

QUESTIONS



“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

(Hebrews 11:1)

When we were children in grade school, we learned to identify parts of sentences and how to write stories by asking 5 questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? There was always an answer in what it was you were looking at but you just had to be asking the right question. As adults, we’ve grown out of the phase of our lives of needing to parse sentences even though we may still need to write a good paragraph from time to time and have it make sense.

Our need for answers to questions has not diminished; it’s only the focus of the questions that has changed. Instead of asking “who” is the subject of a sentence, we ask “who” am I or “who” is God? We ask “what” the purpose of my life is or “what” are God’s plans for me? We ask “when” will things turn out right or “when” will I know in what direction I’m supposed to go? Sometimes there are answers to those questions, especially in the physical realm. In the spiritual realm, however, there are seldom any answers to our questions. We are left asking but not getting much information that satisfies us.

I doubt there are very many of us who don’t ask questions of God from time to time. There are times He allows us to see what He’s doing in our lives and around us but most of the time we are to proceed by faith; faith that He knows what He’s doing and that He has our best interests at heart. In Genesis 12, God said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”

No explanation, no asking for Abram’s input or consent, just “Leave...” Abram was to leave everything that was familiar to him and embark on a journey to somewhere he had never been, following God without question, taking his whole family, his flocks, and his servants.

Apparently, he knew the answers to the most important questions:

- *Who? “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14)
- *What? The Creator of the Universe (Gen.1)
- *When? From everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2)
- *Where? Everywhere (Psalm 139)

The hardest question, though, and the one we struggle with the most is “why?” We have a deep need to know why things happen to those we love, to us, and to the world around us: to explain the unexplainable. No matter the degree of our faith, when something unexpected (and usually bad) comes into our life, our first response is always “why?” It may only be for an instant but, there it is....that question: Why me, why her, why them? Why did God choose to work that way in their lives but not in mine? Why did God heal her and not me? Why? Why? Why? There is never an answer that moves us from that questioning, frightened place to a place of understanding and peace. Whatever answer we come up with only leaves us with more questions. There is a vast chasm between the intellectual answers we have and the emotional/spiritual ones we need.

When my doctor gave me the news....those dreaded words....of colon cancer, I went straight to tears and fear. Minutes later (after the initial sobbing) I knew I had to at least say the words, “My life is in your hands, Father” even if they meant little to me at that point. I hadn’t had a chance to recover from the emotional trauma of an emergency appendectomy when I was suddenly faced with this terrifying specter on the horizon. I had always thought myself pretty strong but all that flew out the window at this new blow. In the midst of that though, there were the questions with no answers. “Did God allow me to have this appendicitis so the doctors could discover the cancer?” “What if....” “What will they find when they operate?” or “Surely God wouldn’t have me go through one surgery and then not the other....would He?” But the facts are irrefutable: The cancer was discovered as a result of the appendicitis. How amazing is that? I’ve always believed in the old saying, “God did it, I believe it, and that settles it!” but Wow! I don’t know that I’ve seen that worked out so clearly in my life before.

The questions are still there: “Why did God do this for me?” but there isn’t an answer except that God is God and can do whatever He wants in our lives. That doesn’t make Him arbitrary, ready to jerk good health away from us and keeping us guessing, but hopefully makes us cling harder to the faith that we’re given as a free gift from a Father who loves us. Maybe we need to ask new questions. Rather than “Why did God do this to me?” perhaps we need to ask ourselves “How can I know God more intimately through this?” **Hebrews 11:6** tells us that “**without faith it is impossible to please God.**” What does that mean? It simply means that God wants us to trust Him with our lives and those of the ones we love; trust Him without reservation or question, to believe that whatever He allows into our lives has gone through His hands first. Is that easy? No. Is it automatic? No. Do we still wonder? Yes. Are questions okay with God? Yes. But the bottom line always brings us back to “Who, what, when, where and why?”; questions Abraham found answers to that were enough....enough for him and enough for us.

Praise the Lord, you His angels,
you mighty ones who do His bidding, who obey His word.
Praise the Lord, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will.
Praise the Lord, all His works everywhere in His dominion.
Praise the Lord, O my soul.
Psalm 103:20-22

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