

Asking the “Right” Questions (and getting the “right” answers)

Policemen, lawyers, judges, and parents (who often have to be all three) all know a simple but important truth: **To get the *right answers*, you usually have to ask the *right questions*.** In the spiritual realm, the trouble is that we don’t usually ask ourselves the *right questions!* Such as:

- **Does *this*** (whatever *this* is) **please me or please God?** “It” will likely *please me*, otherwise I wouldn’t be considering it; but will it *please God*? There is a definite challenge involved with “*trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord*” (Eph.5:19), but perhaps the greater obstacle comes afterwards... that is **deciding to DO** what *pleases God* if/when “it” doesn’t necessarily *please ME*.
- **Do I really believe (and trust) that God knows what is best/right better than I do?** Unfortunately, we sometimes have a “Yeah, but...” attitude toward God/His Word. How so? We either read or someone shows us what God’s word says about what “I” should do/not do in a particular situation, and we reply with “Yeah, but...” and by the way, what ever follows is **irrelative**. Remember and reinforce as needed a couple of passages in these regards: “*a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his own steps,*” Jer.10:23; “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,*’ declares the Lord. ‘*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts,*” Isa.55:8-9; and, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding,*” Prov.3:5.
- **Do I really believe (and trust) that God knows when is best/right better than I do?** We live in “right now” time and are “instant gratification” people. So, if God doesn’t do what we think He should *when* we think He should, we are unwilling to patiently wait. Therefore, “*Am I willing to wait for His time?*” becomes the right question to not only ask, but to **answer in the affirmative**. Note some passages from the Psalms regarding this: “*Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord*” (27:14); “*Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him*” (37:7a); “*I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope*” (130:5).
- **Do I really believe (and trust) that God knows how is best better than I do?** Are we, even our dealings with God, “my way or the highway” type people? It sounds ridiculous to even consider dictating to God the terms of our relationship with Him. But isn’t that exactly what we attempt to do? Don’t we insist on believing, obeying, worshiping, and serving Him only on “my” terms... if such doesn’t interfere with “my” life too much... or contradict “my” way of thinking or “my” personal needs/wants or likes/dislikes? We need to remember: **Who created whom? Who sustains whom? Who serves whom? Who judges whom?** A “reality check” is order, surely! When/if our “god” becomes *our own “appetite,”* then we are “*enemies of the cross of Christ,*” our “*glory*” is in our “*shame,*” and our “*end is destruction*” because we have set our “*minds on earthly things,*” Phil.3:18-19. Search the Scripture to

find God's way, then *trust* that He knows best enough to follow it... even if you think you "know better" (because you don't).

- **Do I really want God's will or my will to be done?** Either in prayer and/or in life, desiring *God's will to be done*, even if, and especially if it differs from *my will* is an identifier of true submission. "Submission" (Greek *hupo* {under} + *tasso* {to order or arrange}) to *place oneself under the control of another*. If we pray and live in such a way as to expect... or perhaps demand, that God simply "rubber stamps" our requests and ways, then we have "submission" **exactly backwards**. Furthermore, if such is the case, we also have failed in regards to all of the previous points! Remember, "*God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit therefore to God,*" Jas.4:6b-7a.

This list of the "right" questions could go on and on, but perhaps these five can serve as a basis for your continued consideration. Thus, we return to where we began: Getting the "right" answers often depends on asking the "right" questions. If we really want the truth about ourselves and our "relationship" with and to God, a brutally honest, seriously intense, and perhaps even brutally painful look into that *mirror of the soul- "the perfect law, the law of liberty"* (cf. Jas.1:23-25), is required... otherwise, we may be just merely *deluding ourselves*, Jas.1:22. Are you willing to sincerely ask (and answer!) these kinds of "right" questions? It's the only way I know to get the "right" answers. (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)