



The Importance of Asking Honest Questions

Ellis Potter

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Sometimes Christian pastors, parents and teachers are afraid of the questions young people and others might ask. Questions of another generation, or generated by secular teachers and other models can seem rebellious and threatening. Questions arising out of other cultural and worldview assumptions than those of the local Church can seem to be coming from another planet. Even if the questions are honest they can be very difficult to understand and the reaction is often suspicion or rebuke. It is known that Jesus is the answer, but there is a strong inclination to limit the questions to familiar ones.

1. Introduction

1.1 Christian fear of questions

It is known that Jesus is the answer, but there is a strong inclination to limit the questions to familiar ones. This situation is often very stressful and alienating.

1.2 Jesus is the answer to all questions

The workers at SEN know that Christians don't need to be afraid of questions because Jesus really is the answer to all the questions. They also know it takes a lot of patience, love, hard work, prayer and deep thought to realize what the answers are and how they apply.

2. The Role of Questions in the Search for Truth

2.1 Raising questions is often more effective

than making statements

Which do you think would be more effective: To get on a city bus and shout out 'Jesus is the answer!' or to shout out 'What are your questions?' before sitting down. In which case would someone be more likely to come to sit with you and open up a conversation?

2.2 Questions must be understood before answers can be given

The questions of someone from an atheistic, mafia connected Russian family, or a Moslem family or a newly converted Evangelical from a nominally Orthodox family will be very different. Their questions are part of who they are and must be carefully and compassionately understood before they can be directed to the answers of Jesus.

2.3 Asking questions is a way of understanding the lost world

As we relate to the culture around us, we are called to be salt and light. This requires us to know something of the nature of the rotting darkness in which we live (Phil. 4:8).

2.4 Questions Christians must ask...

1. Themselves:

Am I doing right? Am I behaving in a loving and inviting way? Am I respecting the lost people around me whom God made and Jesus died to save? Do I trust God to sustain and use me in uncertain circumstances?

2. Others

2.5 The questions of Jesus

Teaching by questioning is often connected to Socrates, but Jesus also used this method.

1. The rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31)

2. The healing of the Syrian/Phoenician woman's daughter (Matthew 15:22-28)

3. The Role of Questions in the Search for Truth

3.1 Questions and doubt

Questioning is often associated with doubt and is thought to be rebellious or unfaithful. But, we only learn more about God and our lives as his

children by asking questions.

3.2 The agenda of questions

1. Dokimazo

Dokimazo means to assay, or to test to find out how much good is there. Paul teaches us how not to put out the Spirit's fire or hold the prophecies in contempt; it is by asking Dokimazo questions or 'testing everything'. (I Thess. 5)

2. Pierazo

Pierazo means to find out what is bad or wrong. If we 'Pierazo' to find something wrong, it will not show us the good. As we interact with the world and its people, we should ask questions to find out how God's image and character are manifested in it. Then, starting with what is praiseworthy, we can lead people to see what is still lacking.

3. Asking questions as Christ asked them

We should follow Jesus and test each other, the world and ourselves as He does. Questioning and testing are hard, painful and frightening. At the end of the Old Testament, Malachi writes of Jesus sitting as a refiner of silver. We are all cooking in the pot. He carefully keeps us just at the point of boiling, but not boiling over while he skims away the black scum that floats to the surface. As more and more of the scum gets taken away, the silver becomes a mirror and Jesus sees Himself in our lives. Boiling is not pleasant, but very effective in purifying.