



**April 23, 2025**

# MESSENGER

## QUOTE FOR TODAY

"The opening song of The Lion King movie is 'The Circle of Life.' Why didn't the author call it 'The Spiral of Life,' with each generation rising higher and higher? Because the truth is that humans actually keep going around in circles --- life and death; same old, same old. Until Jesus' resurrection!"

Pastor George in this week's sermon

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## CHRONIC WHATABOUTISM

He: "Where were you last night? I had to put the kids to bed by myself."

She: "What about all the nights you said you had to work late and didn't come home until the bar closed?"

Whoops!

Whataboutism is a clever way to avoid responsibility by turning the attention onto someone else. The term seemed to have originated in the 1970s during the Cold War to describe a USSR tactic of misdirection. In response to a Western news reporter's criticism of Gulag concentration camps, a Russian spokesman might say, "But what about the Nazis during World War II?" The answer was a non-answer --- a distraction. Plenty of this goes on in modern politics as well.

During recent years, there has been an explosion of public scandals among mega-church Pastors, Prophets and TV Evangelists. Some have simply resigned in disgrace; others have fought back but ultimately faded in popularity and influence. However, sadly, many of them have tried to turn attention to other leaders whose sins may, hopefully, distract critics from them. "What about Brother Jones?"

When I was a kid, my nearest brother and I successfully used whataboutism to confuse our parents about whose offense was the worst and where the punishment should be directed. As I remember, we were both pretty skillful at it.

It's interesting to realize that whataboutism turns up in the earliest chapters of the Bible. God asked Adam, "Did you eat that apple?" Adam said, "What about Eve? She gave it to me." Eve said "What about that snake? He tempted me." (I'm surprised the snake didn't say, "What about God? He made me with no legs.") Since those Garden of Eden experiences, the human race has been infected with chronic whataboutism.

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Right after the Resurrection of Jesus and before he ascended into heaven, the whataboutism germ showed up among his disciples:

*Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "**Lord, what about him?**" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" (John 21:20-22)*

Do you suffer from chronic whataboutism? There's a vaccine, but it only works when you acknowledge that it's between God and you, one on one. In the simple words of the spiritual:

"It's me, it's me, Oh Lord; standing in the need of prayer. Not my sister, not my brother, but it's me, Oh Lord; standing in the need of prayer."

Pastor George Van Alstine