

Foreword by Sean McDowell

340 QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Compiled by Bob Tiede

With contributions by Delanyo Adadevoh,
Matthew Lee Anderson, Andy Bannister, Berti Berhami,
Lesley Cheesman, Judy Douglass, Hock Chye Goh,
Ronald Harris, Wojciech Kowalewski, Debby Thompson,
Keith Webb, and Pete Wehner

LeadingWithQuestions.com

340 QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Bob Tiede

With contributions by

Delanyo Adadevoh
Matthew Lee Anderson
Andy Bannister
Berti Berhami
Lesley Cheesman
Judy Douglass

Hock Chye Goh
Ronald Harris
Wojciech Kowalewski
Debby Thompson
Keith Webb
Pete Wehner

Scriptures taken from New International Version® NIV®
Used by permission of Zondervan.

Copyright © 2024 LeadingWithQuestions.com

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, without written permission of the author.

Bob Tiede
LeadingWithQuestions.com
bob.tiede@cru.org

Cover and Interior Design: Rachel Royer
Copyediting: Keri Hales
Typesetting: Lori Weidert
Proofreading: Meredith Mix

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vi
----------------------	----

FOREWORD

<i>Sean McDowell</i>	vii
----------------------------	-----

340 QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

<i>Compiled by Bob Tiede</i>	1
Matthew: 109 Questions	2
Mark: 68 Questions	13
Luke: 107 Questions	20
John: 55 Questions	31
Acts: 1 Question	37

CHAPTER 1

What Can You Learn from Jesus about Asking Great Questions? <i>Bob Tiede</i>	38
---	----

CHAPTER 2

What Can you Learn from Jesus the Communicator? <i>Bob Tiede</i>	46
---	----

CHAPTER 3

A Tough Question, <i>Bob Tiede</i>	49
--	----

CHAPTER 4

Why Jesus Never Stopped Asking Questions, <i>Pete Wehner</i>	53
---	----

CHAPTER 5

Learning Questions from the Master, *Andy Bannister*59

CHAPTER 6

Do You Love Me? *Debby Thompson*79

CHAPTER 7

Life-Changing Question: What Are You
Looking For? *Wocieh Kowalewski*83

CHAPTER 8

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"
Questioning with Jesus Who Questions Us,
Matthew Lee Anderson89

CHAPTER 9

Jesus Knew, Yet He Still Asked Questions,
Keith Webb96

CHAPTER 10

Learning to Listen: 10 Questions I Love to Ask,
Judy Douglass101

CHAPTER 11

Leading with Questions?
That's a Good Question! *Ronald Harris*105

CHAPTER 12

My Favorite Question
from Jesus, *Hock Chye Goh*110

CHAPTER 13

Who Do People Say That I Am?

Delanyo Adadevoh115

CHAPTER 14

Questions Make Friends, *Lesley Cheesman*.....120

CHAPTER 15

Questions that Silenced the Pharisees,

Berti Berhami127

CHAPTER 16

Leading With Questions: A Biblical Strategy

for Leadership, *Bob Tiede*135

Acknowledgments140

LeadingWithQuestions.com Resources142

Subscribe to LeadingWithQuestions.com144

What People Are Saying About

LeadingWithQuestions.com.....145

PREFACE

“Wait! What?” Whenever I share with friends that I am working on a next edition of *339 Questions Jesus Asked*, their immediate response is, “Wait! What? Have you found more questions that Jesus asked?”

YES! As a matter of fact, I have! One more question! Thanks to one of the readers of *339 Questions Jesus Asked*, who emailed me to ask, “Why have you left out Jesus’s question to Paul (then still called Saul) in Acts 9:4? ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’” I instantly realized that I failed to include the book of Acts, when I compiled all 339 questions recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (in the New International Version).

So, yes, this edition includes one more question that Jesus asked and therefore has a new title, *340 Questions Jesus Asked!*

The heart of this edition is still the list of the now *340 Questions Jesus Asked*, as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke (both in his Gospel and in the book of Acts), and John. A Foreword written by Dr. Sean McDowell has been added, along with 16 new chapters, authored by myself and 12 insightful contributors from around the globe. All of the new texts were written with the goal of providing you with additional insights into the questions Jesus asked.

FOREWORD

A good question can change someone's life. Don't believe me? Just look at Jesus. He was arguably the greatest communicator of all time. How has he influenced so many lives? Through telling stories and asking questions. Consider a few life-changing questions of Jesus:

"But who do you say that I am?" Over 2 billion people alive today answer this question as *the Son of God*. Is there any other question that people can ask (and answer), that has deeper impact on their daily lives and their hopes for eternity, than this one?

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?" This powerful question, which Jesus expounded in the parable of the Good Samaritan, enlarges our duty to love not only our friends, but also our enemies. Has any question encouraged more people to love their neighbors than this one?

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" Has any question caused more people to think about their values, and shift the trajectory in their lives, than this one?

Sean McDowell, Ph.D., is a professor of apologetics at Biola University. Sean is a popular YouTuber and the author or co-author of more than 20 books including, *End the Stalemate: Move Past Cancel Culture to Meaningful Conversations* (Tyndale Elevate, 2024).

These are just a few of the questions Jesus asked that changed individual lives. You and I will *obviously* not change as many lives as Jesus. But by God's grace and wisdom, we may be able to influence the lives of people around us. If we learn from the example of Jesus, we can ask meaningful questions that positively shape our family, friends, and co-workers.

Why are questions so powerful for encouraging change? First, they bring greater clarity on beliefs and motivations. Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." Questions help us understand *what* others think, *why* they think as they do, and discover what deeper purposes motivate them.

Second, questions help build deeper relationships. They invite listening, which binds people together. Questions invite understanding and common ground, which foster bridge-building rather than walls. Relationships give us the platform, medium, and trust to speak into the lives of people and encourage them to change for the good.

Third, they invite people to think. We naturally get defensive when people tell us what to believe, but questions invite personal reflection. If they are posed sincerely, and in good faith, questions can encourage people to reconsider the deepest commitments that guide their lives.

As you will see in this book, questions do much more than this! I am grateful that my dear friend Bob Tiede has taken the time to compile all the questions of Jesus, to offer some helpful commentary, and to invite some others alongside him to reflect on them. This book has both professional and personal value. While it is written for Christians, there are some remarkable insights

here for non-Christians willing to learn from the greatest communicator of all time.

One last thing: This book will not only equip you to influence lives around you, but it will also change *you*. Prepare yourself. Before we can change the world around us, we need to look within. I hope this book will encourage, equip, and convict you to wrestle with the most important questions ever asked.

Are you ready?

—Sean McDowell, Ph.D.

340 QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Compiled by Bob Tiede

MATTHEW: 109 QUESTIONS

1. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, **how can it be made salty again?**"
Matthew 5:13
2. "If you love those who love you, **what reward will you get?**" Matthew 5:46a
3. "**Are not even the tax collectors doing that?**"
Matthew 5:46b
4. "And if you greet only your own people, **what are you doing more than others?**" Matthew 5:47a
5. "**Do not even pagans do that?**" Matthew 5:47b
6. "**Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?**" Matthew 6:25
7. "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not much more valuable than they?**"
Matthew 6:26
8. "**Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?**" Matthew 6:27
9. "**And why do you worry about clothes?**" Matthew 6:28

10. "If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, **will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?**"
Matthew 6:30
11. "So do not worry, saying, '**What shall we eat?**'"
Matthew 6:31a
12. "**What shall we drink?**" Matthew 6:31b
13. "**What shall we wear?**" Matthew 6:31c
14. "**Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?**" Matthew 7:3
15. "**How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?**" Matthew 7:4
16. "**Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?**" Matthew 7:9
17. "**Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?**"
Matthew 7:10
18. "**Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?**" Matthew 7:16b
19. "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, **did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?**'"
Matthew 7:22

20. Jesus said to him, "***Shall I come and heal him?***"
Matthew 8:7
21. He replied, "You of little faith, ***why are you so afraid?***"
Matthew 8:26
22. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "***Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?***" Matthew 9:4
23. "***Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'***" Matthew 9:5
24. Jesus answered, "***How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?***"
Matthew 9:15
25. When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "***Do you believe that I am able to do this?***" Matthew 9:28
26. "***Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?*** Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care." Matthew 10:29
27. As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "***What did you go out into the wilderness to see?***" Matthew 11:7a
28. "***A reed swayed by the wind?***" Matthew 11:7b
29. "***If not, what did you go out to see?***" Matthew 11:8a
30. "***A man dressed in fine clothes?***" Matthew 11:8b

31. ***"Then what did you go out to see?"*** Matthew 11:9a
32. ***"A prophet?"*** Matthew 11:9 b
33. ***"To what can I compare this generation?"***
Matthew 11:16
34. ***"And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens?"*** Matthew 11:23
35. He answered, ***"Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"*** Matthew 12:3
36. ***"Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent?"***
Matthew 12:5
37. He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, ***will you not take hold of it and lift it out?"***
Matthew 12:11
38. ***"If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?"*** Matthew 12:26
39. ***"And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out?"*** Matthew 12:27
40. ***"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man?"*** Matthew 12:29

41. "You brood of vipers, ***how can you who are evil say anything good?***" Matthew 12:34
42. He replied to him, "***Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?***" Matthew 12:48
43. "The owner's servants came to him and said, '***Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field?***'" Matthew 13:27a
44. "***Where then did the weeds come from?***"
Matthew 13:27b
45. "***Have you understood all these things?***"
Matthew 13:51
46. Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "***why did you doubt?***"
Matthew 14:31
47. Jesus replied, "***And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?***" Matthew 15:3
48. "***Are you still so dull?***" Jesus asked them.
Matthew 15:16
49. "***Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?***"
Matthew 15:17
50. "***How many loaves do you have?***" Jesus asked.
Matthew 15:34

51. Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, ***why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?***" Matthew 16:8
52. ***"Do you still not understand?"*** Matthew 16:9a
53. ***"Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?"*** Matthew 16:9b
54. "Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and ***how many basketfuls you gathered?***" Matthew 16:10
55. ***"How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread?"*** Matthew 16:11
56. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "***Who do people say the Son of Man is?***" Matthew 16:13
57. ***"But what about you?"*** he asked. Matthew 16:15a
58. ***"Who do you say I am?"*** Matthew 16:15b
59. ***"What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"*** Matthew 16:26a
60. ***"Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"*** Matthew 16:26b
61. "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "***how long shall I stay with you?***" Matthew 17:17a

62. ***"How long shall I put up with you?"*** Matthew 17:17b
63. ***"What do you think, Simon?"*** he asked.
Matthew 17:25a
64. ***"From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?"***
Matthew 17: 25b
65. ***"What do you think?"*** Matthew 18:12a
66. "If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, ***will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?"***
Matthew 18:12b
67. ***"Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"*** Matthew 18:33
68. ***"Haven't you read,"*** he replied, ***"that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'"*** Matthew 19:4
69. ***"Why do you ask me about what is good?"*** Jesus replied. Matthew 19:17
70. He asked them, ***"Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?"*** Matthew 20:3
71. ***"Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?"***
Matthew 20:13

72. ***"Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money?"*** Matthew 20:15a
73. ***"Or are you envious because I am generous?"***
Matthew 20:15b
74. ***"What is it you want?"*** he asked. Matthew 20:21
75. ***"Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"***
Matthew 20:22b
76. Jesus stopped and called them. ***"What do you want me to do for you?"*** he asked. Matthew 20:32
77. "Yes," replied Jesus, ***"have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise'?"*** Matthew 21:16 b
78. Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—***where did it come from?"*** Matthew 21:24–25a
79. ***"Was it from heaven, or of human origin?"***
Matthew 21:25b
80. ***"What do you think?"*** Matthew 21:28
81. ***"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"***
Matthew 21:31
82. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, ***what will he do to those tenants?"*** Matthew 21:40

83. Jesus said to them, "***Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?***" Matthew 21:42
84. He asked, "***How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?***" Matthew 22:12
85. But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, ***why are you trying to trap me?***"
Matthew 22:18
86. They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "***Whose image is this?***" Matthew 22:20a
87. "***And whose inscription?***" Matthew 22:20b
88. "But about the resurrection of the dead—***have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?***" Matthew 22:31-32
89. "***What do you think about the Messiah?***"
Matthew 22:42a
90. "***Whose son is he?***" Matthew 22:42 b
91. He said to them, "***How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'?***" Matthew 22:43
92. "If then David calls him 'Lord,' ***how can he be his son?***"
Matthew 22:45

93. "You blind fools! **Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?**" Matthew 23:17
94. "You blind men! **Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?**" Matthew 23:19
95. "You snakes! You brood of vipers! **How will you escape being condemned to hell?**" Matthew 23:33
96. "**Do you see all these things?**" he asked. Matthew 24:2
97. "**Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?**" Matthew 24:45
98. "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! **So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed'?**" Matthew 25:26
99. "Then the righteous will answer him, '**Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink'?**" Matthew 25:37
100. "**When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?**" Matthew 25:38
101. "**When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?**" Matthew 25:39

102. "They also will answer, '**Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?**'"
Matthew 25:44
103. Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "**Why are you bothering this woman?**" Matthew 26:10
104. Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "**Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?**" he asked Peter. Matthew 26:40
105. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "**Are you still sleeping and resting?**" Matthew 26:45
106. "**Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?**" Matthew 26:53
107. "**But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?**" Matthew 26:54
108. In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "**Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?**" Matthew 26:55
109. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**" (which means "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**")
Matthew 27:46

MARK: 68 QUESTIONS

1. Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, ***"Why are you thinking these things?"*** Mark 2:8
2. ***"Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"*** Mark 2:9
3. Jesus answered, ***"How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?"*** Mark 2:19
4. He answered, ***"Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?"*** Mark 2:25
5. Then Jesus asked them, ***"Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"*** Mark 3:4
6. So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: ***"How can Satan drive out Satan?"*** Mark 3:23
7. ***"Who are my mother and my brothers?"*** he asked. Mark 3:33
8. Then Jesus said to them, ***"Don't you understand this parable?"*** Mark 4:13a

9. ***"How then will you understand any parable?"*** Mark 4:13b
10. He said to them, ***"Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed?"*** Mark 4:21a
11. ***"Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"*** Mark 4:21b
12. Again he said, ***"What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?"*** Mark 4:30
13. He said to his disciples, ***"Why are you so afraid?"*** Mark 4:40a
14. ***"Do you still have no faith?"*** Mark 4:40b
15. Then Jesus asked him, ***"What is your name?"*** Mark 5:9
16. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ***"Who touched my clothes?"*** Mark 5:30
17. He went in and said to them, ***"Why all this commotion and wailing?"*** Mark 5:39
18. ***"How many loaves do you have?"*** he asked. Mark 6:38
19. ***"Are you so dull?"*** he asked. Mark 7:18a
20. ***"Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?"*** Mark 7:18b

21. ***"How many loaves do you have?"*** Jesus asked. Mark 8:5
22. He sighed deeply and said, ***"Why does this generation ask for a sign?"*** Mark 8:12
23. Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: ***"Why are you talking about having no bread?"*** Mark 8:17a
24. ***"Do you still not see or understand?"*** Mark 8:17b
25. ***"Are your hearts hardened?"*** Mark 8:17c
26. ***"Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"*** Mark 8:18a
27. ***"And don't you remember?"*** Mark 8:18b
28. "When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, ***how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"*** Mark 8:19
29. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, ***how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"*** Mark 8:20
30. He said to them, ***"Do you still not understand?"*** Mark 8:21
31. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, ***"Do you see anything?"*** Mark 8:23
32. On the way he asked them, ***"Who do people say I am?"*** Mark 8:27b

33. ***"But what about you?"*** he asked. Mark 8:29a
34. ***"Who do you say I am?"*** Mark 8:29b
35. ***"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"*** Mark 8:36
36. ***"Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"***
Mark 8:37
37. Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. ***Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?"*** Mark 9:12
38. ***"What are you arguing with them about?"*** he asked.
Mark 9:16
39. "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, ***"how long shall I stay with you?"*** Mark 9:19a
40. ***"How long shall I put up with you?"*** Mark 9:19b
41. Jesus asked the boy's father, ***"How long has he been like this?"*** Mark 9:21
42. ***"If you can?"*** said Jesus. Mark 9:23
43. He asked them, ***"What were you arguing about on the road?"*** Mark 9:33b
44. "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, ***how can you make it salty again?"*** Mark 9:50

45. ***"What did Moses command you?"*** he replied.
Mark 10:3
46. ***"Why do you call me good?"*** Mark 10:18
47. ***"What do you want me to do for you?"*** he asked.
Mark 10:36
48. ***"Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"*** Mark 10:38b
49. ***"What do you want me to do for you?"*** Jesus asked him. Mark 10:51
50. "If anyone asks you, '***Why are you doing this?***' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" Mark 11:3
51. And as he taught them, he said, ***"Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'?"***
Mark 11:17
52. Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—***was it from heaven, or of human origin?***"
Mark 11:29-30
53. ***"What then will the owner of the vineyard do?"***
Mark 12:9

