

118 (Supplement) – Ask Questions the Way Jesus Did

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Prayer: “Lord, help us to see others the way that you see them. Guide us through your word to share your the hope of eternal life.”

1. Prepare your Heart to learn from God’s Word.

Select from the listed topics the one best suited for the current situation, in order to learn how Jesus asked questions to perceive the hearts of men.

Seekers of Jesus: Find in John 1:35-39 how Jesus responded to those who sought to follow him:

- What question did Jesus ask? [*Jesus sought to find what the other person was desiring and what their motivations were and did not simply project his own interests onto them.*]
- How did Jesus treat the those who sought God out of a sincere desire?

When miracles are requested: Find in John 2:1-10 how Jesus responded to his mother when he was asked to perform a miracle:

- What question did Jesus ask? [*In effect, Jesus was asking, “What does what you want done have to do with me?”*]
- Whose commands did his mother tell others to obey?
- Did Jesus seek to promote himself?
- Whose interests should we seek to fulfill, ours or God’s?

Religious leaders questioning spiritual truths: Find in John 3:1-17 how Jesus responded to Nicodemus’s questions concerning a spiritual re-birth:

- What questions did Jesus ask? [*verses 10 & 12*]
- In verse 14, what example did Jesus use, and from where was it taken?
- Did Jesus stress why Nicodemus’s understanding was wrong, or did Jesus show instead what the Bible meant?

When God’s call is questioned: Find in John 4:28-41 how Jesus responded when the disciples questioned his actions:

- Whose will did Jesus say that he needed to do?
- How did Jesus use a question to focus the disciples’ attention to a visual illustration?
- How long was it until the physical crops needed harvesting?
- Read verse 30. When Jesus told the disciples to lift up their eyes and look, what field for harvesting would they have seen?
- What two kinds of workers are mentioned in verse 37?
- Of what values is our reaping? [*verse 36*]

Those who have lost hope: Find in John 5:1-8 how Jesus responded to a terminally ill man:

- What question did Jesus ask?
- How does this man express the hopelessness of his situation?
- Why might Jesus not have been able to heal anyone else who was there? [*Answer: they thought they still could manage to get deliverance by their own resources.*]

Rejection of God: Find in John 5:41-47 how Jesus responded to those who refused to honor the Father by accepting the one whom He sent:

- In whose name did Jesus claim to come?
- Whom did Jesus say that they would accept?
- In verse 44, what did Jesus question concerning them?
- Whom did Jesus say would be the one to accuse them of their unbelief?
- How did Jesus respond to their failure to believe in what they had already supposedly trusted? [*verse 47*]

Human reasoning: Find in John 6:4-14 how Jesus responded when a multitude of people were needing food:

- What question did Jesus ask Philip?
- What calculation did Philip perform to arrive at an answer? [verse 7]
- What resources did Andrew find available, and what was his reasoning?
- What was Jesus able to demonstrate about God's power when the resources seemed to be so limited?
- In verse 12, what did Jesus have them do with the left-overs?

When the truth of the Gospel offends: Find in John 6:53-71 how Jesus responded to the disciples who found his way too hard:

- What questions did Jesus ask the disciples who found his way too difficult? [verses 61 & 62]
- What is the source of all true spiritual life?
- How did Jesus respond to the disciples who left? [He left them go.]
- What question did Jesus ask the disciples who remained? [verse 67]
- What was Simon Peter's response to Jesus's question?
- How did Jesus refer to the one who would betray him? [Answer: as a devil, one who slanders]

When religious persecution comes: Find in John 7:14-24 how Jesus responded to those who sought to kill him because he went against their religious tradition:

- By whose authority did Jesus say he spoke? [verse 16]
- Jesus said that all who had the will to know God's will would know what? [verse 17]
- What did Jesus question their use of, so that they would accuse themselves of what they were accusing him? [verse 19]
- In verse 23, how did Jesus demonstrate that he fulfilled the *intent* of the law?

When being judged harshly: Find in John 8: 2-11 how Jesus treated a woman caught in a sin having severe cultural consequences:

- What did Jesus tell the ones to do who were judging the woman, and on what condition were they to do it? [verse 7]
- What did the ones who were acting as judges do? [verse 9]
- What did Jesus ask the woman after everyone else had left? [verse 10]
- In verse 11, what did Jesus say that he would not do?
- What did Jesus tell the woman to do?

