

Matt Rawlins^{PhD}

A little book that's yours to give away.

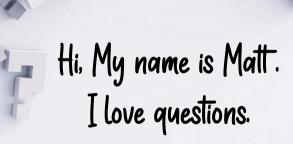
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I haven't always loved questions. When I was in first grade, the school I attended gave me an IQ test.

My score said I was borderline Mentally Retarded.

My initials M R seemed appropriate. I was frustrated with school for many years. It wasn't because I lacked the ability, it was because I questioned things.

For example: My sixth grade teacher said the moon didn't come out during the day.

I questioned her because I had seen it before. I finally walked out of class to find the moon and prove she was wrong. I didn't learn much in school I just did the minimum. When I got to college, I got frustrated and finally

In my earlier ebook I wrote on my struggle with tension and uncertainty.

What I didn't tell you was one of the skills I developed in the midst of all that uncertainty was a very useful skill

I had to learn how to ask questions.

Slowly, this need became a passion.

In addition, I fell in love with God and discovered something wonderful about Him.

I found it in Genesis 3.

It was sparked by a question:

What is the first thing God did after we humans rebelled and created a broken world?

The almighty King of the Universe walks into the Garden where His beloved children are hiding in fear and...

He asks questions.

⁸ They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Genesis 3:8-11

R E F L E C T I O N

Does God need to ask questions?



Why? It fascinated me.

Butfirstwe mustlook at the questions He asks.

3 Questions

After years of reading and rereading the whole Bible. I was stunned to realise the importance of the such as are the been the word to such as a function of the such as a funct

years. He has been trying to get us to understand and answer them.

Here are the three questions.



It is a question about Context.

God is not asking, which tree are you hiding behind as if He didn't know. Context.

How you frame something to understand it's meaning.

Like a jigsaw puzzle: by looking at only one piece you can't tell what part of the puzzle picture it is. Only by seeing all the pieces together can we know for sure how that one piece fits.

The picture gives you a context to know where the single piece belongs.

Darkness removes the context.

¹⁹ "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.
²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

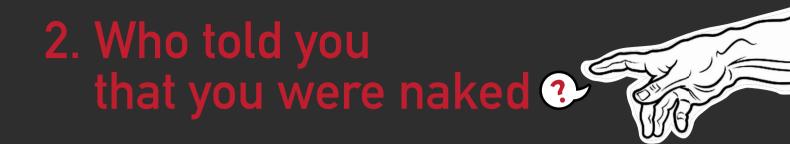
John 3: 19-20

Spiritual darkness:

Is a refusal to define the meaning of our life based on a context of God at the center of it. Every parent has walked into a context where their child is doing something they know they shouldn't be doing.

Without the parent's presence, their child could justify their actions, but as soon as the parent shows up, the context of the situation is radically different and they know they are in trouble.

DARKNESS = creating a context where I can justify my values, beliefs and choices.



Who are you listening to?

Truth is relational It is always referenced and found in and through relationship.

The deeper meaning of the word "obedience" actually listening.

İS

Because we are made in His image, God has given us freedom to make choices.

That includes the authority to govern our own lives.

But He has established other authorities, and He recognises we need wisdom from others. They know what we don't know and can help us. God has delegated authority to three institutions. God delegates to people the choice of who and how they want to be governed.

Purpose: To create and maintain justice for as many as possible.

The Church

A community of believers who model the truths of God.

Purpose: To be God's voice to a dark world.

Family

A mutual authority in the man and wife to create a safe place to grow a family in intimacy. Purpose: Intimacy and safety for understanding vulnerable and safe relationships.

Strangely

Neither Adam nor Eve answered the "Who told you that you were naked" question.

It seems too painful for them to face.



3. Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat ?

The third and final question. We now come to choices, stewardship and the need for personal accountability.

I must give an account of my life.

Purpose: personal responsibility.

PLEASE NOTE:

Until you have clarified the context and who has what authority, personal responsibility is confusing at best and irrelevant at its worst.



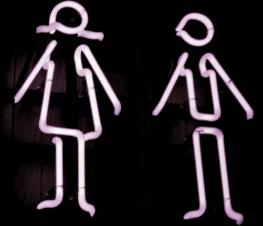
How'd Adam and Eve do?

They defined their own context (outside of God) and tried to avoid the light.

They were silent and didn't expose their new relationship with the devil.