54. ***"Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*** Mark 12:10–11
55. But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. ***"Why are you trying to trap me?"*** he asked. Mark 12:15b
56. They brought the coin, and he asked them, ***"Whose image is this?"*** Mark 12:16a
57. ***"And whose inscription?"*** Mark 12:16b
58. Jesus replied, ***"Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"***
Mark 12:24
59. "Now about the dead rising—***have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"*** Mark 12:26
60. While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, ***"Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?"***
Mark 12:35
61. "David himself calls him 'Lord.' ***How then can he be his son?"*** Mark 12:37
62. ***"Do you see all these great buildings?"*** replied Jesus.
Mark 13:2a

63. ***"Why are you bothering her?"*** Mark 14:6b
64. "Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: ***Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"***" Mark 14:14
65. "Simon," he said to Peter, ***"are you asleep?"*** Mark 14:37b
66. ***"Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?"*** Mark 14:37c
67. Returning the third time, he said to them, ***"Are you still sleeping and resting?"*** Mark 14:41
68. ***"Am I leading a rebellion,"*** said Jesus, ***"that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?"***
Mark 14:48

LUKE: 107 QUESTIONS

1. ***"Why were you searching for me?"*** he asked.
Luke 2:49a
2. ***"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"***
Luke 2:49b
3. Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked,
"Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?"
Luke 5:22
4. ***"Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"*** Luke 5:23
5. Jesus answered, ***"Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?"*** Luke 5:34
6. Jesus answered them, ***"Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"***
Luke 6:3
7. Then Jesus said to them, ***"I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"*** Luke 6:9
8. ***"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?"*** Luke 6:32
9. ***"And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?"*** Luke 6:33

10. ***"And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?"*** Luke 6:34
11. He also told them this parable: ***"Can the blind lead the blind?"*** Luke 6:39a
12. ***"Will they not both fall into a pit?"*** Luke 6:39b
13. ***"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"*** Luke 6:41
14. ***"How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye?"*** Luke 6:42
15. ***"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"*** Luke 6:46
16. After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: ***"What did you go out into the wilderness to see?"*** Luke 7:24a
17. ***"A reed swayed by the wind?"*** Luke 7:24b
18. ***"If not, what did you go out to see?"*** Luke 7:25a
19. ***"A man dressed in fine clothes?"*** Luke 7:25b
20. ***"But what did you go out to see?"*** Luke 7:26a
21. ***"A prophet?"*** Luke 7:26b

22. Jesus went on to say, ***"To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation?"*** Luke 7:31a
23. ***"What are they like?"*** Luke 7:31b
24. "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. ***Now which of them will love him more?"*** Luke 7:41-42
25. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, ***"Do you see this woman?"*** Luke 7:44
26. ***"Where is your faith?"*** he asked his disciples. Luke 8:25
27. Jesus asked him, ***"What is your name?"*** Luke 8:30
28. ***"Who touched me?"*** Jesus asked. Luke 8:45
29. Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, ***"Who do the crowds say I am?"*** Luke 9:18
30. ***"But what about you?"*** he asked. Luke 9:20a
31. ***"Who do you say I am?"*** Luke 9:20b
32. ***"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?"*** Luke 9:25

33. "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "**how long shall I stay with you and put up with you?**" Luke 9:41
34. "And you, Capernaum, **will you be lifted to the heavens?**" Luke 10:15
35. "**What is written in the Law?**" he replied. Luke 10:26a
36. "**How do you read it?**" Luke 10:26b
37. "**Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?**"
Luke 10:36
38. "**Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?**" Luke 11:11
39. "**Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?**"
Luke 11:12
40. "If Satan is divided against himself, **how can his kingdom stand?**" Luke 11:18
41. "Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, **by whom do your followers drive them out?**" Luke 11:19
42. "**Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?**" Luke 11:40b
43. "**Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?**"
Luke 12:6

44. Jesus replied, "Man, ***who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?***" Luke 12:14
45. "He thought to himself, '***What shall I do?***'" Luke 12:17
46. "***Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?***" Luke 12:20b
47. "***Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?***" Luke 12:25
48. "***Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?***" Luke 12:26
49. The Lord answered, "***Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?***" Luke 12:42
50. "***Do you think I came to bring peace on earth?***"
Luke 12:51
51. "***How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?***" Luke 12:56b
52. "***Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?***"
Luke 12:57
53. Jesus answered, "***Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?***" Luke 13:2

54. "Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—**do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?**" Luke 13:4
55. "**Why should it use up the soil?**" Luke 13:7b
56. The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! **Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?**" Luke 13:15
57. "**Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?**" Luke 13:16
58. Then Jesus asked, "**What is the kingdom of God like?**" Luke 13:18a
59. "**What shall I compare it to?**" Luke 13:18b
60. Again he asked, "**What shall I compare the kingdom of God to?**" Luke 13:20
61. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?**" Luke 14:3
62. Then he asked them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, **will you not immediately pull it out?**" Luke 14:5
63. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. **Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?**" Luke 14:28

64. "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. **Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"**
Luke 14:31
65. "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, **how can it be made salty again?"** Luke 14:34
66. "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. **Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"**
Luke 15:4
67. "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. **Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?"** Luke 15:8
68. Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, '**What is this I hear about you?"**' Luke 16:1–2
69. "The manager said to himself, '**What shall I do now?"**'
Luke 16:3
70. "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, '**How much do you owe my master?"**'
Luke 16:5
71. "Then he asked the second, '**And how much do you owe?"**' Luke 16:7

72. "So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, **who will trust you with true riches?**" Luke 16:11
73. "And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, **who will give you property of your own?**" Luke 16:12
74. "**Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat?'**" Luke 17:7b
75. "**Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink?'**" Luke 17:8
76. "**Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?**" Luke 17:9
77. Jesus asked, "**Were not all ten cleansed?**" Luke 17:17a
78. "**Where are the other nine?**" Luke 17:17b
79. "**Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?**" Luke 17:18
80. "**And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?**" Luke 18:7a
81. "**Will he keep putting them off?**" Luke 18:7b
82. "However, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith on the earth?**" Luke 18:8b

83. ***"Why do you call me good?"*** Jesus answered.
Luke 18:19
84. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ***"What do you want me to do for you?"*** Luke 18:40b-41
85. "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! ***You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?"*** Luke 19:22
86. ***"Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?"*** Luke 19:23
87. "If anyone asks you, '***Why are you untying it?***' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Luke 19:31
88. He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: John's baptism—***was it from heaven, or of human origin?"***
Luke 20:3-4
89. "Then the owner of the vineyard said, '***What shall I do?"***' Luke 20:13
90. ***"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"*** Luke 20:15b
91. Jesus looked directly at them and asked, ***"Then what is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'?"***
Luke 20:17

92. "Show me a denarius. **Whose image and inscription are on it?**" Luke 20:24
93. Then Jesus said to them, "**Why is it said that the Messiah is the son of David?**" Luke 20:41
94. "David calls him 'Lord.' **How then can he be his son?**" Luke 20:44
95. "And say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: **Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?**'" Luke 22:11
96. "**For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves?**" Luke 22:27a
97. "**Is it not the one who is at the table?**" Luke 22:27b
98. Then Jesus asked them, "**When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?**" Luke 22:35
99. "**Why are you sleeping?**" he asked them. Luke 22:46
100. But Jesus asked him, "**Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?**" Luke 22:48
101. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "**Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?**" Luke 22:52

102. "For if people do these things when the tree is green, ***what will happen when it is dry?***" Luke 23:31
103. He asked them, "***What are you discussing together as you walk along?***" Luke 24:17
104. "***What things?***" he asked. Luke 24:19
105. "***Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?***" Luke 24:26
106. He said to them, "***Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?***" Luke 24:38
107. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "***Do you have anything here to eat?***" Luke 24:41

JOHN: 55 QUESTIONS

1. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, **"What do you want?"** John 1:38
2. **"Woman, why do you involve me?"** Jesus replied.
John 2:4
3. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and **do you not understand these things?"** John 3:10
4. "I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; **how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"** John 3:12
5. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, **"Will you give me a drink?"** John 4:7
6. **"Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'?"** John 4:35
7. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, **"Do you want to get well?"** John 5:6
8. **"How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?"** John 5:44
9. "But since you do not believe what he wrote, **how are you going to believe what I say?"** John 5:47

10. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "**Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?**" John 6:5
11. Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "**Does this offend you?**" John 6:61
12. "**You do not want to leave too, do you?**" Jesus asked the Twelve. John 6:67
13. Then Jesus replied, "**Have I not chosen you, the Twelve?** Yet one of you is a devil!" John 6:70
14. "**Has not Moses given you the law?**" John 7:19a
15. "**Why are you trying to kill me?**" John 7:19c
16. "Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, **why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath?**" John 7:23
17. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "**Woman, where are they?**" John 8:10a
18. "**Has no one condemned you?**" John 8:10b
19. "**Why is my language not clear to you?**" John 8:43
20. "**Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?**" John 8:46a
21. "If I am telling the truth, **why don't you believe me?**" John 8:46b

22. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**" John 9:35
23. But Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. **For which of these do you stone me?**" John 10:32
24. Jesus answered them, "**Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'?**" John 10:34
25. "**What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?**" John 10:36a
26. "**Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?**" John 10:36b
27. Jesus answered, "**Are there not twelve hours of daylight?**" John 11:9
28. "And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. **Do you believe this?**" John 11:26
29. "**Where have you laid him?**" he asked. John 11:34
30. Then Jesus said, "**Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?**" John 11:40
31. "**Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?**" John 12:27a
32. "**Father, save me from this hour?**" John 12:27b

33. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. **"Do you understand what I have done for you?"** he asked them. John 13:12
34. Then Jesus answered, **"Will you really lay down your life for me?"** John 13:38
35. "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, **would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"** John 14:2
36. Jesus answered: **"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?"**
John 14:9a
37. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. **How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"** John 14:9b
38. **"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"** John 14:10
39. "But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, **'Where are you going?'**" John 16:5
40. Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, **"Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?"**
John 16:19
41. **"Do you now believe?"** Jesus replied. John 16:31

42. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "**Who is it you want?**"
John 18:4
43. Again he asked them, "**Who is it you want?**" John 18:7
44. Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! **Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?**"
John 18:11
45. "**Why question me?**" John 18:21
46. "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, **why did you strike me?**" John 18:23
47. "**Is that your own idea,**" Jesus asked, "**or did others talk to you about me?**" John 18:34
48. He asked her, "**Woman, why are you crying?**"
John 20:15a
49. "**Who is it you are looking for?**" John 20:15b
50. He called out to them, "**Friends, haven't you any fish?**"
John 21:5
51. When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, **do you love me more than these?**" John 21:15
52. Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, **do you love me?**"
John 21:16

53. The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, **do you love me?**" John 21:17
54. Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you?**" John 21:22
55. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you?**" John 21:23b

ACTS: 1 QUESTION

1. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,
"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Acts 9:4

CHAPTER 1

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM JESUS ABOUT ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS?

Bob Tiede

WHY DID JESUS ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS?

Whether you are a follower of Jesus or not, you would do well to study the communication practices of the one that many believe to be the greatest communicator in all of history.

Jesus' communication style focused on two things: He told great stories *and* asked great questions!

I don't know about you, but I ask a lot of questions because I don't know the answers. That was never true of Jesus. He knew all the answers and yet he focused much of his interaction with people by asking them questions. The four Gospels, plus the book of Acts record 340 questions that Jesus asked.

Why do you think he asked so many questions?

I am asking you! Please take a couple of minutes to list 3–5 reasons you think he asked so many questions?

Here are a few that I have come up with:

- Engagement
- Questions build relationships
- Forced those he was interacting with to have to think
- Created conversations
- His listeners were more likely to own their own conclusions
- He sometimes answered questions with questions of his own
- He sometimes asked warm-up questions to get the conversation started

DIFFERENT KINDS OF QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Questions to Make a Human Connection

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) (John 4:7–9)

Questions That Caused Introspection

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repay-

ment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:32–36)

Questions That Addressed Worry

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?” (Matthew 6:25–30)

Questions That Gave Balance to Their Grievances with Others

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3–4)

Questions to Make an Argument

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4)

If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? (Matthew 18:12b)

Warm-Up Questions

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." (Mark 8:27–28)

To-the-Point Questions

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." (Mark 8:29)

Questions That Revealed Inadequacy

His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?" "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish." (Matthew 15:33–34)

Questions That Reminded Them of What They Already Knew

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator

‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? (Matthew 19:3–5)

Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” (Mark 12:10–11)

BOB’S FAVORITE QUESTION:

“WHAT DO YOU THINK?” (MATTHEW 18:12)

Questions That Asked for Opinion

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” (Luke 10:25–28)

Questions That Allowed People to Voice Their Own Needs

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” Jesus had compassion on

them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. (Matthew 20:29–34)

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:49–52)

Clever Questions

“Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?” But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed. So, they left him and went away. (Matthew 22:17–22)

Answering Questions with Questions

They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you authority to do this?” Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’

But if we say, 'Of human origin' . . ." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things." (Mark 11:27–33)

Questions That Asked His Listeners to Tell the Point of a Parable

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." (Luke 10:36–37)

It's easy for us to miss the real brilliance of this question because in our culture we have no hatred for Samaritans. But in Jesus' day the Jews hated the Samaritans. Those living in northern Israel would take the long route to Jerusalem simply to avoid going through Samaria. So, when Jesus asks, "Who was the neighbor?," there was most likely a long pause before the Jewish expert in the law replied and almost certainly it was very difficult for him to verbalize that the "hero" of this story was a Samaritan when he hated all Samaritans. Jesus could have told this story and ended by stating, "Therefore the Samaritan was the good neighbor," but instead he brilliantly asked the expert in the law to answer, knowing how potentially powerful answering that question might be in his life and the lives of the others present.

Questions That Asked People to Consider the Cost

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' Or suppose a

king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace." (Luke 14:28–32)

Questions That Called Forth Commitment

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66–69)

Questions That Restored the Disciple Who Denied Jesus Three Times

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:15–17)

Reflection Question

What are some leadership/communication take-aways from Jesus' strategy of asking great questions?

CHAPTER 2

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM JESUS THE COMMUNICATOR?

Bob Tiede

You and I ask a lot of questions because we don't know the answers!

Jesus never asked a question because he didn't know the answer! So why did Jesus ask so many questions?

When I did the research for this book, I discovered that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and Acts contained 340 questions. Wow! That is a lot of questions!

One day, I had an epiphany—which is not my normal experience. Here is the thought that came to my mind that day:

Imagine a complicated computer program written by a software engineer. If you or I, just casual users, were using the program, we probably would be using only 10 to 15% of the program's available capabilities. But if the program's writer was using it, they would know 100% of the program's capabilities and how to use it to its fullest extent.

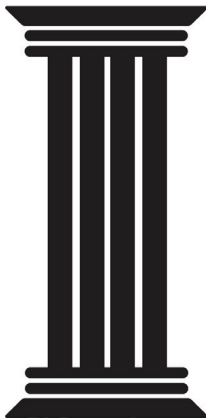
We celebrate Christmas—Christ coming to earth as a baby born in Bethlehem. But the scriptures teach that Jesus has existed forever, and the scriptures teach that Jesus was involved in creation:

- *John 1:3*—Through him (Jesus) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
- *Colossians 1:16*—For in him (Jesus) all things were created.
- *Hebrews 1:2*—Through whom (Jesus) also he made the universe.

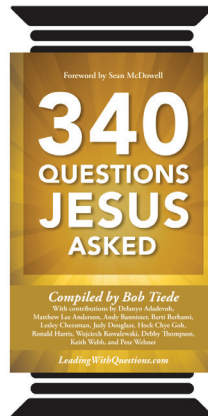
Whether you are a follower of Jesus or not, we would all do well to study the communication practices of the one many believe to be the greatest communicator in all of history. After all, the movement he started more than 2,000 years ago is still signing up recruits today!

THE TWO PILLARS OF JESUS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Stories



Questions



Great stories are sticky! When you hear a great story it sticks. You don't have to do a lot to remember what you just heard. You can share that story almost verbatim a day, week, or even years later. Do you think Jesus knew this was how the brains he created worked? Do you think he was influencing the brains he created when he shared the story of "The Good Samaritan" or "The Prodigal Son," knowing that people would leave remembering the story? It is estimated that only 3% of the Jewish population were literate in the time of Jesus.

Jesus obviously wanted to see people changed. But do you think he knew that instead of saying, "Let me tell You," that saying, "Let me ask you," would be far more effective in changing lives?

- Matthew 16:13—"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
- Matthew 16:15—"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
- Mark 2:8—"Why are you thinking these things?"
- Mark 8:36—"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"
- Luke 6:32—"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?"
- John 16:31—"Do you now believe?"

Reflection Question:

How could you increase your communication effectiveness by using Jesus' communication strategy of telling stories and asking questions?

CHAPTER 3

A TOUGH QUESTION

Bob Tiede

Chapter 2 described the two pillars of Jesus' communication strategy: telling stories and asking questions. Here is an example of where Jesus used both.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LUKE 10:25–37)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind," and "Love your neighbor as yourself."

