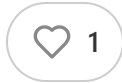


# God's questions are about His relationship with us (and our relationship with Him)

March 4-8, 2024 | Always Peachy Devotionals | God's Questions Week 1



AMY C. WILLIAMS  
MAR 03, 2024



## God knows everything. Right?

The Bible tells us that He is omniscient, which means He knows everything. He knows what we are going to think before we think it. He knew we were going to have that specific thought before He hung the Earth in space. Nothing is impossible for Him. Nothing is unknowable for Him.

### So why would He waste time asking us questions?

When I was young, I used to think that God was just sassy. I mean, He has a right to be sassy if He wants to be. (And sometimes I honestly think He is, although that's just my opinion. So many of His prophets and leaders have had a sassy streak, it makes sense that they'd share a sense of humor.) But the older I've gotten and the more relationships I've had with people, I began to realize **the value of authentic questions**.

I have a degree in journalism. I was trained how to ask good questions, the ones that get to the heart of a subject, the ones that aren't easy to answer. **Because that's where the story is**. A good question isn't an open-ended one, like a yes or a no answer. A good

question forces the answerer to dig deep into their own motivation and reasoning.

**Good questions reveal a person's nature, their character, and their heart.**

God welcomes questions. He invites us to ask Him questions because when we question, we are seeking for what is true. We are seeking to know Him better, to understand Him, to attempt to comprehend Who He Is and why He does things the way He does them. Frankly, not questioning verges on passive faith rather than the active variety that seeks to participate in what God is doing in our lives.

**So why can't it work the other way around?**

Why *wouldn't* God ask us questions that strike at the heart of what we believe? He wants a relationship with us, so of course He will seek to know us better. It doesn't matter that He already knows who we are. **Being invited into conversation is part of building a relationship with someone.**

Is God just sassy and rhetorical? Not at all. God doesn't ask the questions He does throughout Scripture because He's poking fun or irritated or sarcastic. When He questions us it's always about our hearts and His place in our lives.

That's what we're going to talk about throughout this whole month, the Questions God Asks Us. There are so many more questions than the ones I've pulled out of the Bible, so I encourage you to do your own study. But we're going to look at 20 questions God asks people and what we can learn about Him and about ourselves through them.

This week, we're going to look at **questions God asks that focus on our relationship with Him**. At least, these five questions are ones I feel are connected to relationship. You may read them differently, and I'm always interested to hear another Bible-based interpretation.

Here's what we're covering this week, as well as the references **in case you want to look them up yourself**:

- **Mar 4 - Accountability: "Who told you that you were naked?" (Genesis 3:10-11)**
- **Mar 5 - Guilt: "Where is your brother?" (Genesis 4:8-9)**

- **Mar 6 - Control: “Why did Sarah laugh?” (Genesis 18:13-14)**
- **Mar 7 - Peer Pressure: “Who are these men with you?” (Numbers 22:9)**
- **Mar 8 - Faith: “Do you want to be healed?” (John 5:6)**

I’m so excited to dig into these classic stories (well, and maybe one that isn’t so classic lol). If God can ask these questions of these heroes of the faith, He can absolutely ask us too. But what’s important to remember is that our answer to these questions doesn’t affect our salvation.

**If you know Jesus, you are safe.** If you trust that Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God, you don’t need to DO anything else but believe. God wanted a big family, and because of what Jesus did for us, He made it possible.

So for our memory verse this week, I thought **Romans 5:1** would be a good option:

Therefore, since we  
have been made right  
in God’s sight by faith,  
we have peace with  
God because of what  
Jesus Christ our Lord  
has done for us.

ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



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This is such a powerful verse with so much to unpack, but the two key elements that are the most important to grasp are that we have peace with God (we're made right with Him) by faith and that it's possible because of Jesus.

**Thank you, Lord, for Your salvation, Your unfailing love for us, and for Your daily presence in our lives.**

I hope you guys are ready to go deep with God this month. He wants to know you as a friend, intimately, personally, authentically. **So let's answer some questions.**

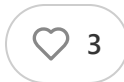
# Who told you that you were naked?

This question isn't about being naked. It's about taking personal responsibility for our choices rather than shifting the blame.



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# God's Questions



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***He [Adam] replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."***

***"Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" (Genesis 3:10-11)***



Have you ever watched a parent with a toddler? Listened to their conversations? It's a fascinating exercise, and I recommend it if you haven't tried it. Every time I see one of my friends interacting with their young children, I am always reminded of my relationship with God.

Always.

Did you take something that doesn't belong to you? Did you do that think I told you not to do? And so on and so forth.

Of course, the parents know. **Toddlers think they're really smooth and that they can conceal the rules they're breaking, and they're really not smooth about it at all.**

There are so many viral videos of little girls who have covered themselves in their mom's makeup but insist that they haven't. Yeah, it's kind of hard to believe that the tube of lipstick is responsible for covering your entire face in sultry red paste.

But that's what the question comes down to: **Responsibility.**

Did you do this thing?

It's a chance to come clean. It's an opportunity to acknowledge that you've done wrong, an opportunity to seek restoration with the person you've wronged.

