, this is classic marketing, make people discontent, make them feel like they're out of touch, out of date, out of style, out of mode. So you take a typical kid, put him in that environment, he is clueless about this kind of experience. "What is she talking about?"

When I was in junior high, and, you know, there was never a time when I didn't believe in the Lord and I read Thomas à Kempis. I didn't even know what he was talking about. But I thought, you're missing something, you don't have it. I've never had these mystical feelings of the presence of God.

So I got a book on prayer by E.M. Bounds, remember that, Phil? And it got worse. What is this? Then I got, Tom will identify with this, Witness Lee, and I'm a junior-high kid, I'm a high-school kid. I'm basically your average football player, baseball player guy who just loves the Lord and is wondering if I'm missing everything. I mean, they're literally...they're literally dupes for this kind of thing. You take a kid who knows his life isn't right, who sees this kind of esoteric, almost transcendental kind of religious experience being portrayed before him, he has no idea what's out there, he's not theologically informed...I can just tell you from my own personal experience, I read things about people who wore holes in a wooden floor from praying for so long in the same place...I couldn't comprehend that kind of behavior, couldn't even grasp it.

And fortunately by the goodness of God, I was kept from that path into which a whole lot of other young people went even in those early years of my life. So I think it is...it is a preparedness of their hearts that comes from knowing they're short of what real spirituality should be. And they know that. And they get suckered in to this kind of thing. And before they know it, they're caught up in it and the emotional falsification, the illegitimate substitute they buy into. And they carry that back and they go to the church and they hear people sing, "Amazing Grace," and the preacher gets up and explains a few verses in Scripture and they will think that he doesn't have it either and they don't have it either because they got it at the Jesus Culture deal.

TODD: Uh-huh. Let me ask for, if I could, please, clip number 23, this is very brief, clip number 23. Remember, Jesus Culture, it is a ministry of Bethel Church in Redding, California. The senior pastor, he's just passed the torch to his son and now he's, I think, considered the international ambassador apostle, Bill Johnson. But this is clip 23, this is the...this is the church...this is the church that they come out of and the type of teaching then that the kids find. This is Bill Johnson of Bethel Church.

PHIL: By the way, when you say that on the radio, would you be more precise that's BILL Johnson.

TODD: (Laughing) You can tell the difference, you speak authoritatively. This is a big mushbomb is what this is. All right...it is...Bill Johnson.

BILL JOHNSON: Not everything that comes at us is God's hope. We have confusion, one of our biggest areas of confusion in the church is concerning the sovereignty of God. We know that God is all powerful. We know that He is in charge of everything. But with that we make a mistake in thinking He is in control of everything. There's a difference of being in charge and being in control. If you think He is in control of everything, then you have to believe that Hitler was His will, that He was just going to work at for His purposes.

TODD: Now, that's not all that subtle, frankly. But that is just a little snippet.

JOHN: Did you notice the absence of the Bible? This is Bill Johnson.

PHIL: BILL Johnson.

TODD: All right, okay. Let me share some more of the objections that I would like to share with you. Hearing from God is not new revelation. You keep saying I should tack it on the book of Revelation, hearing from God is not new revelation. You're response?

NATHAN: Well, Wayne Grudem says it is. So they define it as new revelation and they will call it revelation from God. So to say that it's not would be a cessationist way of speaking. But the Charismatics themselves actually do refer to it as revelation from God. And they'll say that the revelation is perfect but then that the human instrument messes it up. The problem is, in Deuteronomy 18 and all throughout Scripture, those who speak on God's behalf are required to relay that revelation accurately. If they distort it, they come under the condemnation of God's own requirements for those who speak on His behalf.

TODD: Okay, so we would say to them, if God is talking to you, that is indeed revelation. All right? Okay? Any other?

JOHN: Well yeah, what else would it be? If this is God giving you information, by definition that is revelation from God. And if it's to you now, it's new revelation. This is the folly of this movement. And then to say that it's okay for us to mess it up, right? It's okay for us to clobber it and misrepresent it because we're fallible and it's fallible and God somehow works it out anyway, is, as we heard, and we've heard several times, is to completely turn the idea of God's revelation on its head. But of course it's new revelation. What is so bizarre about it is, there is no way to verify it. There is no way.

