



Laying the Foundation for this Study

- 30 minutes with Jesus – if you had 30 minutes alone with Jesus, what would you ask Him?
- We all question God, but the problem is that we very often ask questions that do not matter.
- The beautiful thing is, we really can spend 30 minutes alone with God. We can ask Him anything!
- Wide-open communication with God was made possible through Jesus' ultimate sacrifice (see Matthew 27). God tore the veil in the Temple from top to bottom, the veil through which only the priest previously could enter. There is no longer anything that can keep us from direct access to God.
- This means we can approach God boldly (Hebrews 4:16). Not timidly, not fearfully. Boldly!
- The “tough questions” are not ones that I ask you or that you ask yourself. They are questions to be directed straight to God.

This Journey Started with a Simple Question

- “God, are You pleased with me?” Have we asked God that question? If not, why not? We ask others such as bosses or family members how things are going and how we are doing. Why would we not ask routinely God that same question? What other questions should we be asking but we never have?
- An iron-clad guarantee – when the serious heart approaches God for wisdom, God will not remain silent. He will answer!

What is a Tough Question?

- A tough question is not one to which God does not know the answer. A tough question is one to which we might not want to know the answer. But if we dare to ask God the question, and if we dare to apply the answer... Life will never be the same.
- An easy question is, “God, will you give me a pay raise?” Or “God, will you give me some sort of financial blessing?” It is easy because it requires us to do nothing. WE are merely asking GOD to do something. A tough question is, “God, are you proud of my attitude towards money?” Do you see the world of difference? The tough question invites God to take the gloves off and deal with us in a very critical area.
- Another example: “Am I having an affair?” That should be a very easy question! A tough question however is, “God, am I sexually pure?” This is a completely different and much higher standard! Matthew 5:27-28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
- The easy question dumps it all on God. The tough question requires us to exercise some spiritual maturity to even ask the question. And it requires even greater maturity to do something with the answer God provides.

Can We Really Question God?

- Some of us have been taught that it is dangerous to question God, perhaps even sinful. They may point to Job 38 where God answered Job “from the eye of a violent storm” (38:1, MSG) after Job dared to question Him.
- How we were taught may still influence the nature of the questions we are willing to ask God. If there are artificial or unscriptural structures preventing us from asking the questions that matter, we will destroy them.
- Contrast what happened with Mary and Zechariah when they both questioned the angel Gabriel:
 - The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in Luke 1:28-38 to say that a child would be born. Mary asked, “How can this be?” God responded with love, grace, and affirmation.
 - The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah the priest in Luke 1:11-19 to say that a child would be born. Zechariah asked, “How can this be?” God responded sharply, striking Zechariah mute until the child was born.
- Here are two virtually identical questions, yet two very different responses. So can we question God or not?
- **The problem is not the question, but the heart that produces it.**
- Matthew 12:34 says, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks,” and it is the heart that God ultimately hears, not how we phrase the question. So ask away!
- James 1:5-7 “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”

Discussion Questions

- Were you taught that you could or could not question God? If you were taught that we should not question God, where did those attitudes come from? One way or another, in hindsight could you point to a scriptural foundation that birthed those attitudes, or would you now say that’s just how you were taught?
- What is the importance of our attitude when we come to God with a question? Do you think our attitude influences God’s response?
- What stood out to you most as you considered the strikingly similar accounts of Mary and Zechariah and how God responded so differently?
- What are the typical questions you ask God? Are they more along the lines of, “Lord help me to just make it through the day?” or do they focus more on lasting wisdom? Is it necessarily bad that we focus so much on asking God for our “daily bread”? After all, that is indeed the basic model Jesus gave us in The Lord’s Prayer. But should we stop there?
- “Homework” – would you be willing to spend a bit of time this coming week considering the types of questions you normally ask God? Would you consider expanding them to include more “tough questions”?