I've often wondered how differently Genesis 3 would have played out if Adam had accepted responsibility instead of shifting it. Or if Eve had accepted responsibility instead of shifting it. But **humanity hasn't changed much in the thousands of years that have passed** since our first parents signed over the title deed of creation to our enemy. We still don't like taking responsibility when we screw things up.

Did you lie to someone?

Did you take something that didn't belong to you?

Did you intentional hurt another person?

Did you allow your pride to dictate your response to a situation rather than your love?

We all have. But what is your response when God asks you about it? Do you blame someone else? Or do you accept responsibility for your own choices?

God is so merciful and so gracious. There is nothing He won't forgive. There is no sin that is beyond the power of Jesus blood to wash away. **But if we refuse to acknowledge that we have sinned, God can't do anything with it.**

God desperately wants a relationship with you, but if we refuse to accept responsibility (and accountability) for our sins, there will forever be a self-built barrier between us and our heavenly Father.

When God tries to hold you to account for what you have done wrong, stop pointing fingers. Accept responsibility. Accept His forgiveness. **It won't just change your life, it will transform your perspective.**

## Questions for Reflection

What happens when we make a choice based on bad information?

Why do you think people dislike being held responsible for their failures?

Why do you think Adam chose to disobey God?

### *Weekly Memory Verse*

Therefore, since we  
have been made right  
in God's sight by faith,  
we have peace with  
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has done for us.

ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



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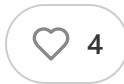
# Where is your brother?

This is the difference between Guilt and Conviction, and it is a very important distinction to understand in the Christian life.



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# God's Questions



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*One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. Afterward the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?" (Genesis 4:8-9)*





Death wasn't something that our first parents had experienced until they chose to disobey God in the Garden of Eden. Granted, the first death they encountered was the sheep God killed to make clothing for them ([Genesis 3:21](#)), but human death is different than an animal's death.

Abel's death is the first recorded human death in Scripture, and **it wasn't an accident**. It wasn't at the end of a very long life. It was premeditated murder at the hands of his older brother.

Once sin entered the world, it didn't take long for us to begin killing each other, did it? Truly the depravity of the human heart knows no limits.

### **Why does God react this way?**

An innocent man had been brutally killed because of another man's jealousy. And God just asks questions? Why would God question Cain like this? If I were God, I'd have just smited the guy where he stood.

We could say that it's for accountability, the same way God questioned Adam and Eve about their sin. But I think it goes beyond that.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they sinned against God Himself. Well, all sin is against God. But they disobeyed His direct instructions because they wanted to do things their own way.

What Cain did wasn't motivated by a desire to do things his own way. **His action was motivated by anger**. Now maybe he was angry at God and just took it out on Abel, but we can interpret from Scripture that Cain wanted to hurt his brother. He attacked him. He wanted to cause him pain. And there is **no indication in the following verses that he was ever sorry about it**. He only begged for mercy when God declared what his punishment would be.

We know from Scripture that there is no condemnation for those who know Jesus ([Romans 8:1-3](#)). God doesn't use guilt and shame to motivate us. When we've asked for forgiveness, He doesn't hold our sins against us. He puts them as far away as the east is

from the west ([Psalm 103:12](#)). **So why does it feel like God is trying to make Cain feel guilty?**

Is that what's happening here? Is God questioning Cain in order to make him understand his guilt? That he should feel guilty? That he should feel shame for what he's done?

Can we get really honest right now? **Because I think the answer is yes.**

In our stubbornness and pride, **sometimes we need to be reminded that what we have done is wrong.** Even if we meant our actions in the best possible way, sin is sin. It harms us. It harms others. It flies in the face of everything God has done for us, and if we refuse to call it sin, we are spitting on the cross.

When we go against God, when we do things that break God's heart, **we need to feel guilty.** We need to feel ashamed. And we need to run to Him and beg forgiveness, because He will give it every time.

**This is the difference between Guilt and Conviction,** and it is a very important distinction to understand in the Christian life.

When you experience conviction, **you will always know what to do.** There will always be a next step. There will always be a clear solution. Run to Jesus, sincerely acknowledge what you've done, and ask for forgiveness.

**Guilt is vague and fuzzy.** It's a lingering sense of unworthiness and isolation, and you can't identify what you're supposed to do with it. If that's what you're feeling, that's not from Jesus. Our enemy is also called the Accuser of the Brethren, and he will do anything to distract you, to tear you down, and keep you paralyzed in self-loathing. Ignore him.

But if you have sinned, don't shut God out. If God is asking you where your brother is, don't pretend you didn't hear him. Own up. Turn back to Him. Let go of your anger.

As long as you're still breathing, it's not too late.

## Questions for Reflection

- How would you describe the difference between Adam's sin and Cain's sin?
- When was a time when you experienced a vague sense of Guilt that had no solution?
- Why do you think God takes murder so seriously?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

Therefore, since we  
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has done for us.

ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



*#AlwaysPeachy*

# Why did Sarah laugh?

Nothing generates sarcasm like disappointed hopes and dreams, and if anyone had a reason to be sarcastic it was Sarah, the wife of Abraham. I'd be laughing too.