TODD: Right.

JOHN: And just because it isn't heresy, we're supposed to say it's new revelation. If it's not heresy, it's new revelation. But all things that God has deemed for us to know for life and godliness are already on the pages of holy Scripture and no new revelation is required or allowed. But for them to say it's not new revelation is ridiculous. If God's saying it, it's revelation. When Sarah Young writes these books *Jesus is Calling*, and she says Jesus is speaking to me and Jesus says this, and then writes the book in the first person, she is claiming these are the words of Jesus. That's scary.

TODD: People will say that, "Come on, we're talking about 500 million people here, I see good fruit coming out of people. They really do love the Lord, you're telling this entire movement is condemned to hell? Everybody is wrong? We'll show you the fruit, there's good fruit there, don't you see it? Quit critiquing."

CONRAD: Well, I think the difficulty there is basically that you are putting the cart before the horse. I mean, Roman Catholicism will show you some good fruit, especially out in Africa at a social level. They put up schools. They put up hospitals which have benefited, you know, entire nations. But that does not therefore mean that Roman Catholicism is correct. And again, they are in the millions.

So we need to always begin with what does the Bible say. Begin from that foundation. And then you have your “therefore” what should be a consequence of that? And that’s where the error is, is the fact that the Bible is very clear that with the foundation laid, the generations succeeding that are to expound the teaching that was brought forth in an extra-ordinary way through those foundations which teaches the Apostles and New Testament prophets. Now that’s straight-forward. Anybody therefore who begins to bring in another approach, wanting to lengthen that is opening a door, a dangerous door where in due season the kinds of things we’ve talked about here begin to be common fare. It becomes the regular diet.

Those of you who have been exposed to regular teaching of God’s Word, you were sighing and groaning when you were hearing some of the things being said, and out of the people who were sitting, listening to some of these things, to them that’s it. It’s life. After all, my teacher is the one who is teaching this, it must be correct.

So I think, let’s always keep getting back to the basic principle. And it’s not so much there’s some good being done, look at it. It is what saith the Scriptures.

TODD: Phil.

PHIL: Yeah, let me say this about good fruit, too. You can’t always tell at first glance what’s truly good fruit. I bought a bag of peaches just last month, seriously, when I got it home...when I got it home, these are great looking peaches, cut them open, every one of them was rotting from the seed out. I think they had been frozen or something.

Spiritual fruit is the same way. Sometimes it looks good, but you have to analyze it. And what...the real test of good fruit is the underlying core of teaching. That’s what Conrad was saying. If it’s not based on and centered on the truth, if the truth isn’t built into it, it’s not really good fruit.

TODD: One of the critiques prior to the conference that I’m sure after the conference and it might be one that we...let me just clarify this first cause I just want to make sure I’ve got this right. You’re a cessationist, is that correct? Okay.

So what they will say is, you cessationists have no business making any sort of critiques about Charismatics who are continuationists, this is not your house, you stay in your own house, don’t try to

clean up ours. It's none of your business.

JOHN: Well, I've lived with that. I mean, we live within five miles of the kind of Pentecostal mecca in this area, Church on the Way. We've had parallel years since I came here with that. And the conversations that I've had sound like this. "God has blessed John MacArthur. Imagine what God could do with him if he had the Holy Spirit."

TODD: Wow!

JOHN: I've heard that for years here. I've heard that for years. He's not equipped to critique this movement because he's void of the Spirit. So there's nothing for me to say. It's a frightening world to live in. I don't know how many years ago, a new pastor was appointed to this church and a prophet came, I think it was a Kansas City Prophet, I think, came, laid hands on him, said he's going to be, this new pastor will be the prophet of the world. He's going to do miracles and signs and wonders and going to spread around the globe. The prophecy—took his hands off—he had a brain aneurism, died. The pastor.