When the Gospel is rejected: Find in John 8:42-47 how Jesus responded to those who would not believe him:

- Who did Jesus say sent him?
- What was the reason Jesus said that they were not able to understand him?
- From where do evil desires come?
- What questions did Jesus ask in verse 46?
- Why are people not able to hear and understand God's words?

When deliverance is brought: Find in John 9:1-11, 34-39 how Jesus respond to a man who had been healed:

- How long had this man been blind?
- What command did Jesus give to the man? [verse 7]
- What did the man do when given this instruction? [verse 11]
- What question did Jesus ask of this man after he had been healed? [verse 35]
- For what reason did Jesus say he came into this world? [verse 39]

Rejection of Jesus as God: Find in John 10:31-39 how Jesus responded to those who refused to believe in his full deity:

- What question did Jesus ask in verse 34?
- From what did Jesus quote to answer their accusations?
- What did Jesus do to show that the Father was in him? [verse 39]

- In verses 35 & 36, how did Jesus use a question to get them to answer that he had a right to be called God, because of the works demonstrating his heavenly authority, if they likewise had a right to be called gods (*i.e.* judges or earthly authorities).

Concerning death & the resurrection: Find in John 11:1-27 how Jesus responded to questions concerning death and of the hope of eternal life:

- What question did Jesus use in verse 9, to demonstrate how we are to live? [*Jesus compared true spiritual life to walking about during the day when one can see where he is walking.*]
- In verse 25, Jesus proclaimed himself to be what?
- In verse 26, What question did Jesus ask Martha?
- What was Jesus encouraging Martha to believe?
- How did Martha respond to Jesus's question?

Additional comfort & healing needed: Find in John 11:28-44 how Jesus responded to Lazarus's death and to Martha's doubt:

- How did Jesus determine what direction to take? [*verse 34*]
- How did Martha express her doubt? [*verse 39*]
- How did Jesus help Martha to apply his earlier teachings? [*verse 40, he questioned her concerning them*]
- Why did Jesus perform these miracles? [*verse 42*]

When in a trial of life: Find in John 12:20-28 how Jesus responded to his trial when the time came for him to glorify the Father's name through death:

- Who will be where Jesus is? [*verse 26*]
- Who will the Father honor?
- What request did Jesus say that he could not ask? [*verse 27*]
- For what purpose are our divine appointments?

When teaching others practical truths: Find in John 13:12-17 how Jesus taught his disciples to provide for the needs of others through hospitality:

- To help the disciples focus on the purpose of the hands-on exercise that Jesus just demonstrated, what question did he ask?
- What command did Jesus give to his disciples? [*Jesus provided one example that is used in the place of any situation where the needs of someone might be provided for in a caring way*]
- Why should we not think ourselves as too important to do just as he did?

Seeing the Father through Jesus: Find in John 14:8-11; 16:19-24, 31 how Jesus explained to the disciples the truths concerning his going away:

- What questions did Jesus ask Philip in verses 9 & 10?
- Since the disciples saw Jesus, who else did they see?
- By whose authority did Jesus speak?
- How was Jesus able to do the works that he did?
- In 16:22, when the disciples were sorrowful because Jesus was leaving, what did he promise that they would have that no one could take from them?
- In verse 31, how did Jesus check their acknowledgment of his deity?

The way of the cross versus the man's way: Find in John 18:1-11 how Jesus responded to his arrest:

- What question did Jesus ask of the soldiers who came to arrest him? [*verses 4 & 7*]
- How did Jesus respond to the soldiers?
- What power did Jesus demonstrate even during his arrest? [*verse 6*]
- What did Jesus ask for his disciples?
- What action (man's way) did Peter take?
- How did Jesus teach Peter about God's way even during this time?

When interrogated during a court trial: Find in John 18:19-38 how Jesus responded during his religious trial and the Roman government trial:

- How secretive was Jesus with his teachings?
- Whom did Jesus say to call as his witnesses for what he taught?
- How did Jesus respond when falsely accused? [verse 23]
- How did Jesus seek to clarify Pilate’s reason for asking his question?