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

Jesus ended the telling of the story with a question:

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

When you look at this question, you likely think, "That's easy! I could have answered that one correctly!" Yet, I would suggest that this was a very tough question!

Let me ask you a question: Did you grow up in a home where your parents and grandparents HATED SAMARITANS?

Of course not! In fact, if there was an athletic team called the "Good Samaritans," you and I would instinctively cheer for them!

But for the "Expert in the Law," he most likely grew up in a home where his parents and grandparents and everyone else he knew hated Samaritans! The Jews at the time of Jesus hated

the Samaritans. The scriptures record that those living in the north, when they traveled to Jerusalem, would take the long way around rather than a much shorter route through Samaria, just to avoid any contact with Samaritans.

So, Jesus shares a story where he made the “hero” of the story a member of this hated group. Then Jesus ends his story by asking the “Expert in the Law,” “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

It was indeed A Tough Question.

The “Expert in the Law” likely thought about his reply for some time! And his reply is a curious one. He chose not to say, “the Samaritan,” but instead chose to respond with, “The one who had mercy on him.”

As noted in chapter 2, Jesus wanted to see people changed. But do you think he knew that instead of saying, “Let me tell you,” that saying, “Let me ask you,” would be far more effective in changing lives?

I Wish We Knew “The Rest of The Story”

I know that this will date me—but for those of you old enough to remember—for more than 30 years (1976–2009), five days a week, there was a radio broadcast titled “The Rest of the Story” by Paul Harvey. In just three or four minutes, Paul would share an event or occurrence that almost everyone in his audience was familiar with, but then would share what has happened since—“The Rest of the Story.”

There are so many stories in the Scriptures where I wish Paul Harvey could have shared "The Rest of the Story." Jesus' interaction with this "Expert in the Law" is one of them. I would love to know how Jesus' question, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" changed this man's life.

CHAPTER 4

WHY JESUS NEVER STOPPED ASKING QUESTIONS

Pete Wehner

Originally posted in the New York Times on December 23, 2021, and gratefully posted here with the permission of the author, Pete Wehner.

Malcolm Muggeridge, the renowned 20th-century social critic and British journalist, was an unlikely convert to Christianity. For most of his life, he was an agnostic; faith for him was “infinitely unattainable.” But attain it he did, late in life, and in 1975 he wrote, “The coming of Jesus into the world is the most stupendous event in human history.”

Twenty centuries after his birth, Jesus still holds a revered place in the hearts of billions of people. I am among them. I imagine

Peter Wehner, a Senior Fellow at the Trinity Forum, served in the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations and the George W. Bush White House. He is a contributing editor at *The Atlantic* and a contributing opinion writer for the *New York Times*. He attends McLean Presbyterian Church in McLean, Va.

that it has influenced almost every area of my life, like food coloring dropped in water.

Among the things that have long fascinated people about Jesus and explain his enduring appeal is his method of dialogue and teaching. He asked a lot of questions and told a lot of stories in the form of parables. In fact, parables form about a third of Jesus' recorded teachings. The Gospels were written decades after he died, so his questions and parables clearly left a deep impression on those who bore testimony to him.

Martin Copenhaver, a retired president of Andover Newton Theological School, claims in his book "Jesus Is the Question" that Jesus was more than 40 times as likely to ask a question as answer one directly, and he was 20 times as likely to offer an indirect answer as a direct one. "Oh my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger," T.S. Eliot wrote in "The Rock." "Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions."

Some of Jesus' questions were rhetorical; others were meant to challenge or even provoke. In some cases, Jesus used questions to parry attacks by religious authorities who set traps for him. In others, he used questions to enter more fully into the lives of others and to help people look at the state of their hearts. He asked people about their fears and their faith. Jesus used questions to free a woman caught in adultery from condemnation and to inquire whether people considered him to be the Messiah. He probed deeply into questions not many had asked before him, like "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Jesus liked to turn the tables on his interlocutors, especially those who were in the business of asking questions themselves.

In Luke, an expert in the law asked Jesus, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” His reply took the form of not one question but two: “What is written in the law?” and “How do you read it?” But that’s hardly the end of the exchange. We’re told that this person wanted to justify himself; Jesus moved the conversation to a very different plane, from the abstract to the personal. When the lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus asked what it meant to him to be a good neighbor. By the end of this cross-examination, Jesus had led his interlocutor—first through his questioning and then via the parable of the good Samaritan—to acknowledge that the person who is a good neighbor is the one who shows mercy. It is an astonishing interaction.

As for his use of parables, in “Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes” the theologian Kenneth Bailey wrote, Jesus “created meaning like a dramatist and a poet rather than like a philosopher.” The author refers to Jesus as a “metaphorical theologian” whose “primary method of creating meaning was through metaphor, simile, parable and dramatic action rather than through logic and reasoning.”

Jesus, when asked by his disciples in Matthew 13 why he spoke in parables, indicated that it was to reveal the truth to some and to hide the truth from others. He was willing to disclose the truth to those who were sincere but wanted to conceal it from people not willing to honestly wrestle with its meaning. Jesus also clearly understood the power of stories to make his words more memorable by making them more personal.

“Arguments may form our opinions, but stories form our loves,” Cherie Harder, the president of the Trinity Forum, told me. She added, “Stories ask us to enter another world—which usually

has the result of broadening or disrupting our own." Jesus' parables provide layers of meaning: There is enough richness and ambiguity in them that people could spend a lifetime reading them and taking different things from them. Bobby Gross of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship told me, "Parables and questions invite us—require us—to think, to ponder."

With his puzzles and paradoxes, Jesus is trusting our discernment, knowing that the Bible includes contrasting approaches on matters ranging from why people suffer to keeping the Sabbath to how we should treat our enemies. As the theologian Kenton Sparks put it, "At face value, Scripture does not seem to furnish us with one divine theology; it gives us numerous theologies."

I wonder, too, if Jesus, in telling parables, might have had in mind what Emily Dickinson described when she wrote, "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant/Success in Circuit lies." So much more so when she closes her poem by saying, "The Truth must dazzle gradually/Or every man be blind."

Kerry Dearborn, a professor emerita of theology at Seattle Pacific, told me that in terms of the ways in which Jesus communicated, "I'm convinced he used questions and stories as a means of connection and transformation—to awaken us, to whet our appetites, to invite us to draw nearer, that we might open up more fully to God and to God's purposes in and for us."

"With his use of everyday elements of life, people felt seen," Ms. Dearborn added. "With his powerful depictions of a father who loves prodigals, tax collectors and Samaritans, people were comforted and felt safe enough to follow him. And hearing sto-

ries of the ways in which God stands on the side of the oppressed, people would know they could trust this God of both justice and love.”

Philip Yancey, the author, most recently, of the memoir “Where the Light Fell,” said that “the aspect of Jesus’ style that stands out to me is how unpropagandistic he was. Imagine: He knew the truth more than anyone who has lived and could have responded with dogma and fiat, as the church so often has done in his place. Instead, he was anything but an arm twister.”

Mr. Yancey went on to point out in so many places, Jesus makes it impossible for us to conclude, “I’m OK. I can relax.” Whether it’s Jesus’ teachings on anger or lust or his command that we be perfect as his father in heaven is perfect, “no one can reach that place of spiritual superiority that Jesus holds out, which was his point, exactly. We don’t earn God’s grace; we receive it.”

William Fullilove, a pastor at McLean Presbyterian Church, where I worship, put it to me this way: “Jesus was after our hearts, not just our minds. He was after lives changed, not just intellects grown.”

Jesus used stories, then, but he was also part of a story, one that contains thousands of characters and unexpected twists and turns, different genres (poetry, prophecy, epistles, wisdom literature) and countless subplots. But the Bible is also, above all, a metanarrative—the unfolding of a story God has entered, most conspicuously in the person of Jesus, a drama that has purpose and direction. That has been, at least for some of us, a source of comfort, especially in moments of grief and great pain.

Kate Bowler, an associate professor at Duke Divinity School who was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer at the age of 35, told me, “Jesus’ tender birth and violent death leave the problem of suffering unanswered until the end of days. We must learn to live and die in the not-yetness of suffering and empire, fear and uncertainty. But our questioning hearts in the face of evil is not an affront to faith. Jesus simply says: Wait. All will be revealed.”

Mark Labberton, the president of Fuller Theological Seminary, explained to me that trauma is like broken glass—shards in our lives that can randomly and repeatedly cut us inside. The trauma needs to be named and gradually integrated into a person’s life, and if possible, for those who are able, it helps for the trauma to be put in the context of being part of a larger story. For some people, that larger story need not have a faith component; they are able to create meaning without it. But for others, having their trauma understood not as a random, awful event but rather as a very difficult chapter in a larger and ultimately redemptive story can be life-giving.

Christmas is meaningful, for those of us of the Christian faith, because it situates each of our lives—the joys and the sorrows, the hope and the despair, the dramatic and the mundane—in a larger narrative: Not only did God author it; the son of God became a protagonist within it.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING QUESTIONS FROM THE MASTER

Andy Bannister

Adapted from Chapter 6 of How to Talk about Jesus without Looking like an Idiot by Andy Bannister. Copyright © 2023. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries. All rights reserved.

JESUS' LOVE OF QUESTIONS

It is absolutely fascinating to look at Jesus' own approach to questions and answers. When I speak in churches, I'm often asked to do Q and A after the talk, but when you read through the Gospels carefully, you quickly discover that Jesus far preferred Q and Q and Q. The statistics are fascinating. It has been calculated that Jesus asked 307 questions in the Gospels, gets

Andy Bannister is a highly in-demand speaker, writer, and broadcaster. Based in the United Kingdom, he's the director of the Solas Centre for Public Christianity, an evangelism and training ministry. He is an adjunct professor at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, and an adjunct research fellow at Melbourne School of Theology in Australia.

asked 183 questions, and answers at most a mere 8. Which means Jesus is almost 40 times more likely to ask a question than to *answer* one (although that's still better odds than I encounter when asking one of my kids questions like "Who tried to paint the cat—*again?*").

Jesus asked questions of invitation ("Who are you looking for?"), questions about his identity ("Who do you say I am?"), questions about attitudes ("Why did you grumble about the splinter in your friend's eye, but not notice the log in your own?"), questions about love ("Don't even tax collectors love those who love them?"), questions about healing ("Do you want to get well?"), questions about the purpose of life ("Is life not about more than food and clothing?"), questions about God's Kingdom ("What shall I compare the Kingdom of God to?"), questions about faith ("Do you believe I can do this?"), questions about obedience ("Why do you call me 'Lord' but don't keep my words?"), questions about discipleship ("Do you also want to leave me?"), and questions about eternal life ("All who believe in me will never die—do you believe this?").

So when it comes to asking questions ourselves in evangelism, how can we learn from Jesus, the Master Questioner? Let's take a look at four conversations Jesus had to see what we can discover.

USING A QUESTION TO CLARIFY MEANINGS AND EXPOSE ASSUMPTIONS

Our first example comes from Mark 10, where we find the well-known story of Jesus and the rich young ruler. It's a slightly odd title for the episode, because nowhere does Mark tell us the

man was a ruler. However, as the conversation unfolds, we discover that though he might not be a ruler in terms of leading men, he was certainly a straight lines kind of guy.

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother.'"

"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

—Mark 10:17–22

Now, you have probably heard this story many times before, but I wonder if this thought has ever struck you: What on earth was Jesus thinking when he gave that incredibly weird answer, "Why do you call me good?" Indeed, the fact that it is a totally weird answer is revealed by a simple thought experiment. Imagine that as you're reading this very paragraph, the doorbell rings. You sigh, put down the book, slightly annoyed at being torn

away from the possibility of a really funny footnote, and fling open the front door. Lo and behold, it's not a delivery guy dropping off a bulk order of turtle feed but your next-door neighbour. "Good neighbour," they begin hesitantly, "I wonder if I might ask: What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Now, what answer are you most likely to give at this point? Perhaps if you are super confident, you might reply, "What a brilliant question! Come on in, the kettle has just boiled. I'd love to help you think about this." Perhaps if you are nervous, you might reply, "Hang on, I've got a book that can help you with that very question." And if you are fearfully knock-kneed, you might suggest, "Why don't you come along with me to church on Sunday? I bet my pastor can really help with that question." (And then, as you bid your neighbour good evening, you quickly ring the pastor and say, "We've got a real live non-Christian coming to church on Sunday! Make sure you preach your best evangelistic sermon!")

But did you notice? You didn't instinctively reach for the answer Jesus gave to the young man: "Why do you call me good? Only God is good." So why did Jesus respond that way? Why didn't he say, "I'm the Son of God, so you're asking the right guy"? Or "Come along to the Alpha course that Peter, James, and John are leading tomorrow at the First Baptist Synagogue of Capernaum—there'll be a free loaves-and-fishes supper"? What was Jesus thinking with this whole "Why do you call me good?" business?

Well, think about this for a moment. Picture in your mind's eye a non-Christian friend. Maybe a work colleague, a classmate, or a neighbour. Now, suppose you say to your friend, "Look, I know you don't believe in God, but can you grant me a couple of

things for a moment? Imagine that there is a God and that there is a heaven—just imagine for a moment. What do you think you need to do to get there?”

What do you think your typical non-Christian friend is *likely* to reply? I’ve tried this a few times, and by far the most common answer is “Be a good person.” Most people think that if God exists, if there is an afterlife, then the way to get there is to be a decent person: to be a good citizen, be kind to others, keep your nose clean, and so on. If you’re good, then God will welcome you into heaven. The most common religious position on the planet is not Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism, but Goodpersonism, the Disney view of life: all good dogs go to heaven.

And this is what the rich young man is asking Jesus. “You look like a good person, so you’re going to heaven—obviously. How do I get there?” (There’s also a bit of preening going on. In verse 20, we discover that the young man is inflated like a novelty balloon at a kid’s party on the helium of his own self-righteousness.) So this is the mess Jesus has to deal with. Of course he could have deflated the young man’s ideas with a parable, a sermon, or a pithy one-liner, but instead Jesus does it with a question: “Why do you call me good? Only God is good.”

The logic here is devastating. That question basically says to the young man, “You know what? You’re absolutely right. All good people do get to go to heaven. However, there is just one itchy-bitsy problem—namely, that only God is good. Follow the steps: (1) all good people go to heaven, (2) but only God is good, (3) so who gets to go to heaven? Only God. And by the way, I’m sorry to inform you that your application to join the Trinity has been turned down.”

The question also opens up a far deeper question. If the rich young man has recognised that Jesus is good, but *only* God is good, who exactly does that make Jesus? That's the real elephant in the room lurking behind Jesus' request to the young man at the end of the conversation: "Follow me."

But before that elephant, another has been exposed. Indeed, there's a whole posse of pachyderms lurking in this conversation, trying hard to blend into the wallpaper. Not least, there's the elephant of riches—that for all his questions about morality and goodness, the issue really holding the young man back is *money*, in particular his greedy attachment to it, and it's that, ultimately, that prevents him from following Jesus. And Jesus exposes that issue by asking just one question.

Jesus' conversation with the rich young man shows how asking questions can both clarify (getting to the heart of what the word *good* actually means) as well as expose (the young man's wealth obsession). And just as Jesus used a question to clarify and expose, we can do the same thing. How might we use what Jesus did here in a contemporary conversation?

Well, imagine that a friend remarks to you something like this: "How can you believe in God in a world so full of evil and suffering?" That's a *great* question, and there are many things that could be said about it (see chapter 11 for some ideas). But in the meantime, what about asking a question to expose some of the hidden assumptions behind the question? For example, you could say, "Thanks for your question—but I'm intrigued you used the word *evil*. If there is no God, how do you decide which events are good and which are *evil*?"

In other words, your friend has assumed that the existence of evil is a problem for Christians but hasn't considered the conundrum that if they throw God out the window, with him go many other things, not least any ability to talk about things like good and evil, other than as personal preferences. It's perfectly fine for an atheist to say, "I don't *like* violent crime"; it makes no sense for them to say, "Violent crime is *evil*." But you can unpack that whole discussion by simply asking, "Why do you call something 'evil'?"

That's an example of how we might use a question like Jesus' to the rich young man to expose an assumption. But Jesus' question is also helpful for clarifying a *meaning*. People often use words quite sloppily, and this seems especially to be the case when it comes to spirituality. Folks who wouldn't dream of redefining "poison" as "seasoning" or "do not feed the bear" as "smear your fingers with peanut butter and wiggle them through the bars" suddenly go all wobbly when it comes to words like *god*.

A few years ago, I was drinking coffee with a colleague at Toronto Pearson Airport, awaiting a flight. The café was crowded, and it wasn't long before a stranger politely asked if he could sit in the spare seat at our table. We got chatting, and it turned out he was heading to Vancouver. "What takes you out west?" I asked. Excitedly he replied that he was off to attend a spiritual conference.

"A spiritual conference?" my colleague, Rick, said. "That sounds amazing."

