

QUESTION & ANSWER SERMON - PT.1

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. August 9, 2026.

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QUESTION ONE

Is common law marriage OK with God?

Answer: No, not really. The Christian perspective on marriage is based on four biblical insights:

1. Marriage is God's idea, not a social construct. He decides what marriage is.

Genesis 2:18 (CSB) Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him."

2. Marriage requires some intentionality and public acknowledgment. Today, we accomplish this by inviting family and friends to witness the ceremony.

Genesis 2:24 (CSB) This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

3. Marriage is covenantal. Today, the covenant is sealed by vows and rings. A covenant binds husband and wife together even when life gets hard, we change, or we do not do our part.

Malachi 2:14 (CSB) She was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant.

4. Finally, a covenant marriage points to Christ's committed, sacrificial, saving love for his bride, the church.

Ephesians 5:31-32 (CSB) For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. 32 This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Living together outside of covenant marriage does not fit this biblical pattern. It's not adequately intentional, public, or covenantal. Therefore, it does not represent Christ's committed covenant love for his church.

QUESTION TWO

Can a Christian lose their salvation?

Answer: No, BUT ... we must understand that there are three kinds of people who “profess” to be Christians.

1. There are temporary Christians. They start out with Jesus, but various situations lead them to fall away from faith (Matthew 13; Hebrews 3:12).
2. There are counterfeit Christians. They use religion for personal agendas, such as money, power, sex, or whatever.

2 Timothy 3:6-8 (CSB) For among them are those who worm (sneak in under false pretenses) their way into households and deceive gullible women ... these (false teachers) also resist the truth. They are men who are corrupt in mind and worthless in regard to the faith.

Temporary and counterfeit Christians were never actually Christians (never actually born again by God’s Spirit), and so they were never saved in the first place, so they can’t lose what they never had.

3. There are genuine Christians. They have turned from themselves and their sins, sincerely trusted in Jesus as God and Savior for forgiveness and life with God, and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Genuine Christians will persevere in faith until the end, will receive final salvation from God’s judgment, and will enter the eternal Kingdom of God because God will keep them in faith until the end.

1 Peter 1:5 (CSB) You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (CSB) In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory. (Also, 1 Thess. 5:23-24)

QUESTION THREE

Outsiders and former “Christians” who are deconstructing their faith note that Christians seem to have the same struggles as non-Christians - sins, brokenness, hurts. We look a lot like the world. Where is the abundant life Jesus promised?

1. WHAT IS THE ABUNDANT LIFE JESUS PROMISED?

In John 10:10, Jesus claimed that he is the source of abundant life:

John 10:9-11 (CSB) 9 I am the gate (to the sheep pen). If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

1. The religious leaders who opposed Jesus came to kill, steal, and destroy God’s people. They led people away from God and eternal life.
2. Jesus was the good shepherd who protected and provided for his flock by leading them into life with God through his sacrificial death. This is life in abundance - the Greek word means the ultimate form of life.
3. Jesus was God; God is the Good Shepherd of the Bible.

The abundant life is found only in Jesus, and it is life with and from God, spiritual or eternal life. It is knowing God and Jesus Christ (John 17:3). There is no secular equivalent to that. So, on that basis alone, Christians are not the same as other people, whether it looks like it or not.

2. WHAT IS THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE?

The critic might say something like this: If you Christians have this spiritual life, why are you so messed up? Why do you live just like everyone else?

Three responses:

- A. Research on people who profess Christ and read their Bibles multiple times weekly shows that they are qualitatively different than their neighbors.
- B. The normal Christian life is a bit bipolar. We're blessed, and we're broken. Life in Christ is a struggle. The Bible doesn't sugarcoat the cause of it:

Galatians 5:17 (CSB) 17 For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want.

- C. We admit that we're messed up and we need forgiveness and restoration to God that we cannot achieve. So, we've turned to Jesus (1 John 1:9-2:2).

LIGHTNING ROUND

Question 1: My genome contains traces of Neanderthal DNA. What are Neanderthals and how do they fit into the creation account?

Answer: The Bible appears to be silent on this matter.

Question 2: When we pray, do we have to include the phrase, "In Jesus' name" in the prayer?

Answer: No. Use of the phrase is based on Jesus' teachings on prayer, such as in John 14:13-14. He was not giving us a formula to use; he was teaching us to approach God through Jesus, and to ask for what Jesus would ask for.

Question 3: Is praying a prayer written by someone else, or listening to someone else pray, really prayer?

Answer: Yes. For example, the Psalms, Jesus, Acts 2 and 4. The key thing is to engage with written prayers with our minds and hearts, and with faith.

Question 4: Could there be another Great Awakening in America and would secular forces suppress it?

Answer: Yes. Awakening is happening. No, nothing can stop God's work. Jesus will build his church, and hell won't hold him back.