

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

The Questions of Jesus¹

Jesus often asked questions as a teaching strategy. Most of Jesus' questions fall under one of three categories.

1. Jesus asked questions to validate His teaching. Many times Jesus asked questions to prove that what He said actually makes sense. In Mt 6:25 Jesus made the significant statement, "Do not worry about your life." To validate this teaching, Jesus followed it with a series of questions: "Isn't life more important than food and clothes?" "Aren't you more valuable than the birds?" When we honestly answer such questions, we can't help but agree with Jesus' original statement. Other examples of validating questions can be found in Lk 6:27-32 and 9:23-25.

2. Jesus asked questions to challenge false ideas. Jesus lived in a religious culture in which false ideas flourished—and so do we. He challenged these ideas by asking questions. In Lk 13:1-2 Jesus challenged the Jewish understanding of suffering. Any type of suffering was thought to be a direct result of sin (see John 9). Following a report of a tragedy involving some Galileans, Jesus challenged Jewish false assumptions by asking, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?" His question forced listeners to reconsider their current view. Other examples of challenge questions can be found in Mt. 15:1-3 and 16:13-15. Such questions confront our traditional, and sometimes wrong, views of God.

3. Jesus asked questions to deepen our faith. Often Jesus prefaced a miracle with a question, such as, "Do you want to get well?" It seems like a preposterous thing to ask? Perhaps Jesus intended to help the person identify the object of his or her faith, and, in so doing, to deepen that person's faith in Him. Jesus also asked faith-building questions after episodes that demonstrated a lack of faith. In Mt. 14:31, for example, Jesus rescued Peter from his water-walk, then asked, "Why did you doubt?" That question had to ring in Peter's ears for the rest of his life and probably helped him through many other challenging situations.

How to Do this Study

Validating Questions	Challenge Questions	Faith Questions
Question: <i>What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?</i> Mt 16:26	Question: <i>And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?</i> Mt 15:3	Question: <i>Who touched you?</i> Lk 8:45
Step 1: Find the statement being validated. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Mt. 16:24	Step 1: Identify the false ideas being challenged. Tradition is more binding than the law of God.	Step 1: Determine the content of the question. A woman suffering from bleeding reaches out to touch the edge of Jesus' cloak and is healed.
Step 2: List potential objections to the statement. This sounds painful. Why must I deny myself? What could be better than gaining the whole world?	Step 2: Discuss the reasons for these false ideas. Tradition provides stability. Tradition allows us to avoid difficult decisions.	Step 2: Determine the question's significance. Jesus has not come just to heal but to develop relationships with people of faith.
Step 3: Describe how the objections are resolved. The payoff is far greater than the	Step 3: Arrive at the clearer understanding. Traditions need to	Step 3: Ask how the question deepens faith. The woman is assured that Jesus loves her

¹ Catteau, T.D. (1997). The Questions of Jesus. Discipleship Journal, 100, 24-25.

sacrifice. No earthly pleasure is worth cashing in your soul.	be abandoned if they conflict with God's law.	enough to seek her out. A relationship with Him is more important than healing.
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20 Questions

1. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust... (Mt 7:3)
2. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? (Mt 7:9)
3. Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? (Mt 12:48)
4. How long shall I put up with you? (Mt 17:17)
5. Which is greater: the gold, or the temple? (Mt 23:17)
6. How many loaves do you have? (Mk 8:5)
7. Who do you say I am? (Mk 8:29)
8. Why do you call me good? (Mk 10:18)
9. Why are you bothering her? (Mk 14:6)
10. Why have you forsaken me? (Mk 15:34)
11. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? (Lk 6:32)
12. Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? (Lk 6:46)
13. Were not all ten cleansed? (Lk 17:17)
14. What do you want me to do for you? (Lk 18:40)
15. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things...? (Lk 24:26)
16. Will you give me a drink? (Jn 4:7)
17. You do not want to leave too, do you? (Jn 6:67)
18. Woman, where are they? (Jn 8:10)
19. Are there not twelve hours of daylight? (Jn 11:9)
20. Shall I not drink...? (Jn 18:11)