Adam had the audacity to blame God. Eve blamed the devil.

They don't take responsibility for the actions.



REFLECTION Whose presence defines life? Who are you talking and listening to? Who has your ear? In light of the above, what are you stewarding?

What do you consider is "my responsibility?"

Welcome to a

New World.

MARDLY

Where humanity refuses to define the context of life with God at the center of it.

Where everyone and anyone claims authority and refuses God's.

Where everyone is a victim and refuses any sense of their own responsibility for who they are.

WHY does God ask questions?

God models. or lives out everything HE asks us to do.

What does God do with all His power?

God uses it to creates space for us to grow.

dership 101

In essence He empowers us.

Leaders ask questions to empower those they are serving.

Let's look at some examples of God doing this in Scripture

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What is that in your hand?

Exodus 4:2



Moses has a "stick" in his hand and God is going to use it to take on the largest army of the day.

God desires you to use what you have. Not what others think you should have or what you want to have.

He is a realist and works with what is in your hands.

Questions are how we "OWN" something.



If you can't ask questions, you will never own the outcome.

God's priority is for us to own (steward) our life, our world and what we have in our hands.

Questions are how we think.

You can't think. Learn, discover or even be curious without questions.

God is a rational God and knows that all thinking will eventually lead to Him.

Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?

Haggai 1:4

The Jewish exiles who have returned from Babylon soon forget God and His role in their nation. They have put their own ease and comfort above the task of rebuilding a space for God. Questions are how we maintain and deepen our relationships.



God is for the richest quality of life and invites us into that depth with him. The way we do this is through asking each other questions.

Questions form the basis of creativity.



? We are made in the image of a creative God.

One of the ways we create is by questioning and using the questions to explore.

? What if...?

God loves creativity and invites us into that with the use of questions.

What are you doing here, Elijah? 1 Kings 19:9

The king's wife, Jezebel, has vowed to kill Elijah.

The prophet has just had a great victory over her pagan priests, but he starts feeling sorry for himself over her new threat.

In his weariness and confusion, Elijah loses perspective on who God is. He runs off and hides in a cave. Even at our lowest point, The Lord pursues us with hope and comfort. Questions are an expression of transparency and vulnerability.



God knows, but he wants us to discover and so makes room for us to question.

God is the most transparent and vulnerable being in the universe. He invites us to model Him.

Why is it that you have fallen on your face?

Joshua 7:10

The foolishness of one man causes Joshua to question his leadership.

God sets him straight. Yes, one of his men stole something. Yes, it needs to be dealt with. But that is no reason to think you are a failure.

Your spiritual anguish won't change it. Get up and deal with it.

Questions define how we resolve conflict.



If you go into a conflict, knowing all the answers, it doesn't solve the conflict.

Two people who are feuding must discover truths together for a conflict to be solved. God's priority is relationship. He wants us to have the same priority.

You may know the answer, but you must create a space for them to discover it for themselves.

Can these bones live?

Ezekiel 37:3

In a valley of bones where there is only death, we are confronted with our frailty and limitations.

God asks the question of life and shows the prophet what He can and is going to do.

Questions sometimes challenge "reality."

Questions create a focus.



If you want to change someone's focus, all you have to do is help them change the questions they are asking.

> What's wrong with me? changed to What can I learn from this?

> > Creates a very different focus.

Do you have good reason to be angry?

Jonah 4:4

God forgives the Ninevites and Jonah is angry.

He is more concerned about his image as a prophet than the people of the city.

CO SAME OF COM

It is almost as if God is saying, "Come let us reason together." This process requires questions.

Questions are a part of leadership.



? God is encouraging Jonah to look at his motives in this.

He models to all leaders that asking questions is vital to a healthy model of who God is in them.

Leaders ask difficult questions to get to the heart of the issue.

Why are you crying out to Me?

Exodus 14:15



Moses sees the Red Sea before and the Egyptians behind him. Can you hear him crying out, "Oh God. Oh God. Oh God. Help! Help me! Help us!. Please..."

Moses knew where they were going and what they needed to do. He just needed to move forward and God would meet them as they stepped out in faith.

Questions affect/reveal how you feel.

We are not thinking creatures that feel We are feeling creatures that think. HOUR Feelings is

Working with your feelings is vital to who we were made to be. One of the ways you learn to work with your feelings is by realising the power of questions and how they affect your feelings.

? God has feelings and wants us to enjoy them, not be trapped by them.

