

# Questions that Lead Us to Conquer

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. If Solomon had been inspired to write about the season of questions and answers, he might have written: "A time to ask questions, and a time to accept the answers."
  - 1. Questions are good for us, both to ask and to answer. A good question can lead us to success or to avoid harm
  - 2. "He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever." (Chinese proverb)
  - 3. On the other hand, some questions and the manner in which they are asked can do harm and should not be answered
  - 4. "There are no right answers to wrong questions." (Ursula K. Le Guin)
- B. All questions are not alike.
  - 1. It is a mistake to assume that every question represents a desire to learn an answer.
  - 2. It is equally a mistake to assume that every question indicates a lack of faith on the part of the questioner

## I. HONEST QUESTIONS

- A. Questions are used for learning - Luke 8:4-9
  - 1. They didn't understand and wanted to understand.
  - 2. Jesus knew the value of questions from childhood - Luke 2:46
- B. Questions are used for teaching
  - 1. Greek philosopher Socrates made asking questions into an art-form.
  - 2. Teachers know that students often forget instruction, but when they work to find answers, the information is more likely to be remembered.
  - 3. Leading questions are employed to direct a student's mind down a particular path.

Socratic questions:

- 1. Questions for clarification:
  - Why do you say that?
  - How does this relate to our discussion?
- 2. Questions that probe assumptions:
  - What could we assume instead?
  - How can you verify or disapprove that assumption?
- 3. Questions that probe reasons and evidence:
  - What would be an example?
  - What is this analogous to?
  - What do you think causes this to happen? Why?
- 4. Questions about viewpoints and perspectives:
  - What would be an alternative?
  - What is another way to look at it?
  - Would you explain why it is necessary or beneficial, and who benefits?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of...?

- How are these two things similar or different?
- What is a counterargument for this answer?
- 5. Questions that probe implications and consequences:
  - What generalizations can you make?
  - What are the consequences of that assumption?
  - What are you implying?
  - How does this affect that?
  - How does this tie in with what we learned before?
- 6. Questions about the question:
  - What was the point of this question?
  - Why do you think I asked this question?
  - How does this apply to everyday life?
    - 4. Jesus often used this form of teaching with his disciples. Sermons were often introduced in the form of a question.
      - a. Mark 8:27-29, 31 - Jesus was able to get the disciples to realize what they already believed.
      - b. Mark 9:31-34 - Questions were used to highlight what a person needed to learn
    - 5. Even though they did not know the answers to Jesus' questions, the questions prepared them to receive His answer.
      - a. The effort to answer a question can make a person realize how much they need to learn - Luke 20:1-8
      - b. Jesus's question revealed that they were not in a position to question His authority to teach
      - c. Matt. 22:41-46
- C. Questions are used to motivate people to action
  - 1. David questioned the people as to why no one answered Goliath's challenge - 1Sam. 17:26-30
    - a. Eliab saw David's questions as harmful because he thought David wanted to see a battle and was stirring people up with his questions.
    - b. David asked questions because he wanted people to serve God.

## II. NOT ALL QUESTIONS ARE SINCERE

- A. Some ask questions to avoid the truth or their responsibility to it
  - 1. John 18:37-38 - He wasn't interested in the answer, because he left before a reply was made.
  - 2. By his question, Pilate does not believe there is an absolute truth. His question becomes a declaration of his belief.
- B. Some ask questions to trap or harm others. They are not looking to learn or to teach, but searching for a way to accuse another.
  - 1. Matt. 22:23-29 - The Sadducees' question was insincere because they asked about something they didn't believe in.
    - a. It is like someone saying they rode in a flying saucer, and the listener challenging them by asking about the color of the upholstery.

2. Matt. 22:34-35 - The Pharisees viewed their question as unanswerable.
- C. Some questions should not be asked - 1Cor. 10:25
- D. Some ask questions to generate controversy - 1Tim. 6:3-5; 2Tim. 2:23
  1. When people disagree, when they are divided and easy to destroy - Luke 11:17
  2. Unity strengthens - Ecc. 4:12
  3. Titus was warned to avoid the foolish controversies of divisive brethren Titus 3:9-11
  4. Some questions are asked to increase ignorance, asked about things they do not and cannot know. The ignorant spend time debating them because it makes feel scholarly - 1Tim. 1:3-8; 2Tim. 2:14-18

Conclusion:

- A. Jer. 12:1-5 - There is a time and manner in which we should ask our questions; and then, there is a time and manner in which to accept the answer