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. 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.

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