

Volume 2 – Day 1: The Only Important Questions

What questions matter in the grand scheme of things? We all have more of them than we can count. Yet, objectively, we could, if we so chose, eliminate most of them as irrelevant. Either they have already been answered and we are not satisfied with the answer, or they are irrelevant because any answer will suffice since their answer does not provide any added value to our experience of life.

So whether you have questions about religion, faith, spirituality and so forth, it would be advisable to eliminate any of the questions that produce nothing of value. This would apply to non spiritual questions as well. Why waste time pondering essentially useless curiosities? To that end, let us try to boil down spiritual questions to the most effective and useful ones.

Asking which religion is the best one, provides very little more than the realization that nearly all of them have the same ways and means to the same common end. For example, all religions of the world, including Christianity, promote teachings that aspire to a final connection and end in the presence of their particular *god*. The common teachings of all are somewhat moralistic and hold cultural morality as the highest order of importance. Again, even Christianity holds high this same banner. Interestingly, Jesus Christ is held by nearly every religion to be the greatest teacher or prophet of all time. So what questions could have any *value-add* associated with them?

As I see it, there are only two that are worth pondering for any length of time. These have both temporal and eternal consequences at stake. The first is, “Who is Jesus Christ, whose followers claim to be alive and well over two millennia after His crucifixion?” The second is, “How does my opinion of Jesus Christ affect my life?” The answers will determine the eternal destiny of every human life.

My Confirming Scriptures:

My Aligning Experiences:

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Volume 2 – Day 2: Your Map or the Official Map

“There are as many ways to God as there are religions in the world,” you may insist. Well, I must admit, your argument seems logical at first glance. However, there are myriad stories of men and women who would have been vastly rich, had they known that their land possessed valuable minerals beneath its surface. Yet, just because they did not ask the question, “Is there anything of value under my yard that might make me rich?” they remained poor. Since they did not ask the first question, they had no reason to ask the second one. If they had asked the first question and the answer to it was *yes*, then the second question would logically be, “What do I need to do to benefit from it?”

Again you raise your hand and with permission to speak, you say, “That’s foolish! The chances are so slim that there would be a *gold mine* under anyone’s property, the world would go mad if everyone began digging in their yard!” This seems logical as well. However, there is a distinct difference between the questions about highly improbable wealth in the yard and the questions about Jesus Christ. Let me restate the questions. The first is, “Who is Jesus Christ?” The second is, “How does my opinion of Jesus Christ affect my life?”

One difference between the questions about land value and the questions of eternal consequence is that there is a treasure map that has been published more widely than any other in the history of man for the eternal treasure. The treasure is a personal relationship with God. The map is the Holy Bible. Further the author of the map has clearly stated that if you will **follow** the map, He will insure that you **will find** the treasure.

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Volume 2 – Day 3: The Treasure and the Map

Like it or not, believe it or not, there is a treasure and a map. The treasure is intimate relationship with God and the map is the Bible. My knowledge or lack thereof does not change the facts. My ignorance is assured unless I choose to pursue knowledge. We are all innocently ignorant until we have been informed. However, once informed, we are just plain stupid if we continue to shout in contradiction to irrefutable evidence, “I still don’t believe it!”

And, to be sure, to ignore the evidence or not even seek such evidence is your option, always. However, with not only life but also eternity at stake, to simply ignore the evidence would border on insanity. Just pretending that something does not matter does not affect its significance

A significant difference between Christianity and all other world religions is this: the gods out there, that is all of the gods except the God of the Bible, require actions and attitudes consistent with recognition of the extreme superiority of the *god-being*. Only the God of the Bible offers human beings the opportunity to be in a genuinely affectionate, personal relationship with Himself! Herein is the rub. Herein is the truth as well. Every relationship is a *two person* choice. Both parties must accept the other’s invitation to be together and to care for each other. God has already chosen you! Why not choose Him back?

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Volume 2 – Day 4: What Have You Got to Lose

It befuddles me to notice the extremely high measure of resistance to God's offer to every person of an up-close-and-personal relationship with Himself. I see nothing to lose and everything to gain. Who, in their right mind, would not want God to be at least a BFF (best friend forever)?

But then this gives rise to the question that is foundational to every affectionate relationship. "Can my significant other be trusted?" And this seems to be the primary reason most humans do not engage God in a personal relationship. They have been convinced, wrongly I might add, that God wants perfect behaviors and attitudes. They have mostly believed that the treasure map will lead them to destruction in the hands of an angry *tyrant*, God. Unfortunately this is a very widely accepted view of God. Fortunately, there is an enormous amount of evidence to prove just the opposite.

