

# OpenTheo

## How Can I Evaluate Whether I'm Doing Enough for the Lord?

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### #STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about how to evaluate whether you are “doing enough for the Lord,” whether Ezekiel 3:18 indicates you will be in trouble on judgment day if you didn’t tell someone the gospel before they died, and whether it’s okay for a Christian to use Latter-day Saint resources to do family research.

\* What advice would you give me as an average believer to evaluate whether I am doing enough for the Lord and serving him enough?

\* Since God tells Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:18 that if he doesn’t warn people, and they die in their sin, their blood will be on his hands, does that mean I’ll be in trouble on judgment day because someone I used to help died in a fight before I could talk to him about Christ?

\* Is it okay for a Christian to use Latter-day Saint (Mormon) resources to do family research, or would he be opening himself up to LDS theology by spending time there?

## Transcript

Welcome to another episode of the hashtag STRask Podcast. You know, it occurs to me. It is another episode, but it might not be another episode for the person listening.

Maybe it's your first episode. Well, that's right. But it is another episode.

We have lots of episodes on our website. So if you are just finding out about us now, go to str.org. We have all of our archives there. Greg, I think you recently asked me how far back it went and I'm trying to remember now.

Was it 2016, 2015? Something like that. Yeah, this is a later enterprise for Stand to Reason. Melinda was on board first and then you came on board.

So you took over in 2017, I think, the early 2018. It's been almost a decade though. Can

you believe that? That's amazing because it feels like this is such a new thing that we do, but it really isn't at all.

We've done hundreds of episodes. So if you're enjoying this, just check out the rest of our archives on our website. Okay, Greg, let's do a question from Todd from Burbank.

What advice would you give an average believer, such as myself, to evaluate whether I'm doing enough for the Lord and serving Him enough? Let me give an average answer. That is, that's a really hard question to answer without knowing the circumstances in somebody's life. And if a person is doing nothing, that's not good, but there are a number of obligations that we have for providing for ourselves so that we're not financially sure not a bird, none others.

Actually, we should be making more than we need to help those who actually have need. This is in the text. I can't remember exactly where it is, but it might be in 2 Thessalonians 3. But in any event, that's an obligation.

If we have family, we have an obligation to make provision for our family and to guide our family spiritually and to be faithful in relationships there. It has been time with our spouses and with our children, and there's all kinds of obligations that are there. And so we have a number of obligations that are incumbent upon us as Christians.

But one of those obligations is to make ourselves fruitful to the body of Christ. Most people do that in the context of their local church. And so whatever capabilities they have, gifts, they can make those available to the church.

Now, sometimes people get a little bit introspective about, well, what's my gift? And my simple way of dealing with this is give what you've got. Whatever it is that you can give to the local church, your time, your efforts, your financial insight, if that's what you do, some particular skill that you have, if you can teach, you teach. But I don't think you have to strain at these lists of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, that I don't think those are comprehensive.

They're examples of people specializing in particular ways that help the larger body. And so I think this is what we should be thinking about. What can I do? And especially if you're fairly new to things, you just do fairly mundane things.

So you need somebody to set up the chairs before the service. Okay, I'll do that. Give what you've got.

As time goes on, there's going to be more you're able to give. Maybe you are more clear in your mind about a particular interest or capability that is somewhat unique to you that you can give to the local body. Well, then you focus in on that and you tend to specialize a little bit more.

But the average Christian should be involved in giving something of themselves for the kingdom's sake. And that's going to look different to different people with different obligations and different schedules. If there's nothing that you're giving because we're just too busy, well, then maybe you're just too busy.

And you need to think of other ways. Sometimes what ends up happening for people that are busy with jobs is then, okay, well, then they make money at the thing they're really busy at, then they take a significant portion of what they're earning and then they give that to the local enterprises, to the kingdom, to kingdom work. Certainly their local church because that's where they're being fed.

But if they're being fed in other places, then they should give where they're being fed. That's a basic biblical principle that we find in Galatians chapter 6. There is no one size fits all to this. A lot depends on your capabilities, how what your other obligations are, where you are in your Christian walk.