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Job 38:2

Job has brought out his argument and wants to stand toe-to-toe with God as if God is his peer and is accountable to him.

Once Job gets a small taste of God's vast greatness he realises his mistake and is undone.

Job's pain and argument have a lot of emotions in them.

Questions change what we hold in our mind.



Our little minds can only hold so much information. The brain spends time trying to figure out what information it doesn't need.

One of the ways it does this is by realising you don't care about something because you are not asking questions about it.

7 What you are questioning, the mind will keep for you.

The question Jesus most frequently asked in all four Gospels is,

"What do you want me to do for you?"



What a beautiful example of Jesus amongst us to serve us and meet us where we are.

Whatever you need in your life, Jesus will meet you there and touch you where you are hurting.

He hopes as a result you will then walk into greater light of who God is and how much He loves you.

Questions invite help.



Asking a question is a way to invite people to help you or work with you on a project.

It is a way for you to communicate to them that you desire a relationship with them and their voice matters to you.

? God has done this with us from the beginning.

Questions empower us.



When someone asks me a question, I feel empowered. It is like an invitation to something richer and deeper that we can discover together.

When a leader asks a question, they are looking to empower those they question.

Who do people say that I am?

Mark 8:27

How open are people to what God is trying to do?

The names they use to define Jesus will represent the type of relationship they want to have with Him.

Prophet, Jew, Human, God, Saviour, Healer...

This is a question we all must answer.



The average four-year-old asks 437 questions a day.

What is a good question?



Notice I didn't say "right" question. A right question assumes there is only one "right" question. There are many ways to ask the same question.

What's the right question will only cause you to spend wasted energy to find "it".

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Matt 16:26

Sometimes He asks questions that are not easily answered.

We must value the internal work of God in our hearts or nothing we do really matters.

The most important thing is to keep Jesus as the most important thing.

A good question accomplishes its goal.



If the question gets you the information you need while maintaining a relationship, it is effective.

Too broad a question leaves a chance for the other person to respond in a 100 different ways.

Too narrow a question limits your chance to learn something you need to know...

Do you think I came to bring peace? Luke 12:49



Jesus is talking about being ready for God to show up. He wants them to be aware of what is going on around them.

He wants them to rethink their idea of peace and living in a broken world.



An effective question stimulates thinking.



🤁 Don't ask leading questions.

7 They are usually statements in disguise.

Like this one: What did you think of this fabulous ebook?

An effective question evidences listening.



I hear you. I will respond accordingly.

Don't get all ego - centered and engage others so you can tell them what you have done.

Why do you call me good?

Mark 10:17



Jesus goes to the heart of the issue.

All good things come from God. Either Jesus is God on display or there is no goodness in Him.





It can make people defensive because with it you are questioning their motive.

> You will notice on the previous page Jesus asks a very clear Why question.

Beware of lazy questions.



They usually start with Can, Will, Should, Could, Are, Is and end with a Yes or No answer.

They can easily polarise as they look for certainty.

They create boxes and often judgements.

? They require litte thinking.

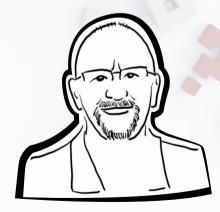
Confirmation, clarification and conclusions are the primary place for Yes or No questions.

R E F L E C T I O N

How are you at asking questions in the midst of tension?

What is one thing you could do to build this capacity in you?

Final Thoughts



We live in uncertain times. The skill we need most in these times is the ability to ask questions.

Christians should be able to teach the world how to ask questions because our Father has taught us how important it is.

S U M M A R Y

God models asking questions to us. He asks three questions to show us how to engage life. Where are you? Who told you ...? Have you eaten ...? Good questions require thinking and the discipline of self - examination. Leaders ask questions as a way to serve the people they are called to.



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Devotions for your mobile phone. It has daily devotions that will help you go deeper with God.

It is called: Broken Top

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Other books I wrote to help Christians deepen their relationship with God.

Rediscovering Reverence The path to intimacy

The Question Is God good to all?

The Namer How do I find my true identity?

Emails from Hell Evil schemes to undermine a leader Walked Naked into the Land of Uncertainty 5 keys for leadership into the unknown

Guardian A journey to the heart

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Emails from Heaven An angels advice to his young apprentice.

The Long Sacred Journey: Volume One Reflections along the way

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