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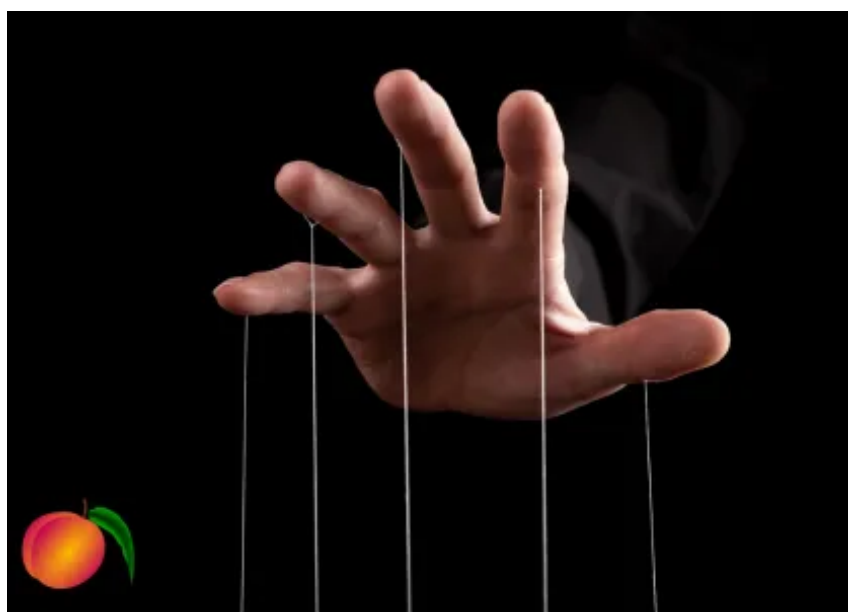
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# God's Questions

MARCH 2024



*Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." (Genesis 18:13-14)*



Have you ever had a friend who manipulated you? Or maybe you were in a relationship where the other person was a control freak? That's a tough friendship to maintain.

**Control freaks need a lot of love.** I can say that because I am one. Or maybe I should say I'm a recovering control freak. It's something the Lord has been working on in my life.

I have always been hard on poor old Sarah. Too hard, probably. This woman is acknowledged throughout Scripture as a hero. She even made the **Faith Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11:11**, so I've got no right to criticize her. Especially when I began to realize how similar we are.

I tell you, **nothing generates sarcasm like disappointed hopes and dreams.** Sarcasm can be really funny at times, but at its core usually stems from a broken heart. You had a dream. You took a risk. You failed. And rather than risk again, you turn it into a funny story that makes other people laugh.

I think that's what happened with Sarah. She was an old woman who had been dragged from one corner of the land to the next with her wild man of a husband who talked to a God nobody could see. She went along with it because she loved him, because what he had been promised was better than what she currently had. But years and years and years had passed, and that promise hadn't come true.

So what did Sarah do? Like any other resourceful, independent-minded, capable woman—she tried to solve the problem on her own (Genesis 16). The results were disastrous. They brought more heartbreak and conflict and distress within their home, and in the end she still didn't have a child of her own. The promise remained unfulfilled. And that's where we find her in Genesis 18.

I'm sure she still believed that Abraham believed, but placing her faith in Abraham wasn't working. And I don't blame her. I wouldn't have had faith in Abraham either. And then, God showed up. God Himself. Mind-blowing. He talked to Abraham and restated the promise, and Sarah overheard and laughed to herself. Because, seriously? How ridiculous!

And that was when God spoke to her directly. God hadn't talked to Sarah before. He'd only talked to Abraham. Sarah only heard about the promise through Abraham until that moment, and in that moment when God Himself asked her why she had laughed, she denied it.

Come on. Be honest. Wouldn't you?

God knew her thoughts. He knew her heart. He knew how she felt like her dreams would never come true, like every promise she'd believed in had fallen apart, like she was alone and unseen.

Just like that, God saw her. And we know from Hebrews ([Hebrews 11:11](#)) that **this was her moment of faith**. She believed Him. She'd tried it her way. She'd tried to control her circumstances in her own power, and she'd only made it worse. She believed that God was a better option.

So what are you trying to control today?

What promise of God's do you hear that makes you laugh or scoff?

What hope have you released because it's just not possible?

Maybe you're not laughing, but God's still asking you an important question. The same one He asked Sarah:

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Is that impossible thing you can't get through too much for Him? Are the shattered pieces of your dreams too tiny for Him to put back together again?

That's a rhetorical question, by the way. Nothing is too hard for God. Nothing. So don't give up on what God has promised you because it's too far outside your control.

My friend, that's the whole point.

# Questions for Reflection

- What is a circumstance or situation in your life that you would like to be able to control?
- Why do you think God has not allowed you control over that circumstance?
- How can you reconcile God being good when you understand that He doesn't always let you control your life?

## ***Weekly Memory Verse***

Therefore, since we  
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ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



*#AlwaysPeachy*

# Who are these men with you?

Balaam was a prophet--just not a prophet of God. His whole story is unusual, but we can learn something about peer pressure from him--and his talking donkey.