When comforting the mourning: Find in John 20:11-18 how Jesus responded to Mary Magdalene while she was weeping beside his tomb:

- How did Jesus seek out the purpose of her sorrow? [verse 15]
- What command did Jesus give to her when she realized that he was now alive?

When direction and meaning of life is lost: Find in John 21:1-14 how Jesus approached the disciples when they returned to their prior life of fishing, not understanding what the resurrection of Jesus meant:

- How much did their old way provide for them without Jesus?
- How did Jesus approach them? [verse 5]
- What happened when the disciples obeyed Jesus’s command and did things his way?
- What further requests did Jesus make of them? [verses 10 & 12]

When restoring the wayward: Find in John 21:15-19 how Jesus restored Peter to fellowship with himself:

- How did Jesus approach this subject with Peter? [verse 15 — *The “these” referred to by Jesus in this verse might mean either the fish that were miraculously caught in the nets or the other disciples. Jesus could be asking, “Do you love me more than this prior life of yours?” Or he might be asking, “After all your prior boasting, do you still claim to love me more than these other disciples do?”*]
- How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him?
- How did Peter respond in each instance?
- What command did Jesus give to Peter each time?
- What request did Jesus make of Peter after explaining to him the way of the cross? [verse 19]

When probing into the affairs of others: Find in John 21:20-23 how Jesus responded to Peter when he questioned what the future held for another disciple:

- What question did Jesus ask of Peter?
- What did Jesus tell Peter to do instead of questioning the affairs of others?
- Whose will did Jesus say it was concerning what happened to another disciple?

2. Conversation Tips (Taken from the training course *The Gospel’s Mandate for Evangelism* by Stephen D. Sweigart.)

- Seek to find what is motivating the other person. Do not simply project your own desires and motivations onto them. What you think is important may not be what they think is important. Ask for their ideas and opinions about a subject.
- Seek to make God’s word relevant to the situation of the other person. Do not simply quote the Bible and say that God’s word has been spoken.
- Since direct questions often sound like the person is prying into another’s affairs, learn to use indirect questions. Instead of asking, “Do you know where you’ll spend eternity?” ask something like, “How wonderful is it that God wants to share His life with us?”
- Avoid using “I,” “me,” and “my” in your conversations. Promote the other person, not yourself.
- When speaking to a group, avoid using “hero” stories about yourself. Although a popular story-telling method in some cultures, it is better to use stories from the Bible, current or historical events, or nature to illustrate a spiritual point, avoiding references which focus on your own exploits.
- Avoid making the other person feel inferior. Many think derogatory wit is fun. But it’s not fun to the other person. Raise another person up by complimenting him, not by belittling him.

- Some think it's great sport to match wits with another person. The Western, Euro-American culture values quick thinking and response. To them, risk brings reward, and the quicker a person can think on their feet, the greater is the reward that can be grabbed. Other cultures prize deliberation. Quick thinking for these cultures is a quick way to bad choices. Trying to prove that you have the sharper wit will simply be seen as rude.
- Avoid presumptive questions. Questions that presume a proper answer may only lead to shame or embarrassment, if answered honestly. Getting a person to agree that they are a Christian and then getting them to admit they have broken God's law, therefore calling them a liar, will not usually change the heart attitudes.
- Some cultures value efficiency, while others value relationships. Asking yes/no questions may only give you the "yes" or "no" answer presumed to be the one that is wanted. An efficiency-based culture may honestly answer, "No," to a question such as, "Do these clothes match?" They are simply giving information, feelings are not a priority. Whereas, a relationship-based culture may simply agree and possibly find another way to say that no, they don't really match, instead of saying it directly. Students have no problem with questioning (often forcefully) the accuracy of a teacher's statements in an efficiency-based culture, while in a relationship-based culture, the student would not want to shame an authority figure by questioning them in front of others.
- Avoid clichés. To be told that a trial must be "God's will" is not very encouraging. To imply that they must not be praying hard enough, or, like Job was told by his friends, that there must be sin involved or that maybe they are just not trying hard enough, just leads to more discouragement, since the implication is that they must somehow "work" harder to please God. "God is with us" is all that sometimes can be said. Jesus is there to walk with us through our trials. The trials may not go away, the hurt may never leave, but God is with us. Spend time praying *with* the person, not just *for* them.