"Yes, it's a conference which promises to help me discover my inner divinity."

"Inert in vanity?" I repeated, as the café was noisy. "My attempts to be inert usually succeed, especially before 9:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning."

"No, no," he clarified, "inner di-vin-i-ty. The conference is all about discovering that I am god."

Now that got my attention. "Why would you call yourself god?" I asked politely.

"Oh, let me be clear," our coffee companion replied, "it's not that I'm god and you're not, but that we are all god. I'm god, you're god, your colleague is god—"

"Oh, I'm not sure about Rick," I added. "Trust me, I work with him."

"No, no, he really is. He's god, everybody in this café is god, every one of us is god."

It might have been tempting to make fun of this man's spiritual views, yet despite how odd they may sound, he was merely expressing a belief quite common in some Eastern religions. So was this the time to give a full-blown rebuttal, or was there a better way? There was, and my colleague found it.

"When you say *everybody* is god, you do mean *everybody*, right? Every human being who has ever lived?"

"Yes!"

"So me, Andy, that man over there with the stupid hat, every person in history—Mahatma Gandhi, Buddha, Martin Luther King Jr., Florence Nightingale—"

"Yes! Yes!"

"—Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin—"

"No! No!"

"But I thought," said Rick, "that you said everybody is god."

"Only the good people."

"But then who gets to decide what the word *good* means?"

We'll leave the conversation there, but my colleague's question got to the heart of the issue. Our new friend was using the word *god* really unclearly, and it just took the right question—in this case about who got to be included in this divine identity free-for-all—to pull the rug from under our friend's assumptions. We were then able, as the conversation unfolded, to gently introduce the idea that as Christians we believe that none of us is worthy of anything, let alone being confused with God, but that God in his tremendous love offers all of us the possibility of forgiveness, restoration, and adoption into his family. We're not God, but we are invited to become his sons and daughters.

USING A QUESTION TO TURN THE TABLES

Let's take a look at a second example in the Gospels. This time Jesus uses a question to turn the tables, taking a trap that his questioners are trying to spring on him and turning it neatly back onto them. Here's how Luke recounts the story:

One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief

priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"

He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

So they answered, "We don't know where it was from." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Luke 20:1–8

Faced with this veritable crowd of questioners—the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders have *all* ganged up together, presumably assuming there's safety from devastating questions in numbers—Jesus doesn't get drawn into a debate. There's no point, given these folks are not in the slightest interested in where his authority rests; they simply want to shut him down. So instead, with one question, Jesus turns the tables on them. And there are contemporary conversations where the same approach works well.

A friend was once chatting to a university student who had a question about faith, and the conversation was going well when another student, who was well known as a loudmouthed scep-

tic, walked past and said rudely, “Religion is a load of ##### rubbish. Christianity is just a psychological crutch for those too scared to face up to life.” Now there are many, many things wrong with that statement, but by far the biggest is that like many atheistic soundbites, it self-destructs. And so my friend, rather than cave in or say something equally rude, simply replied, “What if it’s atheism that’s the psychological crutch, clutched at by people too scared to face God or to be held to account for how they’ve lived their lives?”

By applying a method similar to Jesus’ response to the authority question, my friend was able to cause this overly confident atheist to pause for a moment, after which he laughed and remarked, “Well played, well played.” That gave my friend the chance to briefly suggest that when it comes to beliefs, what matters is not how they make us *feel* but whether they are actually *true*. He then said to the atheist student, “Sometimes Christianity is far from comforting. Some days I find myself thinking the *easiest* path would be atheism—not least because it allows one to do exactly as one wishes. But I don’t walk that path, simply because I don’t happen to believe it’s true.”

USING A QUESTION TO REVEAL A CONTRADICTION OR TENSION

In our third example from the Gospels, we will see how Jesus on one occasion used a question to reveal an apparent contradiction in the beliefs of the religious leadership:

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.”

David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Mark 12:35–37

Questions around the identity of the Messiah were lively in first-century Jerusalem, and of course, Jesus himself was well known for claiming (directly and indirectly) that he was the long-awaited saviour of Israel. To the religious elites, this went down about as well as a glass of rancid milk—hence their constant challenges about the way he and his followers behaved (“How can he be the Messiah? He heals on the Sabbath!” “He can’t be the Messiah; he claims to forgive sins!” and so on). Some of the most fascinating exchanges in the Gospels come from Jesus pushing back on all of this, in word, story, and deed. But here in Mark 12 we see Jesus turn the tables and go on the offensive as he points out that it seems odd for the teachers of the law to claim the Messiah must be David’s son yet is also David’s Lord. Aren’t they missing something somewhere?

Using a question to tease apart tensions, contradictions, or difficulties in another person’s beliefs can often be a powerful step in spiritual conversations. And rather than simply saying “You’re wrong!” (which may just cause your friend to get defensive), asking a question that exposes the weaknesses in their position can be far more effective. So how can we use what Jesus did here in our own conversations?

A good example comes from an experience a friend's daughter, Alice, had the other year. She had been discussing faith issues with a school friend over the lunch break and remarked that she thought the existence of moral values was a good argument for God. Her friend had cheerfully replied, "Oh, we don't need God to be good. We just each decide what's right for ourselves, and what's right for you to do may not be right for me to do. The one thing we must *never* do is tell another person they're wrong."

Bemused at this display of extreme situational ethics, Alice asked a few follow-up questions. "Surely murder is wrong?"

"I couldn't say."

"Assault and battery?"

"It'd be wrong for me to do it, but I couldn't say it would be wrong for you."

"Theft?"

"Couldn't say."

"Country and western music?"

"Probably wr—no, no, I couldn't say."

Finally, in desperation, Alice reached for the go-to example on these occasions: "What about what Hitler and the Nazis did?"

"Look, I find that all horrific, but I still couldn't say it was wrong."

Wow. What would you do faced with that kind of exchange? (And trust me, this position is not that unusual. I hear it a lot when I'm talking to students or young adults, who have often been spoon-fed this kind of insipid moral relativism since kindergarten.) Alice looked at her classmate and, indicating a plastic cup on the desk, asked, "Is that your coffee?"

"Yes, that's my grande quad nonfat cappuccino."

"Brilliant, I love that stuff!" And with that, Alice reached out, grabbed the coffee, and took a large gulp.

"What the heck are you doing?" her classmate protested.

"Taking your coffee," Alice replied with a grin.

"But it's my coffee!"

"It was. But you've convinced me that we get to decide good and evil for ourselves, that there's nothing inherently wrong with theft, and so I thought I'd take your coffee. Do you have a problem with that?"

"Well . . . yes."

"So would you say it seems to be the case that at least *some* moral values are bigger than just personal preference?"

Suffice it to say, the conversation went in a more productive direction from that point. And all Alice had done, very wittily in her case, was what Jesus did in Mark 12: pointed out, dramatically, to her friend that she seemed to believe both that morality was relative and that her coffee was *her* coffee.

USING A QUESTION TO REFOCUS THE CONVERSATION WHERE IT MATTERS

Let's consider one final example of Jesus' use of questions. On this occasion, Jesus uses a question to refocus the conversation onto the issue that *really* matters. The context is a debate with his usual sparring partners, the Pharisees, who have come up with what they think is a Most Cunning Plan to deal with this recalcitrant rural rabbi:

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the poll-tax to Caesar or not?"

Matthew 22:15–17

The context here is that first-century Israel was an occupied land, and the Roman armies were considered by most pious Jews to be evil occupying oppressors. To pay taxes was thus to collaborate with the enemy. On the other hand, if you *didn't* pay your taxes, the Romans considered this to be an act of rebellion, which could quickly lead to arrest, torture, and execution. Roman justice was short, sharp, and brutal, and the Romans were not known for their sense of humour. The Pharisees were probably rubbing their hands with glee, thinking this was a totally brilliant trap they had sprung on Jesus.

So how does Jesus answer this booby-trapped bomb of a question? I have to admit that every time I read the story, I wish

Jesus *had* answered with a clear “No, you must *never* pay tax.” Wouldn’t it be amazing? Every year, come tax return season, we could just write to the government and say, “I’d love to pay my taxes, but Jesus said I mustn’t.” I’m *sure* a rebate cheque would arrive by the following day’s post.

If Jesus had said no, he’d have been arrested on the spot. If he had said yes, he’d have been instantly compromised and would have lost all authority with the crowd. The way forward becomes obvious when you realise this question is not about taxes in the first place. The Pharisees are not interested in economics, and monetary policy is not what Jesus needs to talk about here. So Jesus’ approach, again based around asking questions, is brilliant:

But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Matthew 22:18–21

By asking those seemingly innocent questions (“Whose image is this? Whose inscription?”), Jesus is able to refocus the conversation. Sure, pay taxes when it’s appropriate, but that’s *not* the most important question. The most important question is not what we give to the government but what we give to God. I of-

ten wonder what would have happened had one of Jesus' questioners asked a follow-up question: "What belongs to God?" I wonder if Jesus might have replied by asking, "Whose image is on you?"

Using a question to refocus the conversation on the more important issue has lots of contemporary applications. Imagine you're sitting in a busy coffee shop, catching up with an old school friend whom you haven't seen for years. All is going well, when suddenly your friend looks up from her triple-shot extra-mustard macchiato and says, "Hey, you're still into that Christianity thing, aren't you? So tell me, do you think abortion is wrong?"

To your horror, she asks this question rather loudly, and you can hear the sound of other conversations in the coffee shop dying away as people lean in to listen to what you're about to say. Your heart is racing, your adrenaline is in the red zone, and you're silently praying for the Second Coming to happen (or at least a fire alarm), but no luck. You're going to have to answer. So what do you say? Of course the simple answer from Christian ethics is "Yes, it's wrong." But if you say, "Yes, it's wrong," what are your friend and all the eavesdroppers in the café going to think?

Are they going to think, *This is the wisest, most reflective, most thoughtful, most progressive answer I've ever heard. Pray, tell me from where you got this wisdom, so I can seek it for myself?* Or are they going to think words like *bigot, narrow minded, fundamentalist, naive, and so forth?*

In the eyes of our non-Christian friends, what is the abortion issue all about? It's about *choice*. And what do you call people

who restrict another person's choice? Our culture has a whole series of less-than-charming adjectives for them: fascists, dictators, oppressors. So a thought to consider: if answering the question that has been asked is going to give the wrong impression of God, the gospel, and you, maybe—just *maybe*—there is something wrong with the question. So why not do what Jesus did and refocus it?

For Christians, the abortion issue is about life rather than choice. So what if you responded like this? "Thanks for asking such a fascinating question. But before I try to answer it, I wonder if I might ask you something first. When do you think it's okay to take the life of a totally innocent person? What are the circumstances when you would consider that to be acceptable?" Now, unless you are having coffee with a psychopath, your friend will reply that it is never okay. To which you could then say, "I agree. So the question we need to consider is, What is in the womb? Is it just a worthless collection of atoms and particles, in which case, why are we even having this conversation? Or is it a person, an innocent life, in which case, as you yourself have acknowledged, we can't just snuff it out." Now, that approach doesn't guarantee you'll have a substantive conversation, but it does make it more *likely*. Otherwise your friend won't hear "sanctity of life" but "restriction of choice."

If we follow Jesus' example and learn to ask good questions, we can often take a conversation in much more fruitful directions. Questions can help us zero in on and create space to address the things that *really* matter and not get distracted by rabbit trails and blind alleys. Remember that the right answer to the wrong question is often unhelpful.

JESUS AND QUESTIONS: SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A few years ago, I was speaking at a conference in Canada, and after the afternoon sessions, I was sitting outside in the sunshine enjoying a quiet coffee. A young man approached me and introduced himself as one of the tech team who were running the sound system at the conference. "Have you got a few minutes?" he asked. I invited him to grab a seat, and he began to tell me his story. "I used to be a Christian," he began, "but now I'm not sure what I believe." He went on to explain how he had grown up in a very fundamentalist church, where no questions of any kind were encouraged. "If you expressed any doubts at all," he said, "you'd get shouted at and told that even asking questions meant you were destined for hell. So I left and considered myself an atheist. I eventually discovered an atheist group that met in the local pub and started attending, but you know what? I soon discovered they were just as fundamentalist! If you expressed doubts about something or suggested that Christians might have a point or questioned one of their favourite authors, you got shouted down. So I left that group, and now I don't know what I believe or don't believe. Any advice?"

After listening carefully, I finally replied with a question: "In all of this, what do you think of Jesus now?"

"I . . . well, I guess I miss him. I've never had a problem with Jesus. I just got the impression from the Christians I knew that Jesus had a problem with me asking questions."

Over the next few minutes, I gently pointed out that Jesus never turned away an honest questioner. Indeed, Jesus himself *loved* questions. And saying this isn't to be woolly—when Jesus

replied to questions with questions, he wasn't shrugging his shoulders and saying, "Beats me!" but wanting to draw people deeper into the conversation. "Maybe you need to reread the Gospels and encounter Jesus afresh," I suggested, and I offered to put him in touch with a pastor I knew locally whose church was light-years away from the terrifyingly bonkers one he'd left.

In this chapter we've seen numerous examples of how Jesus used questions. As you read the Gospels, you'll discover hundreds more. Whether he was dealing with critics or cynics, seekers or sceptics, doubters or disciples, asking questions was a hallmark of how Jesus engaged people about faith.

CHAPTER 6

DO YOU LOVE ME?

Debby Thompson

A scene saturated with miracles brings us to one final question from Jesus at the end of the Gospel of John. But before we go there, allow me to share my personal journey with Biblical questions.

When we lived in Budapest and as our three children grew from childhood to adolescence and into young adulthood, they asked

Debby Thompson and her husband, Larry, have served in global missions with Cru® since 1974, and are counted among the pioneering Western missionaries who lived covertly behind the Iron Curtain in Communist-controlled Poland. In her latest book, *Pulling Back the Iron Curtain: Stories from a Cold War Missionary* (Morgan James Faith, 2021), she takes the reader on a riveting journey to experience the personal challenges of a missionary's life in the communist world during the Cold War.

Now with Church Movements and living in Cincinnati, Ohio, Debby, an active grandmother of seven, is an award-winning author, a speaker, and a mentor for women around the world.

Subscribe to Debby's blog, *Living with Eternal Intentionality*®, at DebbyThompson.com

penetrating questions and they expected authentic answers. This dynamic revealed a deep need for my own growth.

On my knees, in raw honesty before God, I prayed, "Lord, I cannot lead them where I have not walked. With every fiber of my being, I long to be authentic before them and be obedient to You. I ache for real answers to real questions—not just for my teenagers—but also for myself."

In this pilgrim's pursuit, God took me to His Word and the passage in Mark 12:28–30, not for the question, but rather, for His *answer* to the question.

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked Him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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 years later, I make my home in His response. If Jesus called this commandment "The Most Important," then it needs to be the North Star for my life.

Engaging with that question-and-answer dialogue led to an insatiable desire to become a student of the questions we discover in Scripture. Not surprisingly, my quest stirs within me a keen interest in the topic at hand: *The Questions of Jesus*.

So, please join me on the shores of Lake Galilee for a breakfast conversation between Jesus and Peter. (John 21:1–24)

DIVINE REALITIES

Failure, futility, and frustration permeated the setting. Peter's three denials of Jesus made a return to fishing his default mechanism. Others joined him in the boat, but their all-night endeavor yielded no catch. Morning sun and shallow water brought a bitter end to their exasperating pursuit.

Then, there was Jesus.

DIVINE INTERVENTION, DIVINE INVITATION

Seeing the group of fishermen, He stood, gave them instructions on how to successfully (*miraculously*) catch 153 fish, and then He extended an invitation: "Come and have breakfast."

Without options of take-out, drive-thru, Door Dash, or Uber Eats, our Lord Jesus served a dual role of Host and Chef. The bread and fish menu cooked with the culinary skills of The Master must have tasted delicious to the men who had worked through the night. (Did anyone have the courage to ask Him how and when He acquired the bread and fish that He had on hand?)

DIVINE CONVERSATION

When they finished eating, Jesus engaged Peter in dialogue. And here in this closing scene in the Gospel of John, Jesus articulated His one final question: "Do you love Me?" Three times Jesus asked, Peter answered, Jesus instructed. (Note the tenderness of correlation to the three denials of Peter.)

DIVINE INSTRUCTION

The simplicity of wisdom shakes the earth. From a question of four words, “Do you love Me?” Jesus gives instruction with two words: Feed and Follow.

Peter’s focus and future—his holy homework assignment from Jesus—fell within those two words. It was as if our Lord told him, “Peter, I want you to shepherd My people and follow your Shepherd. Keep company with the sheep and keep company with Me.”

And later, in the Spirit-anointed writings of first and second Peter, we feel deeply his living out of those directives.

DIVINE DESTINY

The Greatest Question pairs with the Greatest Commandment to guide us to the Greatest Discovery: LOVE. Like Peter, our soul’s destiny, and our daily satisfaction rest within our response to the Question of Jesus: “Do you love Me?”