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God's Questions

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*That night God came to Balaam and asked him, "Who are these men visiting you?"  
(Numbers 22:9)*





Have you ever willingly gone somewhere with people you knew were bad influences? Yeah, how did that work out for you?

It's not that spending time with people who don't follow Jesus is wrong necessarily. We're supposed to be lights in the world, and we can't be a light if we don't have some exposure to darkness. **The issue comes when we allow those dark, worldly influences to affect why we make choices.**

This passage is a tricky one, and to be honest I'm not sure I'm interpreting it the best way. I've been studying it and researching it, but there's not a lot of information about it. **Balaam is just a curious guy in a strange situation ... and his donkey talks.** Like literally. That's not a figure of speech. His donkey actually speaks at one point in this story.

And since I'm sure that none of us are in the same position Balaam is in exactly — and I certainly know that the fuzzy little donkeys at the zoo haven't been sharing any secrets with you recently — **what is in this passage that has any bearing on our lives?**

There is so much happening in this passage that I am not qualified to explain. So much of it I don't understand. But what I do know is that **God had a question for Balaam.**

Balaam's story really isn't one that you can cherry pick. You have to understand the whole story to make heads or tails of it. His story is found in [Numbers 22-24](#) if you'd like to do your own research. But to put the whole thing in a nutshell, Balaam was a prophet. **It's just that he wasn't a prophet of God.** Yet, he wasn't a false prophet. God actually spoke to him.

**Bizarre.** And, frankly, a bit unusual. It's not often that God speaks to people who don't follow Him. There are other examples of times when God did this, but **it's not normal.**

The crux of the matter is that Balaam had been hired by the King of Moab to curse the Tribe of Israel as they passed through Moabite territory. Balaam knew this wasn't possible because God had declared it wouldn't happen. Whatever else we'll say about Balaam, he understood God's authority. **But he didn't tell the King of Moab this.** He led the King of Moab on until the price he was offered to curse Israel was enormous.

Balaam knew better. But **he wanted to get paid.**

Okay. We get that.

But why is God asking him to identify the men? Why is God asking him to explain who the King of Moab is?

I can't find a commentary entry on this (and I've been looking for a while), so I have to go with my gut on this one. **I think God was trying to get Balaam to think about what he was getting himself into.** Balaam was basically putting himself between an enemy king and the people God was protecting.

**That's not a place you want to be. Ever.**

Did he really know who he was throwing his lot in with? Did he really understand what he was stepping in the middle of?

Sometimes I think God asks us the same question about the people we hang out with. Who are those people? What do they believe? Why do you value their opinion? Why is what they're promising you worth more than what I've promised you?

Balaam knew the True God but had decided not to follow Him. This was his opportunity to change his tune, and **he still chose his own way** (even after his donkey lectured him about it).

Whether you know God or not, don't ever let anyone put you in between someone who God is blessing and someone who wants to hurt them. **You'll lose.** Once God has decided to bless someone, to show them favor, there's nothing that can stop that. There's nothing that can stop Him.

So the next time you think about trying to discourage or distract someone who God is using, consider Balaam. His plans backfired. Yours will too.

## Questions for Reflection

- Why is it so easy to give in to peer pressure?

- How have you seen negative influences alter your life or your friends' lives?
- Why is it comforting to know that our enemy needs to have God's permission to harm us?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

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ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



*#AlwaysPeachy*

# Do you want to be healed?

Sometimes we like our brokenness. We controlling own lives, even if we can't control anything. But, hey, if we crash and burn, at least we did it on our terms.



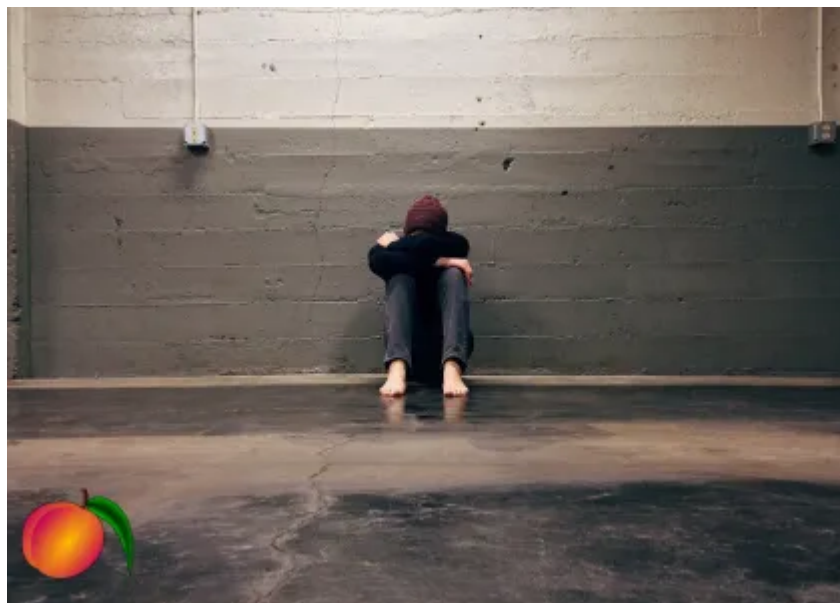
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*When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?" (John 5:6)*



Many years ago, on a mission's trip to the inner city of St. Louis, a student who I had mentored saw a homeless man on the street. He wanted to do something kind, so he went to Subway and bought a sandwich and a drink with his own money. And he took it to the homeless man.