But everybody should be giving something of themselves towards the kingdom. One question I would ask when you're asking whether I'm doing enough is to think about the question enough for what? What are you asking enough to make sure you're worthy of God? That's probably not what you mean. But maybe deep down you do feel like, well, I have to do certain things for what is the reason.

Think carefully about what you're asking and why and make sure you understand. And I know we all know this intellectually. We all know the gospel.

Hopefully everyone listening to the show has heard the gospel. That is, we're not saved by the efforts or the things we accomplished. That isn't what impresses God.

He's not a respected person in that sense. So it's by God's grace. Yes.

And so it's not, I would encourage you not to think of your life as, okay, there's this this bit I have to give to God and how much is enough for that. Rather, our whole lives are given to God. And here's where I think people get a little bit confused because they think that the only thing that is serving God are are things that are specifically sasserdodal.

Yes, they that look like churchy stuff. Yeah. Yeah.

So teaching a Bible study or reading worship, any of being a minister, all those things. And so then they tend to think, well, I'm just a regular Christian. So I can't, I can't give to God because I don't have time to teach a class in a church.

But the reality is the way the Bible describes our lives, our entire lives are given to God. Everything we do is done to the glory of God. So what I would encourage you to do, yes, this is all, and I'm not contradicting anything Greg said.

This is on top of what Greg said. Yes, we need to be giving to our church and helping because that's, that's how it's described. You know, God brings the body together with our different gifts so that as a, as a body, we are working together and we're working to mature people.

So yes, you definitely need to be helping out in your church in some way. But in addition to that, I would encourage you to transform the things that you're already doing into understanding them as ways to give glory to God. So as you're doing your job, God doesn't make a really hard distinction between everything that we're doing.

Like if you are working at a company, that's for you. But if you're working at a church, that's for God. That's not the way it is.

As you're working for the company and you're representing Christ to the people and you're increasing the good and you're doing good for people, that's what companies do. They, they provide for the needs of people or even the wants of people. They're, they're increasing the value in the world.

And so when you're doing that, you are doing what God called Adam and Eve to do in the garden, to tend the garden, to create culture, to do things that are beautiful, to enable people to feed their families. All of these things are also good things that you're doing for God. So I would just encourage you to change the way you think about everything that you do.

Look at everything you're doing and say, how can I glorify God in this? How can I glorify God in changing diapers? Well, you're giving to people. You're sacrificing some of yourself just as Jesus did. You're serving as an example for them.

There's all sorts of ways that as a Christian, everything we do, as Paul says, do all to the glory of God. So don't separate your life into these categories of doing enough for God here. And then the rest are all my other duties.

Every duty that you're doing is serving others in some way and glorifying God in some way. And then on top of those two things, helping out your church and then thinking about your life differently, you could probably also cut out some empty calories. I'm sure there are, you know, maybe there's a video game you've got hooked on or you're sitting down and just vegging out of the TV or whatever it is, there probably are some things you can cut out.

And so maybe that's your time a little bit more productionally for the Kingdom. This reminds me what you said is a story about John Calvin, which may be apocryphal, I don't know, but it makes a good point. And the story goes, he preached and there was a man who's a cobbler made shoes, became a Christian.

So he came to John Calvin and he said, well, now I'm a Christian. Now what do I do? And

he said, make really good shoes. So this is an illustration of the point you were making.

Oh, and the same thing happened to William over for us. He thought when he became a Christian, oh, now I should probably leave my vocation as somebody in politics. And John Newton says, no, these are the gifts God's given you.

And you can use those to the glory of God. So yeah, just don't, don't, we don't, we shouldn't separate out who we are into church things and other things. We are wholly given to God and everything we do is to the glory of God.

Okay, Greg, here is kind of a similar question from James. Ezekiel 3, 18 says, if we don't warn someone and they die in their sin, their blood will be on our hands. I used to give a certain man food a few years ago, but he died in a fight before he could talk to him about Christ.

