



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 answers.
- He will not remain silent when we seek Him.

A summary of the typical characteristics of “tough questions”:

- They focus on relationships, not things. Do we want to know GOD or do we want to know ANSWERS? Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 – “seek first the kingdom of God, and all these other things will be added unto you.”
- They invite God to speak in a very specific area of our lives.
- They encourage us to grow in our spiritual maturity.
- They inherently acknowledge the goodness of God. Fear has no place!
- They are bold. God honors the bold. He smiles upon a tough question.

“God, How Well Do I Respond to the Needs of Others?”

- Proverbs 14:31 says, “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” I cover this question tonight because it reminds me so much of Life Church and how your first response when you see a deep need is to give.
- Pastor Shell says it best: Missions and giving are part of the DNA of this church.
- (Reading the dramatization of Mark chapter 5 covering the demon-possessed man whose dire situation just continued to get worse – until Jesus stepped in.)

“Why?”

- Intro to the question – some examples of what is a very simple but often very loaded question that we ask God when we are deeply hurt or deeply angry.
- The irony of the “Why” question is that on the surface it does not meet at least one of the criteria for a tough question, which pertains to spiritual maturity. So it is merely an easy question, right? But when we are dealing with the most excruciating situations in our lives, this is the question we bring to God most fervently and desperately. There is nothing easy about it.
- What can we learn from the “Why” question? Three things:
 1. Remember it is perfectly okay to ask God this question, in spite of our hurt and anger.

2. We can give ourselves permission to ask this question without questioning our underlying faith. God knows what we are going through and He knows our humanity. **God is God, and no question will faze Him. On the contrary, each sincere question gives Him the opportunity He's been waiting for to pull us just a little closer.**
 3. Go ahead and ask "Why?" **But do not stop at Why.** Make sure the Why question gives birth to an infinitely more important one: "God, my life is still in Your hands, and You knew this would happen. So God, what do You need me to do now?"
- If we stop at the "Why?" question we invite bitterness and depression; it becomes a perpetual roadblock that the enemy can use to constantly get us to question God's goodness and faithfulness. We have to move past "Why?"
 - Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
 - Three final thoughts on the "Why?" question:
 1. Will we trust Him even if He lets bad things happen?
 2. Will we love Him even if He decides not to explain Himself?
 3. Will we follow Him even if He doesn't write the destination on the board?
 - And if you ever get to a point where you are not even sure what question to ask, just remember this one: God, what question should I be asking you?

Discussion Questions:

- Consider the question, "do we want to know *God* or do we want to know *answers*?" How does the discipline of asking "tough questions" enable us to draw closer to God?
- Recognizing that God always knows our underlying motives when we bring a question to Him, how do you think He might respond differently if our motive is to satisfy a curiosity versus seeking genuine, godly wisdom?
- Do you feel that asking questions in and of itself causes you to grow closer to someone? Why or why not?
- Thinking in the natural, imagine trying to build a serious relationship with someone if the #1 ground rule was, "You may never ask any questions". Could it even be done?
- Looking back over the Scriptures, thoughts, and questions covered during this series, what has stood out or impacted you the most?

Beth Moore said, "Life shouldn't be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather, to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly shouting, 'Wow! What a ride! Thank You, Lord!'"

The challenge to you is to go for it! Run with this and take God at His Word, that He will give you the ride of your life.