The homeless man threw it away and shouted at him, demanding money rather than food.

It was a hard lesson for this young student to learn that **sometimes people don't want real help**. Or at least, they don't want the help they actually need. **They want help on their own terms**, whether it's beneficial or not.

When I was little, I couldn't understand how anyone could walk away from Jesus. He was all I knew. He'd been my best friend since I knew what a friend was, and it made no sense to me that people would choose to try to save themselves rather than accepting His gift of salvation.

Then I grew up a bit. And **there's something about gaining maturity as an adult that makes surrendering to Jesus so much harder** than when you're a child. Oh, when we're adults, we really want things our own way. And even when God offers a solution, we'll reject it because it would mean submitting to His way. Turning over authority and agency and freedom.

So it took me a long time to understand why Jesus would ask this poor man whether or not he wanted to be healed. The dude had been sick for years, 38 of them to be exact. Of course he wanted to be healed. He would have been an idiot to say no.

But as He often did, **I think Jesus was asking more than what's on the page**. His words were aimed at something deeper.

This guy had no reason to trust Him. He had no background or examples of who Jesus was. All he had was the superstitions of his time, and they hadn't worked for him.

The Amplified Version of this passage says the question is really more like "Are you really in earnest about getting well?"

Well? **Haven't you known people who say they want to be well, but they aren't willing to do anything about it?** They say they want to be healthy, but they aren't willing to live a healthy life?

Sometimes we don't want healing. **We want to stay miserable.** We want to wallow in our loss and grief because it distinguishes us. It makes us unique in some way.

It's the devil you know, right?

**Sometimes we like our brokenness.** We like having control over our own lives, even if we can't actually control anything. We convince ourselves that we do. And if we crash and burn, at least we did it our way.

But that way never works. It burns you up, wears you out, steals your joy. There's a better way.

**Do you want to be healed?**

Are you tired of trying to make it through life your way?

Will you trust Jesus and God's Way to satisfy you when it doesn't make sense that it should?

You have to reach the place where nothing the world has to offer is enough. You have to be honest in accepting that you can't change your circumstances, that you aren't strong enough to get through life on your own, and that your problems are too much for you.

**Until you are willing to stop going your own way and walk God's way, there won't be a relationship.**

Do you want to be healed?

I know Someone who can help.

## Questions for Reflection

- Why do you think it's easier to stay the way we are than to make a change in how we live?
- What was the tipping point for you when you decided that this world couldn't offer you answers?
- How has Jesus brought healing into your life?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

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ROMANS 5:1 (NLT)



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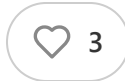
# God's questions make us think about His Identity

March 12-16, 2024 | Always Peachy Devotionals | God's Questions Week 2



AMY C. WILLIAMS

MAR 11, 2024



## Identity is a major issue facing our culture these days.

It seems that our entire world has lost its sense of self for varying reasons, although I suspect the primary cause is looking to define ourselves in things that change. **But have you ever wondered about God's identity?**

In most instances I think we refer to God's identity as His Character. It's who He is. And the way we know who He is comes from the Bible, which gives us example after example of God's actions, His choices, His desires, and His extreme creativity.

But in our study of the questions God asks, maybe it would be worth taking a step back to consider that **perhaps God is inviting us to experience His character on a deeper level.**

Something that always makes me smile about Jesus is how He so frequently answered a question with another question. As puny, finite-minded little humans, **our minds get stuck in a rut.** We like to think inside the box where we were raised. And, well, Jesus



created the box, and He can blow up the box whenever He feels like it—because He’s, you know, Jesus.

Sometimes that kind of answer makes you think again about your assumptions and your preconceived notions. Sometimes we need to be shaken out of the complacency where culture and our own expectations have put us, and we need to think about the question from Jesus’ point of view.

This week, we’re tackling **a set of questions Jesus and God asked people that I feel reveal a lot about His Identity** and cause us to second-guess our assumptions about who He is and what He wants.

- **Mar 12 - Truth: “Do you think I came to bring peace?” (Luke 12:49-53)**
- **Mar 13 - Relational “Who touched me?” (Luke 8:44-45)**
- **Mar 14 - Deserving: “Is it time for you to enjoy your houses while my house lies in ruins?” (Haggai 1:1-15)**
- **Mar 15 - Worthy: “Should I accept from you such offerings as these?” (Malachi 1:13)**
- **Mar 16 - Focus: “Was it really for me you were fasting?” (Zechariah 7:5)**

Remember, if you’d like [a complete list of the verses we’re studying this month, you can always download them.](#)

It’s so important to listen to what God tells us about Himself. Honestly, the Bible is our opportunity to get to know God on **a very personal level**. It’s His love letter to us, His direct words to us, sharing everything we need to know about who He is and how wonderful His plan is.

