



The Importance Of Questions?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Questions are a very basic, yet extremely important, form of communication. Though there are also rhetorical questions (questions whose answers are obvious), questions are generally used as an information gathering tool. In journalism school, we were taught to be certain that we ask the “basic” questions – Who? What? When? Where? How? With these questions answered, we would be able to begin writing the story.

Questions are also important to every serious Bible student. When we are engaged in Bible study, we will develop some very important questions. These questions (whether on matters of salvation, Christian living, the church, worship, or any other subject) can help the student gain further knowledge about the matter. Perhaps you could work toward an answer to your question through the use of a concordance, lexicon, commentary, asking someone else, or, simply, more study of the Scriptures.

As a Bible student, you ought to realize (as I must) that we do not know all of the answers. It will take a lifetime of asking questions and receiving the answers to even begin to know “it all.” Yet, that fact should not intimidate us from asking questions. Rather, it should encourage us to be even more diligent as we pursue those answers!

Questions Asked In The Bible

There are a great many questions that were asked in the Scriptures. For illustration purposes, we will confine our search to the New Testament only.

When the Jews sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist they asked, “Who are you?” (John 1.19; NASB). This question was to gain vital information. Was he the Christ? John simply responded that was not the Christ. They proceeded to ask some “follow-up” questions: “What then? Are you Elijah?...Are you the Prophet... Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” (John 1.21-22; NASB).

After Jesus taught concerning steps that must be taken when a brother sins against you, Peter asked the question, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” (Matt. 18.21; NASB). Jesus gave the answer, essentially, that there is no limit to one’s forgiveness of another!

On the day of Pentecost, after Peter had preached a tremendous sermon that convicted many of their sins, the crowd asked, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2.37; NASB). Peter, then, provided them with the God-given answer to such a question – “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2.38; NASB). Having been provided with this essential information, many obeyed God’s commandments.

Clearly, individuals have used questions to help them gain an understanding of God’s will for them. You are encouraged to do the same! Allow yourself to be curious about God’s will. Challenge yourself as you seek out its answer.

Motives For Asking Questions

While questions are important, there are some questions which are not looked upon as favorably as others. The motive that is behind a question will reveal much about what the one who asked the question will do with the answer (this should become clearer as I develop this point). Simply, we should be certain that we hold proper motives in asking the questions that we ask.

Some questions are asked in order to test another. Jesus frequently encountered this. Perhaps we could say that these are *insincere* questions (though I am in no place to judge the heart of another – fortunately, in some places, the Scriptures reveal such motives). Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath” (Matt. 12.10; NASB). This, ordinarily, would seem like a genuine, information seeking question. However, the Scriptures reveal that these individuals were not looking for the right answer, instead, they were looking for an opportunity to accuse Jesus! The Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection), on another occasion, described a very detailed situation to Jesus dealing with a woman who was married to 7 brothers (Matt. 22.23-27). Then, they asked a question about this hypothetical situation: “In the resurrection...whose wife of the seven will she be?” (Matt. 22.28; NASB). For one who was honestly contemplating such a situation, this would seem like a reasonable question – one that we might ask today! However, it *may* have been that these individuals were simply trying to trip Jesus up about the issue of the resurrection. If so, it didn’t work! On another occasion, a lawyer decided to ask Jesus, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10.25; NASB). To which Jesus responded by commanding love toward God and toward others. This question is a most basic and essential question of life – and, one that must be asked by everyone who lives on earth! However, this man asked this question for the purpose of testing Jesus. You see, questions are good. But, questions that are asked just so we can catch somebody else in error will not profit us (unless we learn from the answer that is given).

Some questions are asked in order to justify self. Continuing with the lawyer in Luke 10, he responded to Jesus' commands by asking, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10.29; NASB). Again, typically, this would have been an excellent question (it is certainly a question whose answer we continue to benefit from). However, this man fails the "question asking motive test" a second time. For, it is revealed that he issued this question "wishing to justify himself" (Luke 10.29; NASB). Chances are, it didn't work! Jesus proceeded to answer his question by teaching the parable of the good Samaritan. We must caution ourselves against asking questions with such a motive. If we do, we will likely continue asking the same question – with the same motive – until we are given the answer that accomplishes our purpose (see 2 Timothy 4.3-4).

Some questions are sincere questions. When the Lord appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul was convicted of his sinful activity. Thus, according to the KJV, Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9.6). This sincere question led to a sincere response – obedience to the Lord's will, being baptized for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 22.16). Similarly, the Philippian jailor sincerely asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16.30). Once again, this sincere question led to a sincere response – obedience to the Lord, being baptized for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 16.33). When you are active in asking sincere questions, coupled with receiving the truthful answer, you will make the necessary changes to your life to be obedient to God!

One GIANT Understanding

Before we conclude this discussion of questions, one thing **must** be understood: There will be times when we desire a truthful answer to our questions, but, an answer has not been revealed to us. Space does not permit a discussion of individuals who desired to know an answer to their question(s), but did not receive one! Suffice one verse to settle this issue for us: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law" (Deut. 29.29). When we are given the answer to a question, we must realize that it is not for us to know and simply continue to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor.5.7)

Conclusion

I desire for you to ask sincere Bible questions so that you might understand more of God's will! Challenge yourself to "dig deeper" in order to understand more of God's revelation. Remember the value in searching for the wisdom that comes from God (Isa. 55.9).

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