Do you love Me? (with all your heart)

Do you love Me? (with all your soul)

Do you love Me? (with all your mind)

Do you love Me? (with all your strength)

“Yes Lord, you know that I love you.”

May it be so.

CHAPTER 7

LIFE-CHANGING QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Dr. Wojciech Kowalewski

**Based on the book Pytania zmieniające życie ["Life-changing Questions"] by Dr. Wojciech Kowalewski.*

What is it that makes life for many people not what they would like it to be? What is the most common cause of such frustration? Experts say that it is a gap between a person's needs and expectations on the one hand, and the current state of his life,

Wojciech Kowalewski is the President and CEO of Golden Apple Institute based in Poland, organization focusing on personal, professional and spiritual growth (www.GoldenAppleInstitute.org). Wojciech is an experienced executive coach and mentor to many leaders, and his passion is helping people get from where they are to where God wants them to be. He is a mentor in the Year-Round Mentoring program in the European Leadership Forum; director of Billy Graham's Institute of Evangelism and Discipleship in Warsaw; and leads the European Great Commission Collaboration in Poland.

which does not coincide with them. In order to consciously prevent such situations and strive for deeper fulfillment in everyday life, we must first know what we really care about, what goals and desires we want to achieve.

MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS

In this context, the question that the Lord Jesus asks at the beginning of John's Gospel seems very relevant: "What are you looking for?" (John 1:38).

Jesus is a master at establishing important conversations and asking questions. Although in the text of all the gospels there are many questions, so far the object of study of biblical scholars has been statements containing assertions rather than questions, which have often been treated as an additional compositional element that contributes little to the understanding of the main message of the analyzed texts. But what if Jesus' questions are not just a stylistic means to build the narrative dynamics of the Gospels, but are an important element of spiritual formation and leadership?

What is the benefit of asking questions? Unlike giving advice or instructing, questions force us to think, lead us to formulate answers we believe in ourselves, and motivate us to act on our own thoughts. Asking questions thus protects us from passively accepting what others say and counteracts stagnation, and inspires us to vigorously apply our creative abilities to solve the dilemmas that move us. Questions can thus lead to answers we don't expect, empowering us to discover possibilities previously unseen and unleashing our potential.

In the evangelist John's description, the question falls the day after the public inauguration of Christ's ministry. John the Baptist has just announced that this is the Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sin of the world. After this declaration, two first followers appear ready to accompany Jesus; he stops, turns around, and asks them a significant question: "What are you looking for?"

Jesus does not start with a superficial question or a polite formula, but asks what is really important. He does not initiate this conversation with confrontation or accusations. He does not force an answer. He asks a question that prompts them to think about something important and provokes them to unveil their identities. This constitutes an invitation to deeper reflection and conversation. Jesus does not reject them. He doesn't look down. He does not impose himself. From the very beginning of his ministry, he expresses his interest. He tries to establish a deep conversation, to know their deepest desires and hopes. He is ready to listen to them.

At first the disciples are puzzled by this question, so they respond with "Rabbi—where are You staying?" (John 1:38) Jesus, in response, invites them into his home. Showing hospitality to someone was synonymous in this culture with acceptance. Jesus invites them into his life by saying, "Come and see." (John 1:39)

A STILL-ACTIVE INVITATION

Imagine for a moment that you are the one talking to Jesus, looking into his eyes filled with love and faith in you, looking at you like an artist at his life's work, like a parent at his beloved son or daughter, like a creator at the beauty of his creation, and asking you the question: "What are you looking for?"

What would your answer to this question be? Seeing the love in His eyes, you know He will not laugh at you. He takes this invitation very seriously and has no intention of rejecting you when you are ready to open up to Him. He understands. He sees. He listens. And that changes everything beyond recognition.

Like every human being, you are only here on earth for a limited period of time. Thus, important questions arise regarding the proper use of the full potential of who you are and the realization of your deepest desires, which are no accident. As St. Augustine wrote, "Desire gives depth to the heart." So it's worth taking the time and energy to properly define what you want to build your life on and translate it into concrete goals to pursue. What are you really looking for in your life? What are your deepest desires? Where do you find fulfillment when thinking about the years you have left?

Tony Stoltzfus defines life purpose as follows: "The energy of passion directed by my experience and disposition in the service of a higher calling." When you are internally consistent, you can be much more effective in realizing your stated purpose. Therefore, how you answer the question "What are you looking for?" will determine what you find and how you live this life.

There are so many voices, opportunities, and options vying for your attention. Experts say there are tens of thousands of pieces of information a day striving to distract us. The world we live in offers many ways to be fulfilled: career, money, knowledge, position, power, influence, relationships . . . These are just some of the suggestions for answering the question, "What are you looking for?" Many people experience frustration when they realize that the goals they set for themselves are unattainable, but they bounce back after momentary dissatisfaction that they

were unable to meet their expectations. This is often due to the fact that these goals didn't really reflect the person's inner world of values and desires, or were simply ill defined.

PUT YOUR FAITH IN QUALITY

But what if life is about something much more? Ultimately, you have to ask yourself what gives my life meaning? The answer to this question will be related to what you constantly seek. Your deepest desires, then, have great power. If you are able to name them, define them, and consciously surrender them to God, it completely changes your perspective and understanding of what is really important, what gives your life meaning. Zig Ziglar, a well-known book author, motivational speaker, and authority on promoting "living a better-than-good life," wrote: "I believe that the highest form of passion is that which sees a greater good as its object. A life that is 'better than good' is lived by people who nourish a passion for making their mark on the world in which they live." So it's not just a matter of focusing on providing pleasure for yourself, but of discovering how who you are can translate into a positive influence to others. Paradoxically, it's this kind of attitude that, in effect, unleashes the dormant potential within us and leads to a fulfilled life.

Are you aware that the best in you is a gift from God? Pascal said that there is a God-like void in every human being, which means that nothing and no one but Him can fill it. This space is related to a constant search that can only be fulfilled in God. The Psalmist expressed it as follows: "As a doe thirsts for spring water so I thirst for you God." (Psalm 42:1) Each of us is uniquely shaped by God; hence, we can experience the satisfaction of thirst in God in different ways.

In the Bible, the heart is seen as a source of creativity, courage, and confidence, while it is also a source of faith, hope, and love. It's in the heart that life finds its source. (Proverbs 4:23) To discover one's deepest desires, therefore, one must start with the heart. It's very important, then, what your heart focuses on.

So it's worth asking yourself some important questions:

- What moves your heart? What passions ignite you to action?
- If you could invest the rest of your life to change one thing around you, what would it be?
- What in life gives you lasting satisfaction?

The answers to these questions will help you see the desires hidden in your heart. However, there is much more. What if you trust that all desires have a Father? What if you trustingly entrust them to God, who loves to bless His children? As the psalmist wrote: "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." (Psalms 37:4) It's worth taking up Jesus' invitation and answering the question, "What are you looking for?" Stop and ask God to show you what you really want. It means honestly facing the question: "What am I looking for?" Your deepest desires have great power. If you are able to name them, define them, and consciously pursue them, your perspective completely changes, as well as your understanding of what is really important and what gives meaning to your life.

CHAPTER 8

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Questioning with Jesus Who Questions with Us

Matthew Lee Anderson

This chapter has been adapted from Called into Questions: Cultivating the Love of Learning within the Christian Life, by Matthew Lee Anderson. © 2023. Used by permission of Moody Publishers. All rights reserved. For more, visit matthewleeanderson.com.

Jesus asks hundreds of questions in the Bible. He asks them of all sorts of audiences and in all manner of ways. He puts questions to his disciples, to the crowds, to the soldiers who come to seize him, to lawyers and to Pharisees and Sadducees. He asks rhetorical questions and real questions, questions that are aimed to draw his audience in and questions that are aimed to drive them away.

Matthew Lee Anderson, D.Phil. is an Assistant Professor of Ethics and Theology in the Baylor University Honors Program and the author of *Called into Questions: Reclaiming the Love of Learning in the Christian Faith*.

You can read more at matthewleeanderson.com.

Yet of all the questions he asks, he directs exactly one question toward God.

As he hangs upon the cross, Christ pierces the hushed silence with a cry so poignant that Matthew records it in its original Aramaic: “Eli, Eli, lema sabachtani?” “My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?” Jesus petitions God often in the Gospels. Only one chapter prior, he asks that the cup of suffering might be taken from him (Matthew 26:39). But while requests and questions have much in common, they are not the same. Only once does Jesus turn to God directly with a question on his lips (Matthew 27:46).

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the fulcrum of our faith; it is the crux of history and the center of the cosmos. God became man in order that He might redeem us from our sins. And at the apex of His redemptive work, in the hour of his agony and suffering, Christ—asks a question. And not just any question, either: Jesus asks God *where are you*, which is the very question God had put to humanity after we had sinned in Genesis 3.

In his question, Jesus gives voice to humanity’s deepest and most difficult longings. Will God remain absent from us, will he leave us alone in the misery and pain of this world, will he abandon us to the infinite darkness of despair? G.K. Chesterton once wrote that Christ’s question on the Cross makes Christianity “the one religion in which God seemed himself for an instant to be an atheist.”¹

¹G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Hollywood, FL: Simon & Brown, 2012), 140.

Christ's question on the cross is a part of humanity's redemption. Through it, Christ sanctifies our lament and our sorrow and frees us from the intolerable burden of carrying the uncertainty, sin, and doubt of the world by ourselves. Through Christ's question, we are freed to question God—and we are also free from the demands of questioning God, for Christ goes ahead of us and asks God where He is on our behalf. Christ's question does not end questioning, but liberates it. We may still ask where God is, and sometimes we must. But we need not fear that we will meet silence. For Christ has already questioned God on our behalf and the Word of God does not return void.

QUESTIONING (WITH) GOD

In its most basic and elemental form, questioning is much more than a rhetorical posture or a strategy for communicating effectively: questioning expresses our need, our poverty. When we ask a question, we place ourselves in a position of those who do *not* know and do *not* have an answer. Questioning reveals our ignorance and perplexity—but in doing so, it also reveals our humanity. In questioning God, we practice becoming “poor in spirit,” which Jesus commends as “blessed” in the Sermon on the Mount. As creatures, we depend on God not only for our sustenance and life, but our understanding. Questions express our deep need for God to reveal Himself to us. Few acts are more fundamentally human than questioning God.

Yet like the rest of our humanity, our questioning has been corrupted and deformed by sin, which animates us to ask questions we ought not and leave unasked questions we should ask. Adam and Eve's failure to resist the Serpent in Genesis involved failing to question the assumptions embedded in the question

they were given: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the Garden?’” (Genesis 3:1).²

Their failure to question well means we now are in danger of questioning badly. When the angel tells Zechariah that his (barren) wife will give birth to John the Baptist, he responds with a note of skepticism: “How shall I know this,” he says, “for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?” Of all the questions he could ask at that moment, registering his uncertainty about the angel’s reliability was the wrong one—and so, he is silenced until his son is born (Luke 1:8–23).³ There are so many ways of questioning badly, and so few, it often seems, of questioning well.

It is possible for our questions to become acts of rebellion against God, as it is possible to become exhausted by the exhausting vanity of our endless search for understanding. With “much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow,” the author of Ecclesiastes tells us. God has set eternity in our hearts, and the desire to search it out on our own will invariably lead to frustration: “No one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” Questioning can be a heavy cross that we are not strong enough to carry on our own.

Or we can avoid questioning God altogether, by blithely turning off our hearts and minds to the suffering we see around us and retreating into a fantasyland of amusement and entertainment. Most of us carry in our pockets the most powerful portal to endless distractions ever created: our smartphones are always

²I expand on this point in *Called into Questions*, chapter 2.

³I discuss what makes this a poor question at greater length in *Called into Questions*, chapter 4.

waiting for us to give our time and attention to it. The cares of this world can bind us so strongly that we never lift our gaze in wonder at it and open ourselves to the deep possibilities of questioning (with) God. The tendency to avoid God is understandable: putting our questions to Him can be a dangerous thing, as we will invariably find that He will also question us. "Guard your steps," we are told in Ecclesiastes, "when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know they are being evil."

Christ's question to God on our behalf sets us free from these deformed ways of questioning. We need not fear to ask where God is in the midst of our most acute suffering, because God has already asked it for us—and has shown us He is with us by suffering for us in Christ. We need not anxiously distract ourselves from God, because He has revealed Himself to be good. We need not mistrust the reliability of His Word, for God vindicated it by rising again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. We may question, and we must question, because God became man and asked Himself the deepest and most important question of all.

Christ's cry on the cross is a very strange sort of lament. While an expression of sorrow, it is at the same time a cry of triumph. In quoting the opening of Psalm 22 by crying aloud to God, "Why have you forsaken me?" Christ invites us to pray the whole psalm with Him. What begins with a cry of dereliction ends with the affirmation of God's faithfulness: "For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him." The freedom to ask God why He has forsaken us is the answer to our question. He has not hidden His face from us, but hears us

as we cry. The suffering of the Man Jesus is made known in His prayer, and so reveals to us the presence of God. Psalm 22 closes with the cry that future generations shall proclaim that the Lord “has done it,” that He has rescued His beloved from their adversaries. When we look backward from Christ’s resurrection to His life, we discover that all God’s promises are yes and amen to the glory of God—even when they look like the strange glory of the cross.

Christ’s question on the Cross, with His death and resurrection, is the form God’s faithfulness to humanity takes in a world of sin. God has made a covenant with humanity and will not depart from it. From this standpoint, Christ’s question is almost a performative contradiction: Where is God? With Christ, on the cross. Christ’s lament that God is absent becomes a strange sign of God’s presence. The same man who cries “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” invites the thief into paradise for believing in Him. Christ’s death discloses the lengths to which God goes to keep faith with creation. And His resurrection vindicates that faith, revealing the depths to which God affirms creation.

At the same time, Christ’s question on the Cross is the form *humanity’s* faithfulness to God takes in a world marked by sin. As the one who ascends the holy hill on our behalf, Christ is the man who has “clean hands and a pure heart.” He fulfills the terms of the covenant on behalf of humanity, innocently undertaking God’s judgment for trespassing His commands. As the Man of God, Christ manifests humanity’s faithfulness to God. His death is the form our life takes through the power of His resurrection, which we are given in the Holy Spirit. And He does this by asking a question and, in doing so, permitting and empowering us to question Him as well.

This is why, even as we learn to question with Jesus, we need not be anxious about questioning well or questioning perfectly. The “right question” to ask is—the question we *have* to ask, the question we feel *impelled* by love to ask. We can embrace God’s justice on the cross and feel free to “inquire badly,” to modify Martin Luther’s famous dictum “sin boldly.” We can count on God’s grace to remedy the unintentional imperfections of our questions. This is no license to be heedless in our questioning and trample each other as though nothing we do matters. Conscientiousness is the freedom of a clean and easy conscience, which empowers us to ask the questions we have—instead of the questions we anxiously perfect as Good Questions.

Questions are a form of poverty. But as Paul writes to the Corinthians, the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” means that “though he was rich, yet for [our] sake He became poor, so that [we] by His poverty might become rich.” His poverty on the cross frees us to enjoy the riches of His abundance, which means we need no longer fear the poverty of our ignorance but can question freely. This is, after all, what it means to have faith ‘like a child.’ No one is less self-conscious about their ignorance than a child, and no one learns as quickly about the world either. Children are both familiar with their ignorance and eager to overcome it; they are shameless in asking questions because they have not yet learned to fear the unknown.

So we can be when we learn to question with Jesus. For there is no unknown left—even death—that God has not explored already on our behalf, and the only answers He leads us into will be those for our good.

CHAPTER 9

JESUS KNEW, YET HE STILL ASKED QUESTIONS

Keith Webb

There's a common cultural misconception about why we ask questions. Questions are mostly asked because we don't know, and we want that information.

This misconception about questions can lead to difficulties. Some leaders who view the purpose of questions as mainly information gathering are reluctant to ask questions. The thinking is, asking reveals their ignorance and not knowing is a weakness. So, to appear strong, informed, and in control, they don't ask many questions. The difficulties with this mindset and these behaviors are obvious.

Dr. Keith E. Webb is President of Creative Results Management. He helps busy leaders multiply their impact. Keith is the author of several books, including *The COACH Model for Christian Leaders* (Morgan James Faith, 2019).

Jesus rarely asked questions to because he didn't know the answers. He had other purposes. He asked questions to benefit the listener. Here are three ways Jesus used questions:

1. As a rhetorical teaching tool.
2. As a reflective tool.
3. As a faith expression tool.

AS A RHETORICAL TEACHING TOOL

Jesus frequently used questions as a rhetorical teaching device. That is, he asked to make a statement to the listener, rather than to gather information. For example, when the Pharisees tried to trap him by asking if it was right to pay the poll tax to Caesar or not. Jesus' answer included three rhetorical questions.

