



Quick Review: 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.
- God wants us to bring our questions to Him, but too often we ask questions that do not really matter. *Let us ask the kinds of questions that build relationships with Him – His heart’s desire!*
- “Tough questions” are not ones that I ask you or that you ask yourself. They are questions to be directed straight to God. And it is God who provides the answer.

“God, Do I Trust You?”

- On the trip up Mt. Sinai in pitch darkness, Brian Cutshall noted that his group was totally safe because they kept their focus on their guide who knew what he was doing.
- Sometimes God chooses to keep us *completely* in the dark until we are into a situation so deep that we cannot turn back. If we had been able to see 100% of the way, the temptation to run in the opposite direction would be too great. And we would miss out on some of God’s glorious benefits!
- The fact that God keeps us in the dark sometimes is never a reflection on our ability to trust Him – sometimes He also hides things that would be distractions to us so that our focus can remain in the right place.
- One of the key places we must learn to trust God more is in the area of our finances. Look at what Jesus said of the widow as she placed an offering into the Temple treasury in Mark chapter 12 verse 44 – she gave “all she had to live on” – literally her last penny. She trusted that even though her primary source of income was gone and she was giving away the little bit that she had left – she believed God would show up. Do we have that same trust?
- The tithe requires a special type of trust because it is the “first fruit” – we are to return to God the *first* part of our income. It entails a greater level of trust because in the natural, we do not know what will be “left over” and so we trust God by returning what is rightfully His, even before we know what’s going to happen later in the week or month as our bills and obligations come due.
- Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! ***Try it! Put me to the test!*** Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. Malachi 3:10-13 (NLT, emphasis added.)
- Malachi 3:10-13 is God’s “double-dog dare” to each of us. It is a promise loaded with explosive potential that we cannot afford to ignore. How He chooses to bless each of us will vary, but He will be true to His Word in this area – that is a guarantee.

- It is said that those who tithe tend to refer to themselves as “blessed”, whereas those who do not tithe tend to constantly say they never have enough, no matter what they do, how many jobs they take, or how hard they try. *Blessed or never having enough*. PICK ONE. This is our personal choice!

“God, Do You Trust Me?”

- “Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person’s heart” John 2:23-25 (NLT).
- How soon would some of these same crowds who fawned over Jesus’ miracles turn completely against Him and shout those terrible words, “Crucify Him!” Jesus knew they could not be trusted even if they at times seemed to say and believe the right things.
- Now look at the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25, especially verse 21 where the Master commended the servant for a job well done:
 - ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’ (NLT)
 - His master commended him: ‘Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.’ (Message)
- In the above verse, look at how The Message translation renders it, painting a picture of partnership with the Master, inferring a very real, dynamic, and growing trust that the Master places in us. How do we become “partners” with God? By taking action and using our resources faithfully and with purpose. This includes our time, our talents, and our treasures.
- It is through taking action, rather than through intellectual belief, that makes the difference. James 2:19 explains, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” (NKJV) But belief alone gets us nowhere.

Discussion Questions

- What evidence could we present that we trust God or that our trust in God is growing?
- Do you have your own miracle(s) where you trusted God and He provided for you?
- What has been the hardest area or situation in life to trust God? What made that so difficult?
- In John chapter 22 Jesus performed miraculous signs in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration and many people put their trust in Him. But Jesus knew He could not return that trust. What parallels do you see between the people of Jerusalem back then and the people of America today?
 - Food for thought - if you saw the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, do you remember the scene called the “leap of faith” where it looked like he had to step off a cliff into sheer nothingness, but in reality there was an invisible path in front of him that led him to the treasure? Looking back, it was an easy thing, he just had to put one foot in front of the other. This week, let us look back and consider how God has kept us safe in so many ways and how He has brought us through some excruciating trials, perhaps even some of our own making. He has proven Himself to be trustworthy in every matter. Thank Him for being with us during those times, and resolve to trust Him even more!