

Share The Gospel
First Baptist Church Dandridge
April-May 2024

Session Five: Questions, Questions

The Inevitability of Questions

- a. **Difficulty:** One of the most difficult parts of sharing the gospel is answering questions. According to studies, one of the reasons that more believers don't engage others with the gospel is the fear of being asked a question that they can't answer. On the one hand, no one wants to get stumped and look like a fool, lowering the confidence of the one they're sharing with. On the other hand, no one wants to give the wrong answer and lead someone astray, leading to greater confusion and unbelief. But even though questions are intimidating, they are inevitable.
- How can you believe in a God who would allow that school mass shooting to happen?
 - Why are you Christians so bigoted about gay and trans people?
 - What makes you think that all these things in the Bible aren't just made-up stories to give us comfort?
 - You say that we're all rebels against God, but I know some genuinely decent and good people. Are you saying that they're all rotten and sinful?
- b. **Reasons:** Some people have genuine questions that need to be answered before they can place their faith in Christ. Other people have dismissive questions that are intentionally difficult to answer to avoid placing their faith in Christ. However, God has called us to be able to give reasonable answers to the questions people have.
- c. **Goals:** There are three goals we must achieve when it comes to approaching questions from unbelievers: (1) Respect the questioner; (2) Point to Jesus; (3) Trust God to give us the words we need.

General Questions About Christianity

"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." – 1 Peter 3:13-16

a. Five Principles for Good Answers

- **Be Prepared:** Preparation is critical for anything important we do in life. The gospel ministry is no exception. Questions can be hard, but that only means that we need to study harder. While most believers will not achieve advanced theological degrees, we can equip ourselves with resources that will help us give reasonable answers to the most common and controversial questions. (e.g., See Appendix 2, pp. 153-162, for excellent responses to questions; however, there are countless apologetics books to find the information we need).
- **Be Clear:** When we answer, we need to be as straightforward and clear as possible. If we are speaking to those who may be less educated, we don't want to use technical words and complex arguments that might leave them more confused or misled. If we honestly don't have a good answer, we need to humbly say, "That's an excellent question, but I need to think about the best way to answer it. Could we meet again soon?" A delayed answer is still an answer, and it's better than a wrong answer.
- **Be Gracious:** When people ask us questions, we should never be arrogant, dismissive, argumentative, or put people down. There are times when people ask us such basic questions that we're tempted to mock them for not knowing (e.g., You really didn't know that Jesus died on the cross for our sins? You had no idea that the story of Noah and the flood was in the Old Testament?). Other times, we might detect that people are trying to pick a fight or be obnoxious, and our response might be to fight back. However, *"our aim is not to win an argument, but to win a person"* (85).
- **Question the Question:** When a person asks a difficult question, sometimes the best approach isn't to answer right away, but to ask them why their curious about that, or what do they mean, or what have they been told. We can often learn more about the person and how best to answer if we know why their asking a certain question (e.g.,

“Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?” They might confess that they lost their home in a fire, etc.). Jesus made a practice of asking questions before giving answers. Sometimes a person’s motives can be exposed, or maybe they’re not asking the right question to begin with.

- **Head toward Jesus and the Gospel:** Good answers are good answers only if they eventually lead to Jesus. It’s possible to get so wrapped up in defending creation that we don’t introduce people to the Creator. For example, when addressing the “problem of evil,” point people toward the Savior that God sent to redeem sinners and create a new heavens and new earth, wiping away every tear and healing every heart.

b. Common Questions

- **Group:** Each table has been given a common question. Please discuss how you would answer the question to the best of your ability. Also, feel free to use the answers in Appendix 2, pp. 153-162.

c. **Answering Questions Following a Gospel Presentation:** There are times when it might be best to delay answering questions until we have explained the basic aspects of the gospel. For example, say, “Those are all good question, but let me first tell you what the Bible teaches about salvation, then I’ll come back and think through what you’re asking.” There are good reasons for this.

- Their question might be answered by the rest of what you say.
- It’s better to explain the whole gospel rather than getting bogged down by specific question, which are many times insignificant and detrimental.
- After giving the whole gospel, you can refer back to aspects of it in your answers.