"But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, 'You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.' They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, 'Whose image is this? And whose inscription?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. Then he said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'" (Matthew 22:18–21)

Here, the three questions were not meant to gather information, but to make a point. The first, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?", is statement and warning to the crowd. The answers to the second two questions were obvious to everyone; it was Caesar's image and inscription. The answers illustrated Jesus' point of distinguishing God's kingdom from worldly kingdoms and how we temporarily live in both.

AS A FAITH EXPRESSION TOOL

My largest hurdle to asking questions is that I think I already know the answer, so I don't ask. In not asking, I'm missing the next two powerful purposes of questions that Jesus modeled.

Jesus asked to give the other person an opportunity to share their desires and express their faith.

Consider two of the times Jesus asked, "What do you want?"

In Matthew 20, two blind men called out to Jesus. "Jesus stopped and called them, 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. 'Lord,' they answered, 'we want our sight.' Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him." (Matthew 20:32–34)

What does it say about Jesus that he would ask two blind men what they wanted of him? Wasn't it obvious? They needed healing and he could provide it. Yet, he still asked. In asking, Jesus allowed these two men to express their faith and their hearts' desires.

Andrew and another of John the Baptists disciples followed Jesus down the road. ". . . Jesus saw them following and asked, 'what do you want?' They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?' 'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him." (John 1:38–39a)

Again, Jesus had so much more to offer Andrew and the other disciple, but he asked, “What do you want?” And then responded according to what they asked of him.

In these two cases, Jesus didn’t tell them what he knew they needed or the better things he could provide. He gave them the opportunity to express their desires and their faith. In other words, the question, “What do you want?” was for their benefit not his.

AS A REFLECTIVE TOOL

Some questions are to generate information—not for you—but for the other person. Asking questions can open another person’s thinking, reflection, and exploration. Jesus used questions as a reflective tool.

Let’s examine Jesus’ exchange with his disciples in Luke 9:18–20:

“Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, ‘Who do the crowds say I am?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Peter answered, ‘God’s Messiah.’”

Jesus began with, “Who do the crowds say I am?” Jesus was fully aware of what the crowds were saying about him. The question was to prompt his disciples to consider what was being said about him. In answering, they needed to reflect on the truth of these opinions.

Then he pressed further, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" Jesus progressed from the crowd's opinion of him, to what they personally believed about him. There was a call to commitment in these questions.

Asking reflective questions is a reliable way to prompt people to think more broadly and reflect more deeply.

You can encourage exploration by asking questions that will cause someone to reflect. Those reflections often produce understanding of underlying issues, meaning, and new learning.

Ask questions, not just for your own information, but for the other person's benefit.

CHAPTER 10

LEARNING TO LISTEN: 10 QUESTIONS I LOVE TO ASK

Judy Douglass

It's noisy out there, isn't it? Especially on X (formerly Twitter), but also on the nightly news, at your place of work, with neighbors, even within your family. So many strong but differing opinions!

We seem to be more committed to making our point and hopefully getting others to agree. We don't really listen to what others are saying.

Judy Douglass is the founder and host of Prayer for Prodigals, an online community for those who love someone who is making destructive choices. She has served as editor of two Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ) magazines, has authored six books, and speaks all over the world. A writer, speaker, encourager, and advocate, Judy loves to encourage God's children to be and do all that He created them for. A native of Dallas, she graduated from The University of Texas with a degree in journalism. Judy serves as global director of Cru's Women's Resources and partnered with her late husband, Steve, president of Campus Crusade for Christ International, to lead Cru globally for almost 20 years. Judy resides in Orlando, Florida. Learn more at judydouglass.com.

Perhaps you've noticed, when reading the Gospels, that Jesus was consistent in his conversation. He wasn't loud. And He asked a lot of questions.

If you think about it, asking questions implies something so critical to relating to others: a willingness to listen.

Now I've known people who ask lots of questions, but they don't listen. You've barely begun to reply before they ask another question. I don't think that's how Jesus did it. Nor should we.

Perhaps, in order to listen well and learn something from the person we are talking with, we should seek to ask questions that draw people out, that create a safe environment, that encourage open minds and open hearts, that say I care about you.

The need to listen is true for all relationships: where we work and lead, with friends and acquaintances, with our spouse and children, with those we know well and those we just met. By asking questions and listening to responses, we demonstrate that we truly care about them and we go much deeper in our understanding of them. We connect better, friendships develop, family ties strengthen, trust increases, love and grace grow.

10 QUESTIONS I LOVE TO ASK

1. What are you thankful for today?

I am almost always delightfully surprised as people pause to answer this one. They stop to think, and can usually think of something they are thankful for.

2. What is something you have learned lately?

Too often this can elicit a snarky remark, such as, “Not to talk with someone who asks too many questions.” But if I wait patiently, I get a real reply and I learn something as well.

3. If you could change something in your life (circumstances, job, attitude, family . . .), what would it be?

Again, sometimes the first remark is funny, but usually followed by a thoughtful response and some genuine conversation.

4. What or who has encouraged you this week?

I love this question—it causes the person I am asking, and myself as well, to gain two wonderful things: being encouraged and grateful thoughts toward a person or event.

5. If you could design your own job, what would it look like?

If this person had told me his something to change would be his job, this provides an opportunity to add to a previous answer. More often they are stymied to give specific ideas, but the question can start them thinking.

6. What book (or movie or tv series) has influenced you in the past month?

This often leads to a stimulating or fun conversation. And I learn a lot about my friend, discover things we have in common, or make a note to read a new book.

7. What is something you’ve often dreamed of doing?

I love this question. I usually have to wait patiently for my companion to do a little dreaming. Answers can range from getting

more education, learning to scuba dive, produce a movie, get married, climb a mountain (or all the 14,000 footers in Colorado).

8. What is the scariest or most challenging thing you have ever done?

Once again, the answers often start with humor—"ask the class beauty queen to prom." Real answers vary widely: Go cave diving. Become a parent. Quit my job to do something I really want to do. Ask forgiveness for something I did. And almost always: Public speaking.

9. If someone asked you for advice for a happy life, what would you tell them?

I get some predictable responses: Be yourself. Do what makes you happy. Hang with people you like. But often I hear amazing stories of how my friend has found real happiness.

10. And my absolute favorite: How has God surprised you lately?

I love this question because I love stories, and it almost always leads to stories. Happy stories, funny stories, sad stories, startling stories.

It never ceases to amaze me where conversations can go from listening to answers to such questions. Rarely does the conversation stall when good questions open wide doors to ideas, experiences, disappointments, hopes, and dreams.

What about you? What are some of your favorite questions?

CHAPTER 11

LEADING WITH QUESTIONS? THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!

Ronald Harris

I have not always been an advocate of leading with questions. As I look back over my many years of leadership and parenting, I know I was in the camp that gave directions more than solicited answers. Until . . .

Until my friend Bob Tiede began poking and probing with that idea that questions can move us to better leadership than simply giving directives to others. It was a revelation. And, while I still fall back into giving direction rather than asking questions, I'm making progress.

Dr. Ron Harris has almost 60 years of experience in media, including radio, television, church media, and media professor at the university and seminary levels. Dr. Harris is the founder and president of MEDIA Alliance International, a nonprofit ministry that helps build up Christian media leaders in over 45 countries through training, mentoring, and encouragement as they share the Gospel and biblical truth in their cultures.

What tipped the scale for me was seeing how Jesus used questions. Over and over again, the Lord drew people out, discerning a person's heart by asking those probing questions. Yes, even penetrating questions. Jesus often used a series of questions to lead up to THE question. I think of the time the Lord asked the disciples what the people were saying about him and who they thought Jesus was. Their answers ranged from John the Baptist to Elijah or Jeremiah. Then came the probing question, "But who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15 NLT)

Think about that for a moment. What if you were standing there in that small group of disciples? You had spent several years with Jesus. You had seen him performing miracles . . . amazing miracles. And you had a growing sense that he wasn't like any other man. That's why you follow Jesus. But the question lingers in the air. "But who do you say I am?"

When Simon Peter responded with, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," it was a revelation. That one question set the course for the disciples. Jesus said to Peter that it wasn't human reasoning that led him to that conclusion, it was heavenly inspiration from God himself.

While I still work at using questions in my leadership opportunities, I am always grateful for the results. That leads me to ask myself this question: "Why don't I ask questions more often?"

If you're like me, asking questions is not a natural part of your DNA. My wife, on the other hand, is great at asking questions. At a dinner gathering, she is the one who often leads the conversation, sometimes getting amazing responses from guests. Her questions engage others and give them the opportunity to

bring up topics that I would never have led them to discuss. I'm working to change that.

I'll admit, as a leader, I can easily think that others need my vast experience to make a decision or to accomplish a task. What I realize is that it is very limiting. Others have experience, too, and they may have a way of doing something that would never even enter my mind. Do I want my organization, ministry, or church to be limited to what one person might think, or am I willing to allow the experiences and expertise God has given others to help guide us to a successful landing?

If we are not comfortable in our leadership, we may want to give the directives to establish our superiority . . . or supposed superiority. We think we can't let our guard down or let another have a "good" idea because it might diminish our leadership authority. That not only limits our team and our organization, but it also limits the Holy Spirit and His ability to lead and guide.

I'll admit, sometimes it is easier to give a directive, to tell others what to do, rather than take time to formulate a good question that will get thoughtful responses from your team. We do what is expedient rather than what might be more productive.

Bob Tiede has taught us that learning to lead with questions is so simple that it can be learned in 30 seconds. Here is Bob's formula, his series of questions:

1. What do you think?
2. What else?
3. What else?
4. What else?

These questions come in a conversation, leading the person deeper and deeper into what his or her thoughts are as they relate to an issue or problem. What else? What else? What else? It also shows you are listening and valuing the person or people to whom you are flinging these questions.

Of course, all this presupposes that we actually *listen* to others when we ask a question. It's so easy for any of us to be moving on to the next thought or idea in our mind and not fully grasp how the person is responding to our question. How many times has someone you are talking to tell you something that you promptly forget? It's often because we jumped past their response to what we want to say next. And as a leader, we may want to show that our ideas are better, so we don't even pay attention to the response. That's one of the quickest ways to devalue someone who otherwise is a valuable team member.

One of the things I've learned is the importance of looking someone in the eyes and not diverting my attention to other things. We all know someone who is constantly looking past us as we talk to see who else is there. We get the distinct impression that we are not as valuable a colleague or friend as someone else. If a supervisor or leader is doing that, we sure don't feel like an important member of the team. Ask your question and look the person in the eyes as they respond.

From my many years in broadcasting, and my over ten thousand media interviews with authors, Christian leaders, and newsmakers, I've also learned the value of silence. Most outstanding reporters know that people become uncomfortable with silence.

They feel the need to fill the void with something. Many a seasoned reporter elicited greater information when they remained silent after the interviewee answered the original question posed to them. When the reporter doesn't respond, the person being interviewed can feel that maybe their answer wasn't understood, or that they need to give more information. What often comes next is an unrehearsed response that may shed much more light than was revealed initially.

Now, in our leadership roles, we aren't trying to trap someone into saying something they didn't intend to say. However, we are wanting to let them know that we are interested in what they are saying and do want to hear more.

By the way, some questions you pose to others on your team cannot be answered quickly. Some answers may take a while to formulate as they gather their thoughts. Some questions may cause them to start down a road that helps them remember great experiences that they can draw on for their responses. Don't be too quick to cut off the response process. It might mean you adjourn the time together for a day or two and pick it back up later, giving your associate time to ponder the question. Or it may mean extending a meeting so a person can fully explain their response and why they answered the way they did.

Be sensitive to those you lead. Value them. And let your questions to them help build them up in worth. You may be surprised at the new culture that is created. And you also may be surprised where the Holy Spirit can lead you when you remain open simply by asking questions.

CHAPTER 12

MY FAVORITE QUESTION FROM JESUS 4 WORDS, 15 LETTERS: "BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?" (MARK 8:29)

Hock Chye Goh

In the alleys of ancient Jerusalem, where the scent of frankincense mingled with the dust of well-trodden paths, a pivotal moment was about to unfold. It was a moment pregnant with significance, a moment when the words of a humble teacher from Galilee would reverberate through the corridors of time.

The disciples, a motley crew of fishermen, tax collectors, and zealots, gathered around their Rabbi with a mixture of awe and uncertainty. They had followed him through desert sands and bustling markets, witnessing miracles that defied logic and

Hock Chye Goh has had a diverse career at Cru Singapore, holding various roles, including his current position as the CEO/ Country Leader. Additionally, he plays a key role in overseeing ministries across the East Asia Region alongside the regional Vice President.

teachings that challenged the very fabric of their existence. And now, as the sun dipped low behind the ancient walls of the city, Jesus posed a question.

“Who do people say that I am?”

His voice, soft yet commanding, cut through the ambient noise of the crowded streets, drawing the disciples into a moment of profound introspection.

The disciples exchanged hesitant glances, their voices a chorus of uncertainty. “Some say you are John the Baptist, returned from the dead,” offered James, his voice tinged with doubt. “Others say you are Elijah, come to herald the coming of the Messiah,” added Matthew, his gaze searching for affirmation among the faces of the gathered crowd.

But Jesus, with eyes that seemed to pierce the depths of their souls, turned his gaze upon them.

“But what about you?”

This is a simple question—4 words, 15 letters in English.

But this question would echo through the ages.

It brings what you think you know to what you really know.

It brings what you think you really know to probe deeper whether you do believe what you really know.

It brings what you believe to push whether you can live by it.

Just in case his disciples missed his question, Jesus added another clarifying question to the initial 4-word question: "Who do you say that I am?"

His words hung in the air like a weighty veil, challenging the disciples to confront their deepest convictions.

Among them, Peter, the impulsive yet loyal disciple, stepped forward. His heart pounded within his chest as he searched for the words to accurately convey the truth that burned within him. With his voice trembling with conviction, he declared, "You are the Messiah." (Mark 8:29)

The Book of Matthew reported that Peter did more than just identify Jesus as the Messiah; he also proclaimed Jesus' divine nature: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)

In that moment, the air seemed to crackle with electricity, as if the very fabric of reality shifted under the weight of Peter's confession. It was a declaration that resonated with the power of truth, illuminating the darkness of doubt and fear that had clouded the disciples' hearts.

Jesus' eyes, filled with a mixture of love and understanding, rested upon Peter.

"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah," he said.

In our words—Bravo! Well said! Well articulated! Standing ovation, PLEASE!!

And with those words, the disciples were plunged into a moment of profound revelation. One by one, they began to really understand the weight of those 4 words. It was a revelation that transcended the confines of earthly understanding. The disciples' eyes and hearts are opened to the divine truth that lay at the heart of Jesus' ministry.

From that moment on, the disciples walked with a newfound sense of purpose and clarity. They had glimpsed the truth of Jesus' identity, and it transformed their understanding of everything they had witnessed in his presence. The miracles, the teachings, the moments of quiet communion—they all took on a deeper significance in light of Peter's confession.

And so, as the sun dipped low behind the ancient walls of Jerusalem, the disciples stood on the threshold of a new chapter in their journey with Jesus because of 4 simple words—"What do you think?"

The same is true for us.

That question from Jesus to his disciples is repeating itself to us.

When you have an encounter with the living God—He asks, "What do you think?"

When a sermon is well preached—you are asked, "What do you think?"

When you read your bible—you ponder, "What do I think?"

What do I believe?

Who do I trust?

To whom do I belong?

When we sincerely answer that question and live by our responses, we embark on a path that leads us to the very heart of God's unique redemptive plan—not just for us but also for the people around us.

What do you think of this 4-word question?

CHAPTER 13

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY THAT I AM?

Delanyo Adadevoh

There could not be a more important subject for Jesus than that of clarifying His own *identity and mission* in life. His time on earth was filled with controversy right from birth. He was announced as “lord and king” from birth. This message was proclaimed by angels, ordinary shepherds, and the wise philosophers of the time. It was a threat enough to King Herod that he tried all he could to ensure that this “child-king-messiah” did not live to fulfill prophecy.

The controversy continued. Some found Him to be a *great teacher*. But He taught with unusual wisdom and authority. Others thought He was a *prophet*, but He worked miracles by His own authority and power. He calmed the storm. He raised the dead. Well, maybe He was an angel, but He accepted the worship of His disciples. Some were bold enough to suggest He worked by

Professor Delanyo Adadevoh is founder and president of the International Leadership Foundation. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live and work in Orlando, Florida.

the power of Beelzebub; but He consistently did good wherever He went.

Amidst such controversy, one would expect Jesus to have clearly and loudly declared to His audience who He really was. Instead, He chose to bring this truth across through questions. He asked His disciples: "Who do people say that I am?" He followed this with yet another question: "Who do you say that I am?" The two questions were in the right sequence. First, it was simply about reporting what they had heard others say regarding the identity of Jesus. This was easy. It introduced the subject, but it did not seriously challenge their own thinking and perspectives. Once they presented the array of options from others, they had the second question. "But who do you say that I am?" This was now personal. It was a test of the studentship of their Master. They had been with Him long enough to have formed their own opinions about His identity. Understandably, some of the opinions would have been expressed publicly and others held on to privately while they continued to wonder and ponder.

