

God Is Not Threatened by Your Honest Questions

There's a reason we have books like Job and Ecclesiastes in the Bible.

God is not threatened by our honest questions, especially when it is our faith in His goodness that causes us to ask those questions. In fact, if the questions come from a sincere heart, He welcomes them.

After all, if you don't believe God exists, you won't have questions about why He allows so much suffering and pain. In the mind of an atheist, God is not even there, and so He can't be responsible for either good or evil.

Of course, suffering and pain are still a massive problem for an atheist. They're just not an overtly theological problem.

But if you believe God exists and understand Him to be all-good, all-powerful and all-knowing, then it's very possible (or even probable) that you will have some serious and difficult faith questions at some point (or points) during your walk with Him.

Do you think He is insensitive to your faith struggles? Do you think He scorns you for daring to question Him out of a broken heart? Doesn't the Word tell us that "He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14)?

It is true that many Christian leaders seem threatened by difficult questions. Perhaps they don't know how to answer them. Perhaps they are insecure in their own faith. Perhaps they perceive such questions to be dangerous. Perhaps they take your honest questions to be a direct challenge to their authority. (I encourage every pastor and leader reading this article to minister out of a place of deep security in God and

your calling. It will avoid a lot of casualties among your people, not to mention avoiding many unnecessary splits.)

To be totally candid with you, I virtually never go through faith struggles—meaning, struggles about God’s existence or goodness or questions about the truth of the gospel—but my wife, Nancy, came to faith as a hardcore atheist in 1974 (we were both 19 when we met, shortly before she became a believer), and she has sensitized me to the agonizing faith struggles that some people endure. (Of course, I go through my share of intense spiritual attacks, just not these kinds of attacks.)

As a Jewish believer in Jesus-Yeshua, I have been challenged by every imaginable Jewish objection from every conceivable angle, ultimately writing more than 1,500 pages of answers to Jewish objections to Jesus. I have certainly felt the depth and force of these objections!

But it is my studied opinion that unless we feel the weight of the objections that people are raising—be they the objections of atheists or liberal Christians or Muslims or religious Jews or Mormons—we cannot answer them adequately.

That’s why to this day, I mainly read the arguments of those I differ with as opposed to reading rebuttals to their arguments. In other words, as I’m presently working on a book entitled *Can You Be Gay and Christian?* I’m primarily reading the writings of those who claim to be “gay Christians,” wanting to understand their stories, wanting to see how they read the Word, wanting to see God and the church through their eyes before responding.

It is a painful process, but in the end it’s worth it, producing deeper insights, more relevant answers and greater compassion.

This was also the pattern for my college and university studies, as I was saved in 1971 at the age of 16 but never

thought about going to Bible college or seminary. That meant that in all my years of higher education, from bachelor's to master's to Ph.D., I never had a fellow believer as a professor. Not a single class. Not a single lecture.

Some of my professors were quite aggressive in their unbelief, but ultimately, listening to their attacks on the Scriptures (or on my beliefs in particular) forced me to dig deeper into the Word, into the biblical languages, into the relevant literature. And ultimately, all this served to strengthen my faith, since I was determined to follow the truth wherever it led, being confident that the God who saved me could withstand the closest scrutiny.

Now, asking honest questions during times of struggle and pain is not the same as grumbling or complaining, something for which our Father has little or no tolerance (remember the children of Israel in the wilderness!). And it is true that without faith, we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).

But often our heartfelt questions are an expression of faith, not unbelief, and while God may not give us the answer we seek, He will always give us Himself.

This week, on July 10, we launch our new TV broadcast on the NRB TV network, *Answering Your Toughest Questions*, beginning with a 32-week series on answering Jewish objections to Jesus. After that, we plan to tackle some of your most difficult, pressing faith questions.

Feel free to post them in the comments section here or to send them to my website—tough questions about the Bible, about God, about faith, about other religions, about life—and in the months ahead, we hope to answer many of these questions on the broadcast. (Don't forget that you can always call my radio show with any question on Fridays.)

I rest secure in Paul's words to the Corinthians: "For we cannot do anything against the truth, but for the truth" (2

Cor. 13:8), always remembering that our Rock is eternally unshakable (Deut. 32:4; 33:27).

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