I meant to, but postponed. Does this mean I'm in trouble on judgment day? Here's the irony. I just read that passage the other day because I'm reading through Ezekiel and the God bless James, but he misquoted it.

It doesn't say if I don't do this, then this, blood's on my head. It says, if Ezekiel doesn't do it, it's a specific directive. Does he have the verse there? Ezekiel 3, 18.

Yeah, see, I knew it was in the beginning because I'm only in chapter eight right now working through this tedious book. I mean, this is not a fun book to read. By the way, I just came off of Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and they're all from the same period.

They're, they're exilic. And that's the period of time where they're speaking from. And oh, man.

So I've written, it's it's like a lot of doom and gloom. That's what I'm saying. So it's not fun to read.

It says, let's see. Son of man, I'm starting verse 17, I appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me, verse 18, when I say to the wicked, from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood, I will require at your hand.

Yet if you have worn the wicked and it is not turned from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered yourself. And he goes on to talk a little bit more about it. Notice this is a very specific directive given to Ezekiel who was appointed as a prophet, a watchman for the house of Israel, verse 17.

And then he said, if you don't tell them what I'm telling you to tell them, you're in big trouble. But if you do tell them what I tell you to tell them and they don't listen then they're in trouble. Okay, the blood's on your head or their blood's on their head.

Now, even though statement, the blood is on your head, what is that actually amount to? I don't think this means that Ezekiel's going to hell. But rather that Ezekiel will be in sin and then God is going to deal with Ezekiel. God is underscoring the importance of Ezekiel doing the job he's told to do because he tells him earlier that he is not, they are not going to listen.

This is the same chapter, verse 10. Moreover, he said to me, Son of Man, take into your heart all the words which I will speak to you and listen closely. Notice that this chapter is the commissioning of Ezekiel as a prophet.

Go to the exiles to the sons of your people and speak to them and tell them whether they listen or not, thus says the Lord God. And he continues to let him know that they are not going to listen. Nevertheless, he has a responsibility for God to tell him the truth or else he's going to have to contend with God.

That's what's going on here. There was a special office. When God commissioned a prophet, he was the mouthpiece of God to those people.

It's not like today when we have the Bible. I mean, I guess one could compare it to if today you were to keep someone from getting a Bible or you were to take parts of the Bible out, that might be something similar. But this was the mouthpiece of God and he had to do what God, he had to communicate the message that God wanted to communicate because he was the mouthpiece.

Yeah. I don't know. I'd have to think about who longer, but I don't know this is there's a direct application of this passage to our lives.

There are lots of passages that don't have direct application to our lives. What are you kidding me? How about this? Husbands, love your wives as Christ, love the church. Guess what? That is not there's no application there for a single person.

It's directed to husbands. Wives do this. Husbands do that.

That's to marry people, you're single. It doesn't apply to you. Now you might be thinking, well, I hope I get married, then it will apply to me and I better get ready for that or something like that.

But not all passages apply to all Christians or all people. This is God talking to Ezekiel about a commission that he's given Ezekiel. To make the application that James is suggesting should be made is just it's first of all, it's not sound.

It's not a sound application with the text. And secondly, it just creates tremendous consternation among people who don't feel that they've warned enough people and now they're going to be guilty of their blood. No people are guilty for their own sins.

We're back to asking the question, is it enough? And here's where, because of course, we are supposed to redeem the time. You should take advantage of today. If you have an opportunity to tell someone you should do it, we should take the opportunities God gives us.

Of course, now bad news and good news, the bad news is we'll never do it sufficiently. We'll never, we'll never do it every time. We will fail.

We'll do it badly. We won't do it at all. The good news is that Jesus died for our sins.

And so we don't have to wallow in this regret and fear. We are adopted children of God. And we tell people because we love giving glory to God and we want to see them with God, not because we're afraid that if we don't, that we're going to have to pay for, pay the cost of them going to hell in some way.