The disciples hesitated. Peter as usual broke the silence and answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16: 13–18) Jesus responded to Peter's confession by stating that this truth was given Him by none other than God the Father, Himself. In other words, it was a knowledge that was dropped into the mind and spirit of Peter by the Spirit of the Father.

We learn a lot of things from the approach of Jesus to disclosing His identity and mission. First, a simple announcement of such an important truth may not be the best way to ensure its understanding and acceptance. Beginning with questions increases curiosity and the capacity to learn. The second thing we learn

is that there is greater impact if questions are presented progressively; from the *general* to the *personal*. “Who do people say that I am?” is general and makes it easy to start the conversation on such a huge topic. “Who do you say that I am?” is deeper and more personal. The personal nature of the question increases the level of ownership of the answer. This is partly because the audience is involved in the discovery of the answer. In this case, the discovery involved the Holy Spirit. The best personal questions are the ones that turn audiences to God for help. They lead to deeper critical thinking and soul searching. The third lesson is that good questions have broader applications. Everyone has to be given the opportunity to answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” It isn’t enough to just answer this question. There has to be a commitment to challenge others to provide their own answers. The kind of answer given to this question will determine people’s destiny.

We have truths to declare to the world as witnesses of Jesus Christ. We can best share these truths through well-crafted questions that begin from the *general* to the *personal*. Good questions challenge thoughts (head), desires (heart), and actions (hand). The goal of asking good questions is not only to cause new thinking, but also to take new actions. Consistent actions reinforce thinking and vice versa.

We cannot end this write-up without asking you the same question: *Who is Jesus to you?*

To best answer this question, begin with critical thinking and deep soul searching. Engage your head, heart, and hand. But turn quickly to the Word of God, trusting in the enlightening ministry of His Spirit. May you discover the answer to the point

of being so convinced that you embrace the mission of helping others discover the right answer to this important question.

We learn from the example of Jesus that questions are not asked only by oral or written communication. Questions can also be asked through our actions. Leadership actions can be instruments for dramatizing questions that are key to leadership agendas. The alignment of words and actions strengthen questions that audiences are being invited to answer. Consistent dramatization of questions with actions reinforces their importance. In addition to the question on who the disciples thought He was, Jesus dramatized His uniqueness through His teachings, lifestyle, and miracles. When He calmed the storm, the disciples exclaimed in awe, "What manner of man is this?" (Matthew 8:27) Jesus, through the miracle of declaring peace over the storm, was still asking the question, "Who do you say that I am?"

John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one to come or if they should expect someone else. (Luke 7:20) Jesus replied to the messengers,

"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." (Luke 7:22)

Jesus continued raising questions and providing answers about His identity through His works. To lead well with questions, our oral and written communications need to be aligned to our leadership actions. What is spoken or written must be aligned

to consistent leadership actions. We lead best when we raise key questions regarding our mission with our total lives; that is, our words and actions. That is the example we have from Jesus on the important subject of His identity and mission.

CHAPTER 14

QUESTIONS MAKE FRIENDS

Lesley Cheesman

WE NEED FRIENDS

How do you go about making friends? One of the most fundamental needs you and I have in common is our need for deep relational connection. For friendship. Societies and communities are built on human connection. As vital as food and water is to our bodies, so is our need for people who are close to us. Despite travel and technology making it easier than ever to be in touch with others wherever they are, loneliness is now one of the great scourges of the 21st century. So much so that in the UK, where I live, the government have appointed a *Minister for Loneliness* to tackle the issue.

Lesley Cheesman is the National Director of Agapé UK, part of Campus Crusade for Christ International. With 35 years of missions experience, she also serves on the regional leadership team for CCCI in Europe and is a trustee of Saltmine Theatre Company. Lesley is passionate about helping people to discover Jesus. She is married to Paul, and they have two grown children both of whom have now “flown the nest.” For more information, go to <https://www.agape.org.uk>.

And it's particularly an issue for the younger generations. In 2023, a study on loneliness in the UK discovered that people aged 16 to 29 were twice as likely to experience loneliness as people who are over 70. It seems the younger people of our society are having a crisis of friendship. But those who are 30 to 49 are not far behind.

Loneliness is not a small issue. It has the capacity to wreak devastation on many fronts. It impacts our health, our ability to learn, our productivity at work, our economy . . . I could go on.

Friendship is not a luxury. We need friends. God made us that way.

JESUS MADE FRIENDS WITH QUESTIONS

Jesus demonstrated the importance of friendship throughout his life and showed what true friendship is. In fact, the greatest gift he gave to people, then and now, is a way for each of us to find the ultimate friendship—friendship with our Creator.

Jesus, the great question asker, made strong connections with people by asking questions and giving them the space to ask him questions also. Some people are cautious in question-asking, fearing it's rude or risky to ask too many questions, particularly personal ones. Charles Dickens famously wrote in *Great Expectations*: "Ask no questions, and you'll be told no lies." Dare I say, that is a rather cynical approach to life and one that Jesus was not signed up to! Of course, asking questions doesn't mean that someone automatically bares their soul in response, but it's the doorway to discovering each other's stories. As we take the risks of inquiring and revealing more of ourselves, not only does it enable a person to access who we are, but we also

often discover something of ourselves in the process. This is the joy of friend-making.

WE KNOW THAT JESUS ASKED GREAT QUESTIONS BUT HOW DID HE MODEL QUESTIONS TO GROW FRIENDSHIPS?

Let me take you back to first century Palestine.

It's the middle of the day and Jesus is passing through the region of Samaria. Tired from his journey, he stops at a well. Instead of helping himself to a drink at the well, he waits until a woman arrives at the well and he asks her, "Will you give me a drink?" Now, Jesus is perfectly capable of getting a drink for himself—he's the Lord of all creation! So what's his motivation for asking for water from this woman, who as a Samaritan would be shocked and embarrassed to be spoken to by a Jewish man? Jesus is looking to make a connection with this woman. He is taking the initiative to start a conversation that would lead to an unlikely but life-transforming friendship. Their conversation begins with a simple ask, "Will you give me a drink?" but that ask creates the pathway to a much deeper conversation. The conversation, a dance of questioning and responding, listening, and understanding, paves the way to friendship.

Great friendships often begin with a simple question.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO START A BOOK GROUP WITH ME?

I love reading books. So when someone I knew asked, "Would you like to start a book group with me?" I jumped at the chance! The idea was to invite some of the other moms from the school

where our children attended. Books and people, what's not to like! In truth, as much as I enjoy a good read, I wasn't as interested in chatting about books as much as I was interested in investing time in friendship.

The people were invited, and a date was set for our first gathering. To be honest, the book that we'd chosen to read turned out to not be "my cup of tea," but that didn't matter. We were going to get together, over a cup of tea and some cake, to chat.

Through the process of asking each other questions about what we thought of the storyline and the characters, we started to discover something more about who we were as people, particularly as we related some of the things that happened in the book to things in our own lives. As we asked each other questions about the book, it took us to much more personal questions (and even more so over the years that we got together), but a particular question from that evening has stayed with me ever since, mainly because of the response it elicited. A question was asked of the whole group: "Why do you go to church?" In many ways this wasn't a strange question as all our children attended a Church of England school. However, the answers we all gave were quite different. We all took turns to talk about our motivations and experiences and I happened to be the last one to answer. My answer seemed to be a little different to the others as I didn't so much as talk about going to church as I did about how I'd come to know Jesus as my friend. One of the ladies who I knew a little better than the others responded, "I can't get enough of you talking about Jesus. It's like you really know him!"

I do know Jesus. And he has helped me to understand many things, including the importance of friendship and how being curious and asking great questions paves the way to deep friendship. We all have a story. When we give space by asking open curious questions, listening well to the answers, responding with grace, and asking further questions to go even deeper, we make friends.

CURIOSITY MAY HAVE KILLED THE CAT, BUT IT GIVES LIFE TO FRIENDSHIP!

Being curious is powerful when it comes to making friends because it enables us to ask real questions. According to Harvard University research, your likability grows when you ask someone questions, especially follow-up questions that demonstrate that you're listening, that you're interested, and that you care. Showing a genuine interest, "wondering" our way into the conversation, often reciprocates itself. Here are some things that I've learned in my own wonderings and pursuit of friendship.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE—"CAN I HELP?"

School-aged children learn that, to make new friends, you need to walk across the playground and ask someone if they want to play. As adults we sometimes overcomplicate it. But the principle for us is still the same: walk across the room or across the street, introduce yourself, and ask an opening question. Our neighbour's favorite question is "Can I help you?" An opening question doesn't need to be deep (in fact it's best at this stage if it's not); it just needs show interest and start the conversation.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE "SMALL TALK"— "HOW WAS YOUR WEEK?"

I confess I don't love small talk. I'm the kind of person that wants to jump in deep straight away, but I have learned that seemingly small talk about where you are from, what you enjoy, and how your weekend was, is a gentle way to connect and establishes some common ground and shared interests that eases the conversation into deeper topics. It's like starting in the shallows on the beach, testing the temperature and current of the water, before being ready to wade into the deep and go for a good swim. Be genuinely interested.

GIVE SPACE FOR THEIR QUESTIONS—"WHAT ABOUT YOU?"

Building a mutual friendship happens when each person is given the space to ask questions as well as to answer them. It's about discovering each other. If we ask all the questions and don't give space either for their questions or to share information about ourselves, it can come across as more of an interrogation than a conversation!

GIVE IT TIME—"WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET FOR A COFFEE OR GO FOR A WALK?"

An invitational question is one of the best ways to build new friendships! Friendship takes time. Asking someone if they would like to invest time with you beyond this conversation communicates value to that person and shows a commitment to developing the connection.

GO DEEPER: "CAN YOU TELL ME MORE?"

What a question! As someone takes the courage to share something a little more personal in their lives asking to hear more about it shows interest and a desire to know more of who they really are. It shows you like them. Friend-building conversations are not just sharing information, they are a process of discovery upon discovery through curiosity and insightful questions. It's this kind of connection that starts to touch the soul.

FRIENDS LIKE QUESTIONS

Our stories are important. When we give space by asking open questions and hold a nonjudgmental space with what people share, we get to share a beautiful exchange of life and experience that inspires hope and the possibility of something more. To be seen and understood and embraced as who we are creates a generosity of friendship that enriches our lives and spurs us on towards all we can be. A mutual sharing with empathy and kindness in ways that Jesus himself fully demonstrated for us. Time and again I have experienced this with new friends and old.

The pursuit of friendship is a life-giving adventure full of discovery aided by great questions. Who are you going to take the initiative with this week?

CHAPTER 15

QUESTIONS THAT SILENCED THE PHARISEES

Berti Berhami

What is so hard about asking great questions?

Great leaders ask questions, but not all leaders who ask questions are great!

The art of asking great questions is a skill, which leaders don't have the luxury not to master. As a skill it can be developed over time by experience and learning. But asking great questions is more than a skill. It goes much deeper than the techniques we learn to employ. It takes a leader of great character to ask great questions. This becomes quickly evident when interacting and leading your opponents. It's fascinating to see this in the light of the dialogue between Jesus and the religious leaders of his time.

Berti Berhami is the director of Cru ministry in Albania, and a leadership coach in the region. After 30 years in ministry, he is still a learner, and as such he loves leading with questions. He has a master's degree in mathematics, and an MABS from Dallas Theological Seminary.

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

Jesus was known for engaging others by asking questions—Pharisees not the least. In dialogues recorded in the Gospel accounts, Jesus asked them around 100 questions on matters of faith, law, and morality. But so did the Pharisees. In fact, they were the ones who initiated most of the public debates and discussions with Jesus. They were rightly depicted as leaders who couldn't resist questioning Jesus.

However, Jesus and the Pharisees responded quite differently to their respective questions. Jesus stayed engaged in the dialogue with the Pharisees after they asked him a question. But Pharisees, when questioned by Jesus, often avoided directly answering him and kept silent, or responded with confrontation.

What prompted this kind of response from the religious leaders? How is it connected to the questions that Jesus asked, in the first place? Does it challenge the expectation that "Good questions lead to good responses?"

One doesn't need to read very far into in the gospel of Mark in order to discover the above contrast, and learn to ask good questions when leading opponents.

LEFT WITHOUT WORDS

In Capernaum (Mark 2:1–13), when Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven," and the religious leaders were troubled by that, asking in their hearts silent but very important questions, Jesus answered them with questions, to reveal their concern and demonstrate his divine identity. "Why are

you thinking about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"

Religious leaders had questions which they did not even ask, but Jesus answered them. He challenged what was going on in the minds and hearts of his opponents.

In the house of Levi (Mark 2:14–17), the Scribes and the Pharisees asked the disciples why Jesus was eating with tax collectors and sinners. Hearing that, Jesus answered them to clarify his mission: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Religious leaders had questions about Jesus which they asked to his disciples, but Jesus answered them directly. He shared his heart for sinners with his opponents in a way that challenged their thinking.

Observing the ritual of fasting (Mark 2:18–22), the Pharisees came and directly asked Jesus why his disciples were not fasting. Jesus answered them, starting with the question, "While the groom is with them, the attendants of the groom cannot fast, can they?" He challenged their expectations and laid out his vision for the great new area, which started with him.

Observing the Sabbath (Mark 2:23–27), the Pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples were doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath. Jesus answered them with a question. He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry . . . ?" He corrected the reasoning of his opponents using David's story as an appealing example from the scriptures.

But in the synagogue on the Sabbath, when Jesus was about to heal a man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1–6), he engaged the Pharisees with a question, but THEY KEPT SILENT. Jesus asked, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” His question didn’t seem to serve the purpose of why they were there (Mark 3:2), so they chose none of the options. Their answer was silence. We know exactly how the Pharisees processed Jesus’ questions from another story told by Mark later on in his gospel. In the Temple in Jerusalem, religious leaders questioned the authority of Jesus, (Mark 11:27–33). Jesus said he would answer them with a condition if they answered his question first. Here was his question: “Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men?” They considered both options among themselves: If they said, “from heaven,” he would say, “then, why did you not believe John?” But if they said, “from men,” they were afraid of people, for they all believed John to be a real prophet. So they chose to say, “We don’t know.” The Pharisees had made up their minds about John and Jesus being not from God, but they couldn’t say that because of the fear in their hearts.

Back in the synagogue, the strong reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus’ act of healing on the Sabbath is totally unwarranted. The silence of their mouths revealed hearts which were ready to stop Jesus doing good and saving a life on the Sabbath, while conspiring to kill him on that same Sabbath. Jesus’ question revealed their true hearts.

At this point of the story, we may conclude that Jesus asked a great question to disarm his opponents. He masterfully asked a question that didn’t allow room for choosing anything but the one and only answer, the right one. He led the Pharisees to face the impossible. So they kept silent.

Some would probably stop here to rejoice and celebrate, saying: "That was a great question! It disarmed the Pharisees, leaving them without words!"

ANGERED BY SILENCE

Surprisingly enough Jesus isn't happy at all with the Pharisees' response to his question. Instead, he looked around at them with anger. (Mark 3:5)

Why? What does it say about Jesus' purpose and intention for his question?

There is no indication that Jesus regretted his question. He was angry at them for their response, not at himself for what he asked. His question was a great one. It destroyed the argument of the Pharisees that healing on the Sabbath was a violation of the law, and therefore, worthy of death. But that doesn't seem to be all that Jesus intended. Disarming the Pharisees was not the ultimate goal of Jesus's question, or else their silence would have brought him joy. As important as it was for Jesus to reveal and correct their wrong teaching on crucial matters of faith, he wasn't pleased to end there. Jesus was actually hoping to change their hearts. That's quite different from the intentions of the Pharisees, who were happy to catch Jesus doing the wrong thing and bring charges against him. (Mark 3:2) With his question, Jesus intended to penetrate their hearts.

AIMING FOR THE HEART

Disarming someone's mouth doesn't mean you have disarmed his heart. The Pharisees were given a choice, a clear one. In-

tellectual options were exhausted by the way Jesus framed his question. Rightly observed by scholars, it recalls Deuteronomy 30:15–19: “See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. . . . I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” Jesus aimed for a heart response. He gave the Pharisees the opportunity to choose life over death, which was the heart of the Sabbath. He didn’t aim to win the argument and leave them silent. His intention was to destroy their wrong teaching with what he was about to do in order to save their hearts.

But instead of anticipating the healing miracle that Jesus was about to perform with joy, the Pharisees chose harm and death with their silence. That is why Jesus grieved, for their hearts were hardened. Their silence was not a sign of surrender; it was a sign of rebellious hearts. Their love for people was lost, and the rules and laws had gotten in the way of restoring people’s health. Now they were ready to put to death the one who brought healing on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:6) The question of Jesus, backed with his work of healing, accelerated their evil response. They plotted with the Herodians to kill Jesus.

