

5 Questions worth Asking  
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Fact 1: I love my wife and kids; seeing them, spending time with them, doing stuff with them.

Fact 2: I was convinced that I was ready to be a parent.

Fact 3: I was not. (Note: All of these events are real.)

I thought I was a patient person... I am not.

"Brush your teeth" is not too much to ask

"10 minutes of looking up your own nose and making up a song about it... That tests my patience."

I thought I could handle stress... I cannot.

Well, I can handle simple stress. "like training for war and be responsible for men's lives and millions of dollars worth of equipment."

But I cannot handle the stress of getting a K and 2nd grader to school with their clothes on and homework.

I thought I liked answering questions... I do not.

I like simple questions... Like what's for breakfast? Why do you believe in God?

Some questions I do not like. Like when my son learns a word (rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_) from a friend... and decides to ask me what this word means... in the grocery store when I'm getting ready to pay for my groceries...

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Around 400 B.C. a man lived who was considered (by some) to be the most influential philosopher to ever live.

History tells us that he was a...

Poor, fat, short, unemployed, deadbeat dad, who apparently didn't care what anybody thought about him.

His name was Socrates and he is famous because he understood the power of questions.

Questions help us...

Not the cynical rude kind of questions...

...but the sincere truth-seeking questions

-Questions can solve problems.

-Questions can shift perspective and opinions.

-Questions can direct our thinking.

-Questions can help us create, empathize, focus, reflect and inspire.

The Bible is no stranger to the potency of questions. Every page, if read honestly, provides a torrent of them for the reader to ponder.

The Book of James is no exception.

Our goal this morning is to allow five questions to infiltrate our hearts and our minds that we might experience God through the power of His true Word.

James gives us five questions that are worth our time.

THESE ARE FIVE QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING...

Read James 1:19-26

The first question that James places in the hands of his readers is...

1) Do I listen? James 1:19-20

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. 20 For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

-Here James calls Christians to assess their "quickness"

"How quick do I hear"

This is not the "political" sort of "hearing" that formulates a response halfway through the conversation.

Example:

Reporter: Why do you think your policy wasn't successful.

Politician: Well, let's first go back and see what history shows... Policies have always been hard to implement.

Try using this sort of answer in real life.

Person a): Why would my husband say such mean things?

Person b): Well, let's talk about how many people have said mean things...

a) Quick to hear = can you take the time to truly empathize with those who disagree with you?

(Context = Persecution)

b) Slow to speak = are you ok with not "being right?" perhaps ever???

Sometimes it's better to be silent.

c) Slow to anger = it's as if James is inside my head...

I don't like it when people disagree with me.

I don't like it when I don't get to say "piece."

2) Do I receive the Scriptures (James 1:21)

21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James gives us a comparison...

Compare "filth and wickedness" is opposite the "receiving the Word with Meekness"

When was the last time I read the Scriptures & let them change me?

When was the last time someone tried to share the word of God with me and I let them?

Can you see that this passage is a violent assault on our attitudes?

3) Am I productive? (James 1:22-24)

This has nothing to do with how much you can get done at work or home...

This has to do with the product of the Scriptures...

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

Doer = An action taker... a maker... a performer...

Example: I'm fortunate to be able to help Coach at Scott's Gym.

I enjoy being healthy & I enjoy seeing other people "be healthy."

Healthy people move in a certain way & part of coaching is helping people to move better.

A Doer is someone who changes how they move so that they can move better...

The Scriptures are not merely there to make us feel a certain way or see things a certain way...

They are there to change us...

So foolish is using the Scriptures any other way that James makes a joke... "forgets what he looks like."

Do we read the Scriptures to change... to inspire us to act?

4) Do I persevere? (James 1:25)

25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

As Christians we... I have a bad habit of turning God into a superstition...

Example: Gary gets sick, asks me to preach, I pray for God's guidance. "please speak through me, God."

But, in the back of my mind, honestly, what I really mean (even if just a little bit.)

"Please Oh Please don't let me embarrass myself."

Sometimes things won't "work out."

The one who perseveres Hangs on to truth "Perfect Law"

The Believer who "acts" knows that there will be days when things may "feel" like a failure...

WE may be embarrassed... or worse (mocked)... or worse (torture) and it won't feel good at all. But the call on our lives is to "persevere" to press on because we know that far greater than our emotions or the condition is God's glory and His promised hope in Christ...

So even when everything in our being is saying this "feels" wrong... we cling to the "perfect law." And ask ourselves how should I act despite how I "Feel?"

5) Are my words restrained? (James 1:26)

26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

Religious = Devoted or Dedicated

Bridle - A harness that helps control power.

If we say whatever we want... for whatever reason we tell ourselves... we are not devoted or dedicated.

Example: Our culture values loud and obnoxious behavior.

We elevate statements like...

"So I told that guy!"

"So I said!"

"I don't care what people think!"

"I just say what's on my mind."

Our words are powerful and if we say we are devoted to Christ... We cannot just say "whatever we want."

I must "Harness" my words... not only so they don't destroy but so that they matter and communicate effectively... hopefully the Gospel that I say I believe.

Conclusion:

So this is a new year, and as a church family we have been through a lot.

So perhaps our resolution can begin with a desire to ask ourselves these five very worthwhile questions...

May we... be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.

May we... receive the Word of God and act.

May our words to each other and all we meet be harnessed so that when others see our hearts they see the heart of our savior Jesus Christ.