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Weekly Devotional

Tough Questions

by Mark A. Segraves

My son is almost seventeen and my daughter is rapidly approaching twelve, but I can still vividly recall when they would respond to every statement I made with the question: Why? A typical conversation would go like this: "Okay, we need to leave the park and go back home now." "Why?" "Because daddy has to go to work." "Why?" "Because daddy needs to make some money." "Why?" "So daddy can buy some groceries." "Why?" "Because if we don't have groceries, we'll get hungry?" "Why?" "BECAUSE OUR BODIES WERE DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN A HOMEOSTATIC BALANCE AND IF WE DON'T CONSUME CALORICALLY-RICH AND NUTRITIONALLY-HEALTHY FOODS WE WILL DIE A HORRIBLE DEATH!" Silence. Followed by: "Why?"

Sometimes, the simplest questions can be the most difficult, but if there is one thing all human beings have in common it is the ability to ask the simplest and the toughest questions. Much of the time, these questions are directed at God. "If you are a good God, why is there suffering in the world?" "If you are a good God, why did my loved one die?" "If you are a good God, why are you punishing me?" "Will the world really end in 2012?" "If I'm one of Your children, why don't I have a job yet!?" I'm sure all of these questions are important, but we often receive unsatisfying answers or ineffective solutions from well-meaning individuals. Over the next several weeks, we will take some time at LifeSong to wrestle with some of these important questions. I hope you can make it. But even if you can't, I hope you'll consider this: Is it possible that we're asking the wrong question? Are we asking why when we should be asking what? We want to know why something is happening in our life (after all, if we know why it is happening, maybe we can do something to stop it), but we should probably be asking, "What can I learn from this?"

Think about the story of Job in what is probably the oldest book of the Bible (written even before Genesis). After chapters of asking, "Why have I lost my family, my crops, my servants, my flocks, my herd and my health," God finally responds, but He doesn't seem to find it necessary to offer an explanation. Instead, He speaks from a whirlwind and says: "*Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?*" (Job 38:1-7, NLT).

The next time I'm tempted to ask God why, I think I'll try to remember that God is older than me, bigger than me, wiser than me, stronger than me and cares more about my well-being than I do! Instead of demanding an answer for why, I

feel challenged to ask: "What more can I learn about Him?" I have a feeling the answer to that question will cause the other questions to quickly evaporate.

Prayer: Awesome Answer, I don't always understand You, but I trust You! I will no longer demand a full understanding of the cause of my circumstances; I probably wouldn't understand anyway. Instead, I will pursue a more full understanding of You. Thank You for peace... In Jesus' name! Amen!

Point to Ponder: "Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers" (Anthony Robbins).



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