FOLLOWING THE MASTER

Leadership today hasn’t become less challenging in the face of the opposition. Whoever assumes that the “Pharisees” are not around anymore, or that the influence of evil has ceased doesn’t know true leadership yet. Such a leader doesn’t even know himself. The opposition is present and well. One should not search for it, nor be paranoid with it. It will rise if challenged by truth.

Jesus chose to do that by asking hard questions. Although leaders aren't able to know exactly what is in the minds and hearts of people, as Jesus did (Mark 2:6–8), they can discover a lot of information by asking good questions. Leaders don't have the exclusivity of truth and infallibility, as Jesus did, but they can be humble to listen and learn from their opponents.

Like Jesus, leaders facing opposition should aim for the minds and hearts of their opponents. Asking questions to understand the opposition's perspective, gather insights, and recognize heart issues are important before formulating effective responses. Here are a few examples:

- "What concerns you the most about the issue that you're raising?"
- "Can you provide examples or evidence to support your criticisms?"
- "What fears, needs, or interests drive your opposition?"
- "How do you propose we solve the issue?"
- "Do you have other solutions to suggest?"
- "What do you see happening if nothing changes?"
- "Is there a common ground where we can work together?"
- "What changes can we make to build trust and move forward?"

Asking such questions isn't rocket science for leaders. Demonstrating a heart of love and integrity through such questions is what makes them crucial for fostering a dialogue, and moving forward together with our opponents.

WHAT IS SO HARD ABOUT ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS?

We're often told that we shouldn't win the argument just to lose the person! That makes perfect sense if we're fighting over something of no importance. The Pharisees fought over many unimportant matters concerning the laws and regulations of religious practice. Jesus fought over very few matters. He didn't compromise those truths, even when he had to lose people. Once he asked his disciples, "You do not want to leave also, do you?" (John 6:67) A leader who fears losing people because of the truth won't have the boldness to ask questions that call people to commit to truth.

Pharisees were consumed with themselves. Jesus was consumed by his love for the lost. Pharisees found joy in acting like religious police. Jesus didn't find joy in silencing his opponents. He wanted to win their minds and save their hearts. His questions intended the best for the people. A leader who is preoccupied with himself will be happy to ask questions that make him look good.

Nothing separates Jesus from the religious leaders of his day more strongly than his integrity at any cost. Without hesitation, Jesus was willing to pay the price for what he said and did, even when criticized. The Pharisees failed to answer Jesus' questions, or ask great questions, for they weren't willing to pay the cost of honesty and vulnerability. The two situations mentioned above from Mark 3:1–6 and Mark 11:27–33 are just examples of the hypocrisy that characterized them. Jesus was known as the one who dwelled among his people, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

CHAPTER 16

LEADING WITH QUESTIONS: A BIBLICAL STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP

by **Bob Tiede**

**Originally posted at FaithDrivenEntrepreneur.org.*

When Jesus was 12 years old: “After three days they (his parents, Joseph and Mary) found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.” (Luke 2:46)

There is a communication crisis wreaking havoc on corporate America.

The Society for Human Resource Management reports that miscommunication costs companies about \$420,000 per year. In our offices, at home, and in our relationships, our communication determines what gets done and how well it gets done. Where, then does our communication go awry?

A good place to start is with our questions (or lack of). When a leader becomes so task-oriented and results-driven that he

or she neglects a teammate's ideas and honest feedback, the leader does a disservice to organizational growth. An inability or refusal to ask questions leads to stagnation, siloing, and a lack of competitiveness. It also ignores an important biblical leadership principle.

That's right, leading with questions is a biblical leadership principle.

Through years of studying the Gospel and Jesus' ministry, many leaders in business have deduced that Jesus himself is the most critical example of excellent leadership and communication. During his ministry, Jesus invested time in teaching and training his followers, and empowered them to carry on his mission after he was gone.

How did he do this? One of his most effective strategies was leading with questions.

We can apply this leadership strategy to our own lives by studying Jesus' ability to find meaning through the art of asking questions. Throughout the Gospels, we find numerous instances where Jesus asked questions to his disciples, religious leaders, and individuals seeking his help. Depending on the situation, Jesus was able to lead others to key realizations and incredible transformations.

This may seem obvious, but asking thoughtful questions is an essential way of gaining knowledge and understanding. In the Bible, we see that Jesus often asked questions to help his disciples and followers understand his teachings. In Matthew 16:13–16, Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" He follows up with another question, "But who do

you say that I am?" Through these questions, Jesus helps his disciples understand his identity and unified mission.

Similarly, in John 3:1–15, Jesus engages Nicodemus in a conversation where he asks him several questions to help him understand the concept of being born again. By asking questions, Jesus helps Nicodemus understand the spiritual truth that he is trying to convey.

It's an organizational leader's job to spur a sense of unity and collaboration. Simultaneously, leaders are responsible for streamlining efforts, and ensuring there's a general understanding of the "what" and the "why." Jesus' ultimate example of using questions to ignite aligned perception and team harmony can and should be translated into our leadership habits.

LEADING WITH QUESTIONS REVEALS HEART

Jesus' questions oftentimes provoked people to think critically about their actions, and at other times, they were used to draw his team back to the mission.

In John 21:15–17, after Jesus' resurrection, he asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Jesus' repeated question is not only a way to confirm Peter's love for him but also to restore Peter after he had denied him three times. This line of questioning brought Peter back to the truths of his own heart, his own thoughts, and his own experiences. Jesus brought out of Peter what was true, and what was relevant—bringing him back to the mission.

When leaders ask good questions, they encourage their team members to think more critically about their own work and the problems they are trying to solve. By probing deeper into

issues and asking thoughtful questions, leaders can help their team members uncover underlying assumptions and unspoken doubts that identify potential blind spots.

LEADING WITH QUESTIONS CAN IGNITE DISCUSSION AND FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

In Jesus' day, the Jews hated the Samaritans. Those living in northern Israel would take the long route to Jerusalem, simply to avoid going through Samaria. So, when Jesus asks, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." In Luke 10:36–37, there was most likely a long pause before the Jewish expert in the law replied, and almost certainly it was very difficult for him to verbalize that the hero of this story was a Samaritan when he hated all Samaritans.

Jesus could have ended His story by stating, "Therefore, the Samaritan was the good neighbor," but instead he brilliantly asked the expert in the law to answer, knowing how potentially powerful answering that question might be in his life and the lives of the others present.

In our modern workplaces, it's not uncommon for conflict to arise. Sometimes sparked by clashing personalities or the competitive corporate ladder, office culture can be divisive and often lack truth. A good leader seeks to unite and pose questions that solicit truth and revelation. A strong leader is willing to address issues head-on rather than allowing them to fester and grow. Ultimately, the model of leading with questions calls for

leaders to demonstrate their commitment to creating a culture of respect and accountability within the workplace.

LEADING WITH QUESTIONS IS LEADING WITH FAITH

Using strategic question-asking as a leadership framework is rooted in biblical principles. Not only does this method require biblical characteristics like trust, humility, and a willingness to listen and learn from others, but it's also the pathway to establishing harmony in the workplace.

By leading with questions, we can represent the way of Jesus in everyday life and create a culture of curiosity, respect, and continuous improvement within our organizations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book would not be possible without the help of so many people—starting of course with Jesus! He is the one that asked all of these Questions! Then, of course I want to express my appreciation to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who are the real authors of *340 Questions Jesus Asked*. They are the ones who recorded for us all of the questions Jesus asked! I merely compiled the questions they recorded.

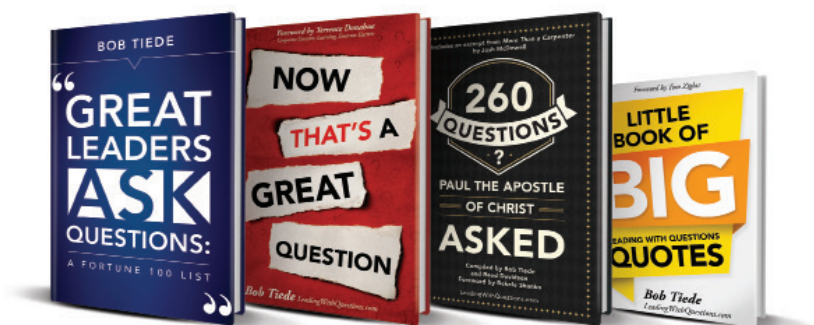
I also want to express my deep appreciation to my friend Sean McDowell—who I have known since he was two—for writing the Foreword. And special thanks to Delanyo Adadevoh, Matthew Lee Anderson, Andy Bannister, Berti Herhami, Lesley Cheesman, Judy Douglass, Hock Chye Goh, Ronald Harris, Wojciech Kowalewski, Debby Thompson, Keith Webb, and Pete Wehner for each contributing their insights to benefit all of us to better understand with incredible wisdom of the one who asked all of these questions!

I'm grateful to the folks from Weaving Influence, who have worked so diligently on my behalf. My gratitude to my editor, Keri Hales, for her attention to detail; to designer Rachel Royer, for her terrific graphic design of the front and back covers; to my production manager and compositor, Lori Weidert, who expertly typeset the book; to Meredith Mix, for proofreading; and to my project managers, Amy Driehorst and Kristin Elliott. A special thanks to my daughter, Sara Williams, for her editorial input.

Special thanks also to my wonderful executive assistant—who is also my daughter—Becca Davidson. She continually makes her dad look better than he deserves!

And above all else, I must express my gratitude to my amazing wife, Sherry, whose love and encouragement constantly motivate me to be a better man!

LEADINGWITHQUESTIONS.COM RESOURCES



GREAT LEADERS ASK QUESTIONS: A FORTUNE 100 LIST

Would you like to increase your Leadership Effectiveness $\times 10$?
Would you like to know more than 100 questions the world's best leaders use to improve their effectiveness, to motivate their teams, and to connect deeply with others?

Available for free download in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Farsi, and Portuguese, as well as audiobook in English and Spanish, and Farsi.

NOW THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION

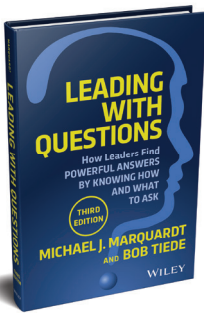
Leading with questions isn't just about asking, it's about asking the questions that bring about deeper learning and understanding. *Now That's a Great Question* offers you questions for a

variety of leadership and life scenarios from some of the great leaders of our time.

Available for free download in English, Spanish, Albanian, and Farsi ebook, as well as audiobook in English, Spanish, and Farsi.

260 QUESTIONS PAUL THE APOSTLE OF CHRIST ASKED

As you read through *260 Questions Paul the Apostle of Christ Asked*, imagine that you are sitting with the Apostle Paul and having a conversation with him. Take time to reflect on Paul's questions and write down your answers before opening your Bible to see how he answered.



LEADING WITH QUESTIONS, Third Edition

In this third edition of *Leading with Questions*, renowned global leadership consultants Michael Marquardt & Bob Tiede describe how to ask powerful questions that generate short-term and long-term results and success. You'll learn how to use questions to encourage participation and teamwork, foster creative thinking, empower others, create relationships with customers, and solve problems. Available on Amazon and all major online retailers.

Resources available at:

leadingwithquestions.com/books

SUBSCRIBE TO LEADINGWITHQUESTIONS.COM

You are the reason for my blog! Now celebrating it's 12-Year Anniversary, the LeadingwithQuestions.com blog reaches leaders in over 190 countries who receive new "Turn-Key Ready Questions" via email every Monday and Thursday morning that they can ask their colleagues, staff, clients, prospects, friends, or family.

If you'd like to join this email community, subscribing is free. Simply go to:

www.leadingwithquestions.com

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your commitment to increasing your leadership effectiveness $\times 10$ by moving from a leader who "Leads by Telling" to being a leader who "Leads With Questions!" Not only will you personally benefit—your staff will also benefit by being much better led and by seeing effective leadership modeled by you!

—Bob

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT LEADINGWITHQUESTIONS.COM



"Bob Tiede's blog, LeadingWithQuestions.com, consistently helps me to ask better questions—not just to my audiences and to my staff, but also to my family and friends!"

Josh McDowell, Best-selling author
of *More Than A Carpenter* and
New Evidence That Demands A Verdict



"I look forward to reading Bob Tiede's LeadingWithQuestions.com twice each week as every blog is filled with wonderful insights, stories and examples of powerful questions. It is undoubtedly the single best source for discovering great questions used by leaders from the corporate, academic, public, and social arenas."

Dr. Michael Marquardt, Author of
Leading with Questions and President
of World Institute for Action Learning



"As a business owner, speaker and author, I encourage my clients and audiences to take their businesses to a higher level of excellence. With his blog, LeadingWithQuestions.com, Bob Tiede provides us with practical tools and inspirational insights for achieving this."

Dr. K. Shelette Stewart,
Senior Strategic Relationship Manager
at Harvard Business School Publishing



"In over three decades in executive search, I can tell you that one of the differences between successful and unsuccessful people is good questions. Bob Tiede takes this principle and greatly expounds on it with LeadingWithQuestions.com. I encourage everyone to absorb the wisdom here, as I do often."

Bob Beaudine, CEO, Eastman & Beaudine;
best-selling author, *The Power of WHO!*



"Bob Tiede is always thinking about how to grow your leadership capability. His blog, LeadingWithQuestions.com, will give you the benefit of his experience and enthusiasm for developing leaders. You won't want to miss it!"

Cheryl Bachelder, Former CEO,
Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Inc., from 2007 to 2017



"Thanks to Bob Tiede's LeadingWithQuestions.com... Keeps me questioning."

Lolly Daskal,
Founder and CEO of Lead From Within;
Coach, Consultant, Speaker and Author



"Bob Tiede understands why we are on this earth...to add value to others. LeadingWithQuestions.com is a glimpse into his wisdom and insight which are a direct result of his passion for people and leaving every person in every interaction with him better! I'm grateful to call Bob a friend!"

Logan Stout, Best-selling author, speaker, Founder and
CEO of IDLife; Founder and CEO, Dallas Patriots Inc.



"I look forward to being inspired and challenged by Bob's blog each week. It has been so beneficial to us, it led to a great sermon series at our church, 'Questions Jesus Asked.'"

Lamarr Lark, Sr., Chick-fil-A Operator,
Gurnee, Illinois



"My Dad, Zig Ziglar, always said: 'Questions are the answer!' If you are looking for answers to life's most challenging questions there is no better place than Bob Tiede's blog, LeadingWithQuestions.com"

Tom Ziglar, President at Ziglar Inc.



"My role as a leader mandates the prolific, internal dialogue with questions for self-direction, life-management, and people-leadership. Bob Tiede excels in both the content and timing of questions. Each time I am with him, whether in person or by his blog, I come away deeply refreshed."

Dr. Ramesh Richard, President of RREACH
and Professor at Dallas Theological Seminary



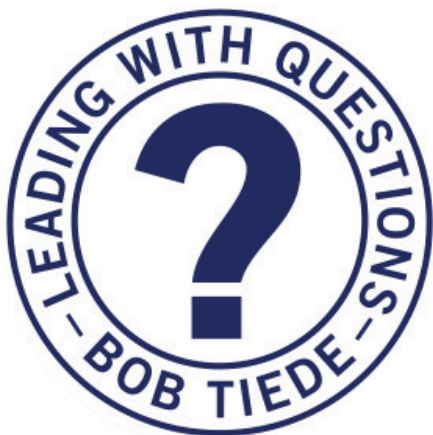
"Bob Tiede is a great leader as well as a highly effective coach, who is committed to increasing the leadership understanding and effectiveness of others. His unique contributions on leading with questions is an incredible resource for those who want to lead through the empowerment of others."

Delanyo Adadevoh, PhD, President,
International Leadership Foundation



"Ever since I have known Bob he has asked me the questions which have helped me to develop my thinking, improve my decision-making skills and in turn lead others more effectively through asking good questions. *Leading with Questions* is a skill every growing leader needs to be fruitful and effective. I highly commend Bob in helping you with this."

Lesley Cheesman, National Director
of Agape United Kingdom



For more Leading With Questions
Tips and Articles,
visit LeadingWithQuestions.com

ABOUT BOB TIEDE



Bob Tiede has been on the staff of Cru for over 53 years and currently serves on the U.S. Leadership Development team.

Helping develop the next generation of leaders for Cru is Bob's focus. His role includes recruiting outstanding leaders from business, education, government, medicine, military, and non-profits to coach Cru leaders.

Bob started his blog LeadingWithQuestions.com as a way to better connect with his target audience: Cru's emerging leaders who are 20- and 30-something.

Today, his blog provides a continued source of new tools (new questions) for all of Cru's coaches and leaders and is viewed by leaders in more than 190 countries.

A leader who leads with questions will often be 10 times more effective than a leader who only leads by telling!

Bob and his wife, Sherry, are proud parents of four adult children and super proud grandparents of eight incredible grandchildren—all of whom love to ask their Papa Bob questions!

Scan to visit Bob Tiede's blog ►



LeadingWithQuestions.com