

# Lent devotions

## READ:

Mark 12:18-34 (click to open link)

## REFLECT:

Does this sound familiar? "Train A leaves the Omaha station traveling west at 55 mph at 8:00 a.m. Train B leaves the Denver station traveling east at 65 mph at 9:15 a.m. If they're on the same track when will they meet? And what color suspenders is the conductor wearing?" Sound impossible? Sound kooky? Now imagine the person asking you to solve this problem doesn't even believe in trains! This is the position Jesus was in when the Sadducees posed their question. Jesus's reply their question about marriage at the resurrection is essentially 'Are you wrong because you don't know your stuff (the physics of the question above) or because you've gone so far off the rails (pun intended) you're asking questions that just don't matter' (the suspenders above)? Which is it for the Sadducees? Which is it for us?

Are we asking questions from a position of not knowing what's in the bible or are we completely missing the point, having taken off on some tangent neither intended nor implied by God? In either circumstance we stand to be sadly mistaken.

Sometimes we just haven't done our homework. We've expected to know the answers intuitively or to have God speak to us, perhaps not from a burning bush but from some other obvious sign or source. Either way, our lack of knowledge holds us back.

More often, our misunderstanding of the power of God and his path for our lives prohibits us from not only turning to the bible but from turning to Him when life asks us about the color of someone's suspenders. Realizing how God can and does work in our lives simplifies things. It allows us to focus on what is important just as Jesus did when asked about the greatest commandment. He reduced it down to one thing: love.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" and then, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Remembering those things means everything else falls away like so many purple suspenders (the correct answer, of course).

## RESPOND:

Does your life seem like an impossible story problem sometimes? I know mine does, and although I dimly remember algebra and the quadratic equation I'll be darned if I know how they work. Why does it have to be so hard? The unflattering answer is, it doesn't. Jesus said that. He said it comes down to love, but love of the important things, in the full, without holding back or being distracted. So what is your story problem today? And what are the color of your suspenders? And why does it matter?