I went to the funeral. I said, "What's going on? And the person that I spoke with, I was there for the funeral just out of respect and love for some of the folks there, I said, "What's going on?" Well the prophecy was true so the devil killed him."

I would rather...you know, you would like them to believe that we had the Holy Spirit here because it's true, all of us in Christ. But their perceptions are that far off. In other words, they not only misunderstand us, they misunderstand their own situation. So it's impossible apart from them coming to a biblical understanding.

TODD: By the way, if you ever try to use this as a tactic to state, you know, why is it that certainly there's got to be some believers in this assembly, why doesn't the Holy Spirit show up in those ways in this community? And the response will be because the Holy Spirit is a gentleman and He is not going to come barging in where He's not invited. So that's why we don't act the way that they act, because we're saved, I guess, but the Holy Spirit has invited it. That's why it doesn't happen.

JOHN: And that fits...that fits the control that supposedly the believer has over the powers, over the demonic powers and even over the Holy Spirit, like Benny Hinn. You know, he doesn't do anything until I say something.

TODD: Right, right.

PHIL: You know what the best Charismatics, those who really do have a concern about the authority of Scripture, were actually critiquing their own movement and sounding an adequate alarm to the

people who follow them, we wouldn't have had this conference. But somebody needs to say this.

TODD: I would like to try...we're going to have to do this somewhat quickly, clips 15 and 25 if you'd be so kind and this will kind of have to represent some of our friends. We would say that John Piper is a brother. We would say that Wayne Grudem is a brother. We would say...and so these are some biblical scholars that many of us perhaps have read and loved for years who are saying some things that are causing us to scratch our heads. And what I would like to focus on as we take a look at clip number 15, and then let's just do clip number 25 for the sake of time. Clip number 25 for the sake of time.

How then do we respond to these men? What do we do with these, talking then about associations with whom do we relate? With whom do we relate and associate? With whom do we break relationships with? Where do we draw those lines. Let's start with John Piper, clip number 25, talking about speaking in tongues on a You Tube video.

JOHN PIPER: But I thought of tongues. I said I haven't asked for tongues for a long time. I just paused, I'm walking back and forth in my living room, Tala is up in her room, Noel is at the gym. And I said, "Lord, I'm still eager to speak in tongues, would You give me that gift?" Now at that point you can try to say banana backwards if you want to. I used to sit in the car outside church, singing in tongues. But I knew I wasn't. I was just making it up. And I said this isn't it. I know this isn't it. But this is what they try to get you to do if you're in that certain group. And I just...I did everything to try to open myself to this and the Lord has always said to me, without words, "No." No. But He never just said no, He always said, "John Piper, I have given you a gift, I've given you the gift of teaching, of preaching, of shepherding. You shepherd the prophets. You shepherd the tongue speakers. I'm not going to give it to you."

But I don't think that's His last word, and so every now and then I'm just going to go back to him like a child and say, "A lot of my brothers and sisters have this toy...this gift, can I have it, too?"

TODD: All right, now we could show clips, for instance, of...we have some of Wayne Grudem talking about some prophecies in his church where, for instance, there was a young lady who had been struggling with an illness. Four people approached the pastor and said, "Have a sense, and that we've been given a word that she's going to die. So we prayed like crazy and she didn't die, and we all rejoiced in that." Pastoral implications aside of that. Wayne Grudem, I don't know that there's anybody who doesn't have a systematic theology on their bookshelf. John Piper, we have all loved so much of his preaching. What do we do with these men when they say things like that?

PHIL: I think it's important to critique those comments honestly. And I did, as a matter of fact respond to that very comment yesterday in my breakout session. I had a couple of people come up to me afterwards and say, "Well then...because I also said, Look, I love John Piper, I've benefited from him,

I've learned things from him. I'm not prepared to throw him out completely....and they said you should, you just should." And my response to that is the times in which we are living are the theological parallel to the book of Judges where every man does what's right in his own eyes. And there isn't of consistent voice, there's no king in Israel, there's no consistent voice in the church that...that sort of polices all that stuff. Everybody is doing what's right in their own eyes, and it's not even considered political correct to sit in a venue like this, and say, "This is wrong." That's...that's automatically considered unkind, uncharitable, unloving. You can't disagree anymore. So everybody can say what they want.