So when God introduces Himself, it’s probably a good idea to pay attention. That’s what led me to choose **Exodus 3:14** as our memory verse for this week.

God replied to  
Moses, “I AM WHO  
I AM. Say this to  
the people of Israel:  
I AM has sent me  
to you.”

EXODUS 3:14 (NLT)



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You may recognize this familiar passage from the Charlton Heston movie, *The Ten Commandments*. It's the scene with the burning bush, where God speaks to Moses and tells him to take off his sandals because he's on holy ground.

There are verses earlier in Scripture that indicate that people worshiped God by name ([Genesis 4:26](#)). So people knew God's name, or at least one of His names. But **this is the first time where God introduces Himself.**

I AM. YHVH. The Self-Existing One. That's who He is, God's Identity, and this week we're going to consider some of the questions God asks us. He wants us to know Him better, and He is inviting us to do just that.

**I'm ready. Are you?**

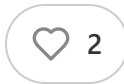
# Do you think I came to bring peace?

Understanding a question like requires knowing who Jesus is. Because as inconvenient and uncomfortable as it is, there's only one way to define God.



AMY C. WILLIAMS

MAR 11, 2024



*Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other! (Luke 12:51)*



God just wants us all to get along.

That's not a false statement exactly. For the most part, it's true. We know throughout the New Testament, specifically in the Apostle Paul's letters to the churches throughout the region, that God desires Unity between His people. The Church can't function the way God intended if we are constantly divided against each other.

So when you look back at what Jesus says in Luke, how can this statement be true? **If God wants us all unified, why did Jesus come to divide us?**

So much of understanding a question like this goes into **knowing who Jesus is**, who God is. Because as inconvenient and uncomfortable as it is, there is only one answer when you're looking to define God.

**God, and by extension Jesus, is Truth.** He is the Truth. **The Only Truth.** Truth, by its very nature, is exclusive. **There can't be more than one.**

I know we live in a culture that loves to claim individual truths, and while there are some semantics we can get lost in, the facts remain that there is only one Truth. And that is God. It's essential to His Identity, and it is the reason why Jesus makes people so angry.

**There is no other Way.** There is no other Explanation. There is no other Salvation. Only entirely exclusively Jesus. You can't add to Him. You can't subtract from Him. It's Him or nothing. **You can't go your own way and His way at the same time.**

Yes, God wants unity between and among His people, but people can't be God's People without Jesus. If you reject salvation by Christ alone, you are not one of God's children. That doesn't mean you can't be. But you cannot claim to follow Jesus and reject Him and all He stands for.

But isn't God Love too?

Of course, He is. God is Love, but God's Love is perfect and pure and holy and TRUE. And so is His justice. So is His wrath. He is all of that wrapped up into one unknowable, incomprehensible, unstoppable Creator.

If you believe that Jesus came to unify people, think again. **Jesus came to draw the line.** That's Who He Is. That doesn't make Him unloving. That doesn't make Him cruel. It makes Him the Only Way to be saved.

## Questions for Reflection

- How would you explain the difference between being Loving and being Truthful?
- Why do you think people get upset when Christians declare that Jesus is the only way to heaven?
- How is it possible for Jesus to love everyone yet still insist on obedience to God's Word?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

God replied to  
Moses, "I AM WHO  
I AM. Say this to  
the people of Israel:  
I AM has sent me  
to you."

EXODUS 3:14 (NLT)



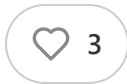
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# Who touched me?

Have you ever had an opportunity to meet one of your heroes? I did. It was a train wreck. Not literally, but it sure felt like one.



AMY C. WILLIAMS  
MAR 12, 2024 · PAID



ALWAYS PEACHY DEVOTIONALS

God's Questions



MARCH 2024

*Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped. "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you." (Luke 8:44-45)*



Have you ever had an opportunity to meet one of your heroes? I mean, one of the famous ones. How did that go for you?

I did, years ago. I had a chance to speak face to face with one my favorite authors, someone whose early work had changed my dreams about becoming an author. This guy made what I wanted to write seem possible, because if he could do it, maybe I could too.

It was a train wreck. I **couldn't speak. I was nearly in tears.** I just wanted him to understand what his work had meant to me, and instead of just saying that, I think I blubbered. **Poor guy probably thought I was nuts.**

We all have opportunities to talk to famous people face to face, but none of us have been able to talk to Jesus like that. Someday we will. But until then, we have interactions like this one in [Luke 8:40-48](#) to show us how Jesus responds to fans.

This woman had suffered. Because of her illness, she was constantly considered unclean. Like a leper. She couldn't be a part of regular, normal, everyday Jewish communities. She'd been cast out. Thrown away. However, somehow she'd heard [Malachi 4:2](#), that there would be a Messiah who came with "[healing in his wings.](#)"

That's what the fringe of a rabbi's robe was called, by the way. *Wings*. That's why she knew all she had to do was touch it and she'd be healed.

We know all that.

But why did Jesus ask this?

I mean, granted, it's funny because of Peter's answer. Oh, Peter. Always trying to explain how life works to Jesus. I adore him.