So just accept the fact that you, you didn't tell him and thank God that he is sovereign and also he is forgiving and loving and it changes nothing in your relationship with him. And maybe this isn't a chance for, you remember next time when you have an opportunity and it's hard and you're scared and you don't want to do it, you remember, but I lost my chance that other time and this will be an opportunity for you to grow. And just trust God.

I mean, we talked a couple episodes ago about, you know, when we step out and we're afraid to do something, God speaking through us and using us in ways that are supernatural beyond what we would do on our own. And just remember that and next time step out. Okay, Greg, we are going to switch gears a little bit here and take a question from Drew.

What do you think about a Christian using LDS resources to do family research? A friend just visited one of their libraries to look into his family tree. I fear he is opening himself up to LDS theology if he spends more time there. Well, I guess if your friends convictions are so weak that whatever exposure there would be to LDS theology by using their resources for genealogical research, that might be a concern.

I don't, excuse me, I don't know about that. From my understanding, CLDS has done, with aberrant theology, I've done a lot of good for a lot of people to help them find about genealogy has actually done a lot of good for solving crimes. Because, oh yeah, Jay Warner Wallace talks about this at different times, you know, and how all this other work has been done.

And so they can track, they can follow kind of genetic markers in a way that they weren't able to do so before DNA things. But I would not say out of hand that a person should avoid that. I don't know how much LDS theology is actually manifest there.

There's actually was a nativity, a 17 minute nativity account over Christmas that my wife

and I watched, and actually she watched it multiple times. That was really good, except for the last couple lines were about the LDS church, but they did a great job. And in a way, really corrected a lot of inaccuracies that we, that are in current nativity characterizations that have nothing to do with the scripture.

Okay. And so it was very refreshing. But then following that, there's all this LDS stuff.

And if you go to YouTube, I think it's called, I think I might have said she'll link to it. The Christ child or something like that, but it's just 17 minutes long. And it's nicely done.

It's very sweet, well acted, and very biblically accurate. So when the wise men come, Jesus is about a year and a half or two years old, for example. And so that seems to be the way it was.

He didn't show up on Christmas night, Jesus was born in any event. Boy, we watched that. And I've recommended people watch it.

But then you've got all this other interview stuff where the LDS people are promoting their LDS stuff. And for some people that are weak in faith that might not be good. Now, I'm, of course, we never suggest avoid all contrary opinions.

But the issue is if you're not well grounded in the reasons why Christianity is true and the LDS characterization of Christianity is just false, then it's easy to get confused. And you should wait to get a better grounding, okay, to do that. I don't have any sense that using their genealogical stuff is going to expose them to a lot of, in a sense, LDS propaganda.

I don't know. What do you think? I don't know if it does either. They tend to use their opportunities.

So I would suspect that they probably are some sort of evangelistic attempts happening when people use their resources. But at the same time, it's also very focused on the LDS people who are using those resources. So I'm not, I'm not, it's not primarily an outreach is what I'm saying.

So I'm not sure. But it's, and it's also not clear if the friend is a Christian. So I don't know if Drew is concerned that this is a Christian who will be drawn in or a non Christian who will be drawn in.

I think the response might be a little bit different for each of those. If it is a Christian, I think this is, this is a great opportunity to, well, I know I would love to be in a position where a Mormon would come and ask me questions that I would be, have the opportunity to talk to them. So it's not necessarily a bad thing if you're, if you're having these opportunities to talk to people or they want to meet with you or whatever, but they do need to know about Mormonism.



And you could start just by saying, Hey, do you, do you understand, do you know why they do all this genealogical research? There's a reason they're doing it because they want to baptize their relatives. They dead people. Yes, they do work for the dead.

And that's why it's a baptism by proxy for dead people. And the baptism then gives them a chance to get into the heaven that they need to get into. Right.

So there's a whole theological reason why they're doing this. It's not just something they like to do. There's actually reason.

So whether it's a Christian friend or a non Christian friend, this is a great opportunity to talk to your friend and say, Did you know that this is why they do that? Here's what they believe. They, they believe that we were, we existed in eternity before. It's some sort of intelligences.