Unless you are first willing to ask the two most important questions in human experience, you will be saying *no* to a proposition you never evaluated. That, my friend, is an irretrievable mistake. I would suggest that "It is better to be safe than sorry." One religious teacher said frequently, "If my faith in Jesus Christ proves to have been unnecessary on an eternal landscape, I have lost nothing. However, if what I believe about Jesus Christ is true, and you refuse to believe it yourself, you will suffer separation from God, forever!"

If you will not ponder the evidence, the question is already rendered irrelevant. But, if you consider all of the evidence revealing the facts about Jesus Christ, it is foolish to refuse to answer the second one. But, be advised, the second question is always answered and it is answered by every human being. No answer, is a "No!" answer.

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Volume 2 – Day 5: The Nature of Human Nature.

"Wherefore as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

This verse does not imply that God punished the human race for one man's sin; but that the motivation to sin, that is, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race by one man. Then "another Man (Jesus Christ) took on Him the sin of the human race and put it away." (Hebrews 9:26)

The motivation to sin is not the acts themselves (immorality and crime) but the tendency toward self-indulgence, self-promotion and self worship - I am my own god. This motivation may work out in high morality or in low immorality, but it has the single basis, my claim to my right to myself, that is, **my rights**. When Our Lord faced men with all the forces of **evil in them**, He did not pay any attention to the moral degradation of the one or to the moral attainment of the other. He looked at something we do not see, that is, the motive.

In the Cross of Jesus Christ, God redeemed the whole human race from the possibility of damnation by the heredity of personal evil (sin). God nowhere holds a man responsible for having the heredity of sin. The condemnation is not that I am born with a selfish nature. But when I realize Jesus Christ came to deliver me from its punishment, and I refuse to let Him do so, at that moment I seal my own damnation.

"And this is the judgment that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light." God does not condemn me, or anyone else to hell. We choose to bear our own penalty or agree with God to let Jesus be our substitute in condemnation.

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Volume 2 – Day 6: Don't Take the Baton from God

It is natural for Christians to try to understand God and try to know His ways. It is also natural for Christians to take action in anticipation of what we believe He's going to say. But God's desire is rather that we develop such a deep love for Him that we *do know* His thoughts and might even be able to finish His sentences. When and only when our affection for God is strong enough that we operate in unity with His desires, are we where He intends for us to be.

Our life is to God like a grand orchestra. He wants to be the conductor. He, and only He, knows the full concert and how each piece must cooperate with the others in order to create a great musical performance. Every instrument (circumstance) and every line (experience) in our lives will either produce harmony or discord. Whenever we stop watching Him or following Him, noise rather than music results.

Whenever we try to determine **what** we will do for God or the **manner** in which we will do it, we are actually working at cross purposes to the music He has in mind. We can't think ahead of him. We do not know the end of the concert or even the next movement. So in order to affect the symphonic harmony God desires, we must do as the Psalmist wrote and see every stroke of the baton as imperative. David said in Psalm 27, "Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path."

The truth is that God only needs to give us enough light to take one step. If we are not willing to take that one step, there's no need to provide any more light. You will not stumble if you are not moving. And you will not stumble if you keep your eye on the lighted path (or the conductor of the orchestra musically speaking).

Volume 2 – Day 7: The Essence of Christ Within

The essence of faith in Christ, the essence being a Christian (a ‘Christ-In’ as they were called at Antioch), the essence of becoming Christ-like is to be like Him in spirit and attitude. Jesus possessed from his very beginning an emptiness of self. There was a distinct absence of pride and a fullness of humility in Him. He was willing to introduce Himself at the lowest entry point into humanity. And He was willing to always be in a place of submission to those to whom He ministered. Even in His final moments, Jesus, the Master, the very Son of God would give His life to redeem us all.

The ultimate example of humility is written in Philippians 2:5-8 “Think of your selves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.” — Philippians 2:5-8 MSG. Jesus, who deserved all the praise and glory of every man, woman and child ever to exist, personified relationship at its finest!

At His final meal with His disciples, Jesus dropped down on His knees before each man and washed their feet. If the King of the universe can wash the feet of His disciples, we certainly should desire to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you consider any task to be beneath your dignity, this pride will prevent a deeply intimate and personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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