But seriously? Why did Jesus ask who had touched Him? Obviously, He already knew. And, yes, the whole crowd was pressing up against Him, but none of them were touching Him with intention. A casual brush against an arm was one thing; **this woman touched Him in faith**, believing that she only need that brief contact to be healed.

And she was healed.

Look, this woman believed that Jesus was Messiah. He was Salvation. He was God's Son, the promised King. She believed it, otherwise she wouldn't have touched Him.

### **But did she *know* Him?**

Did she understand that He offers healing freely, yes, **but He also wants to know her personally?** Not just as someone who needs Him but as someone who loves Him.

When she was willing to come forward and explain what had been wrong with her in front of the whole crowd and how just touching Jesus made her whole again, **Jesus called her *Daughter*.**

We can know and even believe that Jesus has the power to make our lives whole. And I think if we cling to Him in that belief, He'll heal us. **But knowing Jesus is so much more than that.**

He isn't a distant, impersonal, supernatural Savior. **He is our Friend. He is our Father. He's our family.** It's a fine line to walk between acknowledging Him as God while embracing Him as Brother. But He is both.

We know that He is our Friend, but friendship goes both ways. Don't you want to be His?

## Questions for Reflection

- How would you explain the way to regard Jesus as God and our Friend at the same time?
- Why do you think the Bleeding Woman was terrified to admit what she'd done?
- How does Jesus' response to her make you feel?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."

EXODUS 3:14 (NLT)



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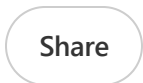
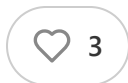


# Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins?

When did we begin to think that we deserved luxury while God could be satisfied with whatever was leftover?



AMY C. WILLIAMS  
MAR 13, 2024 · PAID



*This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: The people are saying, "The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord." Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: "Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? (Haggai 1:2-4)*



Haggai. Yes, we're going there. I don't think I've ever written anything on Haggai before, so we'll see how this goes. I may never do it again!

Haggai obviously isn't one of the better known books of the Old Testament. It's what's called a Minor Prophet, not because Haggai was less important than the Major Prophets (a.k.a. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc.) but because Haggai's book is very short. **It's quite small. But it packs a punch.**

As a speaker for God to Israel, Haggai confronted God's people about something they were doing that was making God unhappy. See, historically by this time, Israel had already been taken into captivity, and a remnant had been allowed to return to Jerusalem to start rebuilding.

And that's what they did. They built up walls. They built up houses. They built up the places of the city where their people could live in relative comfort again, even if they weren't technically a free people anymore.

But **what they hadn't rebuilt was the Temple. God's House.** The Temple had been the most important building for Israel. A building where God's presence could be approached. When Israel was wandering in the wilderness for forty years, they had the Tabernacle (basically an uber-tent). But when David was king of Israel, he wanted to build God a house. A permanent home. His son Solomon did just that.

And now that Israel had come back to Jerusalem after being in exile, they had a choice. They could build homes for themselves, or they could rebuild God's house.

Well, we know what they chose.

"Why are you living in luxurious houses why my house lies in ruins?"

That's a tough question, and I think it's a question that we all should think about. The answer reveals where our heart is in many situations.

And in our place in history, the Church Age, the question falls a little differently. Christ-followers don't have a Temple, per se. We carry the Holy Spirit with us. Our body is His Temple.

## **But doesn't that give us even more cause to examine this question?**

How is your Temple, by the way? Are you taking care of it? Are you being a good steward of the health God has given you? Or are you living a life of luxury and excess without caring for the health of your body, your mind, and your soul?

I think the root of this question comes down to God asking **if we realize who He is**. When did we begin to think that we deserved luxury while God could be satisfied with whatever was leftover? What happened to indicate that He was okay with that? Because He's not.

**It's not that He needs it. But doesn't He deserve it?** Why is it right for us to live indulgent, excessive lifestyles while we leave Him in the dark?

## Questions for Reflection

- If you had to explain who God is to someone who doesn't know Him, what would you tell them?
- Why is it so easy to focus on getting what we want rather than giving God what He deserves?
- What would need to change in your life so that your actions are in line with what you say you believe about God?

### ***Weekly Memory Verse***

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Moses, "I AM WHO  
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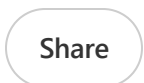
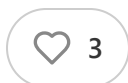
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# Should I accept from you such offerings as these?

God isn't being difficult or demanding. He's asking where your heart is. Because if your heart isn't in what you're trying to give Him, He's not interested.



AMY C. WILLIAMS  
MAR 14, 2024 · PAID



*"You say, 'It's too hard to serve the Lord,' and you turn up your noses at my commands," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?" asks the Lord. (Malachi 1:13)*



Many moons ago, I attended a conference where one of the speakers was giving a tribute to a guest. And, well, I guess it was a touching tribute, but **the speaker was so drunk that he mixed up his words**. And he wasn't exactly prepared. And—well, maybe it was the thought that counted.

And when it's a child giving a gift to a parent, that's one thing. Kids can make a masterpiece out of crayons and watercolors, and they are the stuff that decorates our fridges. As adults we're so thrilled to receive a gift like that from them.