In a time when every man does what's right in his own eyes, and nobody is willing to speak with a voice of clarity and say that's wrong, you're going to have men, lots of men in whom there's lots of good and some bad. And the question I always ask people who say that, What would you say about Samson? Would you say he's a good guy, you should follow him? And most of us would say I think know, Samson made a wreck of his life and yet he's in Hebrews 11. And I think the same thing about a lot of these men.

Despite what I would criticize and disagree with them, they're men of faith and I think that deserves to be recognized.

JOHN: You know, I think that with somebody like John Piper, this is a complete anomaly. That is just so off everything else about him. I'm not talking about percentages. You know, we ask ourselves, it's not that he speaks in tongues, it's not that he prophesies. He's never...he's admitted that. It's just that there's this anomaly in his mind that is open to that, and that's the way he's always stated that, that he's open to that, he's open to that. He's even made statements like I don't know, I'm not sure. I don't know exactly what to think about all this.

So that's a far cry from the propagation side of it. And so I look at this with him and even with Wayne Grudem who has made such immense contributions in so many ways, as an anomaly. And I don't know, nor do I need to know where the impulse of this comes from, where the influence comes from. Sometimes it comes from family. Sometimes it comes from a spouse.

You know, we...we...we see that, we understand that. I don't know where these influences come from. But I do know the great body of work that John Piper has done is true to the faith. And John is a friend, whom I not only admire but whom I love. And I don't know why on this front he has that open idea. But it is...it is not an advocacy position for the movement and he would...he would join us in decrying the excesses of that movement for sure, and even the theology of it. So I think if we start shutting everybody down whose got one thing they're not clear on, or you know, we're going to really find ourselves alone. And that's going too far. I have no fear that John would ever tamper with anything that is essential to the Christian faith. Starting from theology proper, all the way through to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, he's going to be faithful to the Word of God as he understands it

in a historical sense. How to explain anomalies like this, I have the same issue with my dear friend R.C. Sproul. You know, I want to say to him, "Why are you baptizing babies?" You would say the same thing to him. Right. He's a Reformed Baptist, but...and we say, it's not...I don't understand that, everything else is so clear and, you know, well thought out and biblically defended, but I fully embrace the range of his commitment and the impact of his ministry. So I think at this point, this is where love comes in to embrace faithful men.

And then when I look at myself, I say, "Look, I know I'm wrong somewhere and if you can show me where, please show me cause I would change." But I know somewhere I'm wrong because none of us has a complete control of all truth. And I hope to have the same charity from them that I would eagerly extend to them.

TODD: So, if I hear a pastor say, "Reading from John Piper's work," I don't have to think that the pastor's tainted or a heretic because he quoted John Piper who said on a You Tube video so many months about speaking in tongues.

JOHN: No, but I wish and I'm going to say this a little bit later tonight, I wish they would see that they don't need to be unclear about this issue, because the lack of clarity on this issue has given room to this movement. These guys give credibility to this movement by even allowing for it. (Applause)

TODD: All right. As we close, gentlemen, what I'd like to do and Phil will start...we'll start with you and make our way and try to keep this tight, we're going to leave here and I suspect almost everybody is thinking about something in their church, a family member, their mom, and they're wondering just how to go about and what to do with all of this. Whatever the scenario is, they're going back and they're going to be addressing and confronting these issues. You would give them one piece of advice, one suggestion, and then we'll let you apply it as you see fit. Phil, what would it be?

PHIL: It would be, immerse yourself in the Word of God. You know you don't have to take my word for it and I don't ask people to change their minds the first time they hear me teach on something. Be like a Berean, study the Word for yourself. And if you can coax your Charismatic friends to really truly devote themselves to finding out what does Scripture teach about this, then you're miles ahead. And they're on their way to abandoning some of these extremes.