And then we have a chance to accept their gospel. And here's their gospel. And if you don't accept it, it's not good news, by the way, just for the record.

So they're a word is gospel. It's not good news. So this is a great opening for talking to your friend about Mormon theology.

So that is what I would do with this. And I think that's it's a great opportunity to highlight the differences. Here's their gospel.

Here's my gospel. By the way, what's interesting about that really wonderful piece. I recommend it to anyone.

There's no Mormon theology in it at all until you get to the very last line. And here's what it says. So when we think about the nativity, what Jesus is, Jesus is born to die, right? So He came into this world to be the king and to rescue us, etc, etc.

Okay. But after this wonderful characterization of the nativity, you see a line. It says, Jesus came into this world doing good.

He went about the world doing good. Now that actually comes from Acts chapter 10. And Peter is telling Cornelius, you know this about this guy, Jesus, and He went about doing good.

That's the only line they sees. They don't seize anything from that evangelistic message that talks about salvation. They seize that line.

And then they say, basically go and do likewise, go around the world. And that was considered insufficient by Paul to know. Right.

Because that's why he was saying it. You've heard this. Well, what he's doing is he's commending Jesus to Cornelius.

And he's just giving a character to Jesus. And he was doing this and he worked the miracles. He went around doing good and blah, blah, blah.

And then he died, blah, blah. So he's just giving a characterization of Jesus' life, which leads to the cross and belief in Jesus for the purpose of salvation. And that's when they were then moved by the Spirit and start speaking in tongues, regenerated.

But the LDS characterization says nothing about the gospel. It tells, it says be an imitator of Jesus. Now that's good advice, you know, all things considered or whatever, as far as it goes, I guess is what I mean.

The problem is that's not the gospel. It's their gospel. But it's not good news because we can never imitate Christ adequately to satisfy the requirements of God.

We imitate Christ now as Christians because we are born again in him and we are seeking to live like him by the grace he provides, which is the same grace that initiated the relationship that we stand in. Romans 5-1 and 2, right? It's by grace. We exalt in the glory of God because we have this grace that has saved us.

And it's in the foundation of our salvation by grace that we then engage in the good works that were characteristic of Jesus. It's not the other way around. Yeah.

So this is a great opportunity. I would love it if my friend was doing genealogical work and I had an in to talk to that friend about the truth. If it is a Christian friend, then I would definitely say, hey, you need to be aware of this.

If it's a non-Christian friend, this is a great opportunity to say, oh, I'm so interested in the differences between us. Did you know about these differences? Here's what they believe about this. Here's what I believe.

And you can just be very clear so that at least they know what they're stepping into and know where it diverges from Christianity. Because I think there are a lot of people who grew up either Mormon or in a Mormon area, and they don't know what Christians believe. Right.

They actually don't even know. There's a lot of Mormons who don't know what Christians believe. Yeah.

They think we believe pretty much the same thing. Yeah. But their church is better.

That's what they did disparagingly. I'm just saying, this is their view. And I've talked to Mormons and they were stunned.

They say to me, well, don't you believe this? I said, no. You don't? Yeah. They don't know.

Well, what about this? Don't you believe this? And these are all distinctive of LDS doctrine. I said, no, we don't. We don't believe that either.

Really? Yeah. I think the farther you get into an area where it's mostly Mormon, the less they know about what other Christians believe. I have a friend who talks to people all the time talks to Mormons, Temple Square, and he will ask, have you ever heard an evangelical explain the gospel? And they'll say, no.

And then he has this opportunity to explain the difference. So anyway, I think this is a great opportunity. And I hope Drew that it turns out well for you.

And you know what? This question ended up being related to the other ones because we got right back to the gospel. There you go. So there you go.

Well, thank you, Drew and Todd and James. If you have a question, send it on X with the hashtag SDR. Ask or go to our website at [str.org](http://str.org). This is Amy Hall and Gray Cocle for Stand to Reason.