

Essay Exam

**A Midterm Exam
Submitted to Dr. John DelHousaye
Phoenix Seminary
Scottsdale, Arizona**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
BI 505**

**by
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28-November-2006**

1. **A husband decides to leave his wife because over the past few years he has discovered that they are “very different people.” Because of this “bad chemistry” he is unhappy. Concerning his commitment to God, the one seeking the divorce argues that God wants people to be happy and free to pursue their dreams. The couple is sitting in your office. What do you say?**

I would do my best to present the Gospel to this couple, as it sounds like the husband has no clue about Who God really is or what He wants for his life. I would then tell him that God does indeed want what is best for him and his wife. God has their best interests at heart. If they begin by believing this, then they should be ready to willingly submit to God's prescription for marriage, knowing that it will be what is best, whatever it is. I would then proceed to show God's prescription for marriage from the Gospels, citing Matthew 5. God knows a sacred life-long commitment between a husband and wife is the essential ingredient for a healthy marriage. When both the husband and wife commit and know that the other has committed to a life long relationship, there is a security each has and a comfort which comes from this security in relaxing in the stability of the bond. When frustrations arise, knowing that the other will always be there as one's spouse will direct emotions to the appropriate channels to heal the problem *in* the bond, instead of possibly wondering if it might be best to *break* the bond. I would then return to Matthew's Gospel and note the severity of their God's command to them as Christians. I would then return to their previous assertion that God does indeed love them and has their best interests at heart, and if this is what He prescribes for marriage, then it must also be best for them.

- 7. You have been asked to teach a Bible Study at your church. You schedule two hours to study and prepare your thought. When you are about to start, someone in your ministry asks to meet with you. From past experience, you know he/she will take the whole two hours. What do you do? Also, how in the future can you avoid having to make such a decision.**

I would spend time with the person requesting the meeting. We never see Christ refusing an opportunity to minister to His target audience because it interfered with His schedule. On the contrary, we see His prayer and preparation time constantly interrupted (Mark 1:35-38). His journeys seemed always interrupted as He went, as we see, be leprous men in Luke 17:11-12. We see Him repeatedly using these opportune meetings to share the Gospel of God, like with the Samaritan Woman at a well (John 4). Ministry is about people, and most of the time our plans don't leave room for God to bring people into our lives for the real meat of our ministry to happen.

Having said this, if there will be no more opportunity for study before my teaching time, I would likely ask the person about the content of the discussion and, if appropriate, if it might be possible to reschedule immediately after my teaching time. To avoid this in the future, I would try to plan preparation time more in advance of my engagement.

- 3. A woman is paralyzed by anxiety. While her job performance is high, the company is losing money and probably needs to downsize. She is fifty-four years old and, without a college degree, worked her way up to management, making about \$60,000 per year. But she is convinced that because of her age and lack of formal education no other company will hire her. How would you minister to her?**

I would encourage her and praise her hard work. I would try to address the focus of her heart and point her to Christ's teaching about being heavenly minded (Mat. 6). Is she in a serving ministry? Is she concerned about the lost? If she has been only working for things of this world, then Christ tells us that this world is where her heart will be (Mat 6:21). We have to get her involved in service for the Lord. Finally, I would encourage her from this same passage that the Lord knows and will provide for her daily needs in this life. As she begins to get involved and excited about ministry, I would encourage her to possibly volunteer for early retirement, since her company may be considering downsizing. Often companies will give 1 month pay for each year an employee has been with the company, benefiting both the employer, by not paying unemployment benefits, and the employee. As it sounds like she has been with the company for a number of years, this might be enough for her to pay off any debt and live a less complex life, giving more time for her newly found joy in service.

- 5. A couple has just lost their eight-year-old daughter in a car accident. They have been Christians for only three months. She was killed by a drunk driver. Ironically, the father had been charged with a DUI only a year ago. In jail he repented and later began to take his family to your church. The couple is confused and angry. They wonder why such a horrible thing would happen *after* they became Christians. The father believes God is judging him for his earlier sin. How would you minister to them?**

I had thought about a number of Bible verses to show this couple to encourage them in this time of sorrow and help them understand that it was not their fault. I thought of Luke 13:1-5, where

Jesus cites two contemporary tragedies and says these men were not greater sinners than other men, but then goes on to say, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” That didn't sound comforting. In John 9:2, Jesus corrects His disciples' thinking about the tragedy of blindness-- that it must have come from God as a result of the blind man's sin, or from the sins of his parents. “Jesus answered, *It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” How do you tell parents that the death of their eight year old daughter was so that the works of God might be displayed in them? In John 11:33 we read of Jesus' response to those close to Him when they had lost a loved one, “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was **Himself** troubled,” (I don't understand why translations leave out the ἑαυτὸν.) What do you say to those who have lost a loved one? I have no idea. I think my role is to follow Christ's example; to be there for them and be deeply moved in spirit with them; to weep with them. For sure they should be encouraged that God has forgiven their past sins completely, and that their daughter's death was not God's judgment of such. I would be troubled with them about the evil and unfairness in this world, and encourage them that this is not how things are supposed to be. One day they will again be with their daughter in heaven and then God will make all things right.