But when you're an adult—when you know how to create something professional—and when you know what the expected standard is—**how does it work to under-deliver?**

When you know what your boss expects from you, and you refuse to do what they ask, what happens? When you know the law, and you choose to break it anyway, what happens?

What happens **if you know how** to create a work of art that's truly beautiful, and you want to make something to honor someone you admire. And instead you just swing by Hobby Lobby and grab a cheap wicker basket and fill it with candy. And if someone asks you why, you just say that **you were too busy to make something better**.

Is that really what you're saying? **Or are you saying that your friend isn't worth the effort?**

God had an agreement with the people of Israel. He offered them the blessings of a covenant relationship with Him. If they would keep His laws, follow His commandments, and honor Him as their Only God, He would bless them.

You know the story. Israel didn't hold up their end of the agreement. And it's not like God hadn't been clear with them about His expectations. God told them specifically what they were to do to honor Him, how they were to worship Him.

And they refused. They declared Him a cruel taskmaster. They told Him His expectations were too high, His judgments were too harsh, and His Laws were too unpopular. As far as God was concerned, the people of Israel had the attitude of "any old thing would do."

I wish I could tell you that's not me. I wish I could say I have always given God 110% of my effort, but that would be a lie. I've given God less than my best more often than I'd like to admit. In some of those instances, it really was the best I could do at the time, and God knew that. But at other times, I could have done better. And He knew that too.

**What God asks from us isn't too much.** What He asks from us is our attention, our hearts, our focus. All it takes is your best. Whatever your best looks like. And **your best will look different at different seasons, but what shape and form it takes is between you and God.**

God knows when you're only going halfway. And when He asks if He should accept a half-hearted offering, He isn't being sassy. He isn't being difficult. **He's asking where your heart is.** Because if your heart isn't in what you're trying to give Him, He's not interested.

## Questions for Reflection

- When was a time that you gave God less than your best effort?
- When you know someone is capable of doing something more, how does it make you feel for them to devote a half-hearted effort for you?
- Why do you think we blame God for being too hard to please?

### *Weekly Memory Verse*

God replied to  
Moses, "I AM WHO  
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the people of Israel:  
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EXODUS 3:14 (NLT)



#AlwaysPeachy

# Was it really for me you were fasting?

God isn't a God of busyness; He is a God of stillness. He is the God who invites us to quiet, to rest, to wait. Can you say truly that all your life's chaos is for Him?



AMY C. WILLIAMS  
MAR 15, 2024 · PAID



3



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ALWAYS PEACHY DEVOTIONALS

# God's Questions

MARCH 2024



*Say to all your people and your priests, 'During these seventy years of exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer and in early autumn, was it really for me that you were fasting?' (Zechariah 7:5)*



I like doing things my own way. I'm an American after all, and American culture encourages us to be resourceful, resilient, and independent. And, hey, there's nothing wrong with any of that. Free will is a right that begins with God. He made us with a conscience, with the ability to choose, to prioritize.

And I don't know about you guys, but I appreciate that. I'm busy. A lot busier than I ought to be probably, but such is life, right? So sometimes I end up multi-tasking.

Okay. Most of the time.

But here's a little tidbit I learned from a favorite boss of mine: **Multi-tasking is impossible.**

No one is actually able to do more than one thing at once. At least, you can't do it with **the same amount of focus**. When you try to do several things at the same time, your focus will always suffer.

But that's for work, right? Or for everyday life. This isn't something that has anything to do with our spiritual lives, is it?

Come on. How many of us can say we spend time with God without any outside distractions? How many of us set aside intentional time with the Lord to learn from Him, to listen to Him, to hear His voice?

It's pretty hard to hear God's voice when you have a whole lot of other voices going on around you. And, honestly, I think that's what God is asking His people here.

Maybe they were doing all sorts of other things while they were worshiping God. Maybe they were going grocery shopping. Maybe they were going on vacation. Maybe they were at work or at school, or—what about this—what if they were at church? Anything can distract you from listening to God. Anything can take the place in your mind and heart that God's supposed to inhabit—even church things.

So—all of those errands you need to run, all of those tasks you need to check off your list, all of those responsibilities that are on your shoulders—are they distracting you from truly focusing on God?



All of those really good things you're doing (and no one is saying they aren't good), are they what God has asked you to do? Or are they what you feel like you need to do? Are they what you think you have to do?

It's really easy to feel like God wants us to stay busy. There's something in us that feels better when we're busy, more accomplished, more in control. But that's an illusion. **God isn't a God of busyness; He is a God of stillness.** He is the God who invites us to quiet, to rest, to wait.

The next time you say yes to an overwhelming schedule, maybe you need to hear the question God asked His people: "Is it really for Me?"

## Questions for Reflection

- Why is it easier to be busy?
- What is it about a busy schedule that makes us feel like we are doing more for God?
- If God values stillness and rest so much, why do you think so many Christians are so busy all the time?

### *Weekly Memory Verse*

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Moses, "I AM WHO  
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the people of Israel:  
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