TODD: Nathan?

NATHAN: Yeah, celebrate the true work of the Holy Spirit. Don't allow the Charismatic Movement to replace a celebration of the true work of the Holy Spirit with counterfeits. The true work of the Holy Spirit is His work in salvation, His work in illumination of the Scriptures, and listen, when we go to the Word of God, we are sitting at the feet of the author of the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit is the one who has given us this book. So to go to the Scriptures is to go to the Spirit.

TODD: Conrad?

CONRAD: I think basically what's already been said, *sola scriptura*, keep that in mind, that's the foundation. Everything else pillars and you have the roof on top, but always remember the Scriptures. If any contradicts the Scriptures, there is no light or life in them.

JOHN: And you can personalize that a little bit. I think you need to say to people, "Show me from the Word of God why you believe that, let's talk about that.

I think if you pounce with all your Bible verses, you put them on defense. But if you ask them to explain to you from the Word of God why they believe what they believe and start the discussion, you can lead them into the Scripture. I think they live with assumptions that have never been proven, even to their own minds. So put the burden on them. The burden lies with them to prove their point. And I think if they're not willing to do that, if they're disinterested in that, if that's too much trouble or too much effort for them, then they need to face the absence of integrity in denying you that. So I would put the burden on them, encourage them. You want to understand why they believe what they believe, and you'd like them to show you why they believe that from Scripture, and then be willing to discuss that with you.

TODD: Might I toss on top of it, if you decide to confront somebody, might I encourage you instead of attacking the teacher, attack the teaching because if you attack the teacher, you're touching God's anointed, you're going after perhaps their best friend, somebody that they really revere and you are just in for a cat fight. Go after the teaching, as opposed to the teacher.

The second thing I might suggest is as we've been hearing, I think, rather grievously, the majority of these folks are caught up in a very wrong system. It might be starting instead of debating eschatology, speaking in tongues, prophesy, gifts of wisdom, share the gospel with these folks. Witness to these folks. Help them understand the true gospel and how magnificent it is.

Third, I would add to that, I really think that a lot of people run to this movement because they've never been shown that Christianity is vibrant and vital and alive and the theology works, and that we need to be showing them, telling them, teaching them, "Now let me show..." you think that theology is all stodgy, let's take this theology and I'm going to show you what this does in your life. So that they don't stop running for the experiential and the whimsical and the feelings base but the knowledge base knowing that it actually does something and that frankly is exciting.

And my final exhortation, if I might be so bold, is you're...in America, these days, we think that we've got to write a best-selling book. We better have a TV show. That's the only thing that makes an impact and we cannot do something be frustrated and just get out of the game, or carp a lot because

we just don't see this whole thing changing. It's not going to change overnight and nobody in this room is going to be the room who accomplishes that.

So what can you do? Where you are, think local church. Get plugged in, volunteer, teach the little kids, you know the little four-year-old armadillos, start teaching them, the little junior-high group, whatever it is, start your Bible study, start mentoring. I see some, and it's lovely to see, some gray hair in this audience, identify somebody younger and start mentoring them and do what you can do where God has called you to be. And I know that He's called you to be there because you're there. Okay? Don't be discouraged that the whole thing doesn't change, do what you can do and maybe God will be kind to show you a little victory here, and a little victory there. And if we all do that, that's how God's Kingdom marches on. Not with one big overnight victory, but with a million small ones as we go and we all be faithful to the gospel.

So with that, Conrad, will you pray for us.

CONRAD: All right, let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank You for the opportunity You've given us to think through a number of questions. We realize, O Lord, that in this short time it would not have been possible to handle them through any meaningful depth, and we thank You that Your Holy Spirit is with us, each one, and we have Your Word and therefore You continue to teach us, to guide us, to correct us, and even where we are stubbornly wrong, to rebuke us that we might be fashioned after the image of Christ. Therefore we pray that that which we have learned here, we might take to heart and that which you come here to teach us will build us to be better instruments in Your hands. Dismiss us now, therefore, from this gathering in Jesus' name. Amen.

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