

The Questions of Life



Facing The Facts of Life

Life is made up of various progressive stages. Each stage poses us with many questions that need to be faced before we can proceed to the next stage. Failure to answer the questions of life is in essence failure to deal with the issues confronting the person at that stage of life.

There are many possible responses to the questions of life, each with its own potential consequences such as:

1. **Ignore:** Genuine ignorance is not a sin but to deliberately ignore questions is to reject outright the offers of life.
2. **Feign Ignorance:** those who feign ignorance are avoiding the responsibilities of life and thereby throwing away their chances for an enriching life / growth. The chief priests, scribes and

elders forfeited their privilege of getting answer to their questions because they feigned ignorance of Christ's question (Mark 11:27-33).

3. **Evade:** By evasion one forfeits the privileges and opportunities that life offers.
4. **Keep silent:** keeping silence is 'playing the ostrich game' (i.e. putting the head under the sand and hoping that the danger will pass). The disciples kept quiet when Jesus asked them what they were discussing about because they were ashamed / afraid of owning up to their folly (Mark 9:33,34).
5. **Providing wrong answers** prolongs the wilderness journey till the lessons of life and

faith have been learnt.

6. **Answer:** those who answer the questions of life face up to the challenges and responsibilities of life. When those questions are answered correctly, the result is progress to the next stage of life.
7. **Answer plus advise:** Joseph got promoted because he not only answered Pharaoh's questions but also advanced unsolicited advice on how to resolve the problems associated with the answer (Genesis 41:25-44).



The richness of life is revealed by the issues properly addressed, and the questions correctly answered.

Where Art Thou?

(Genesis 3:9)

Where you are in life today is a reflection of how you have so far answered the questions of life. Answering the questions of life correctly is synonymous to effectively dealing with the issues of life. A person remains a child until s/he begins to answer the questions of adulthood.

Success, promotion, revelation, riches, commendation, maturity, wisdom and treasures—just to mention the few, are the

outcome of answering the questions of life correctly.

Adam failed to deal correctly with the issues of life and hence missed reaching the point God expected him to be on that day—Hence the query “Adam, Where art thou?” How would Judas Iscariot have answered this question if he were asked on the night he left Jesus after the supper? Where are you today in relation to where God planned for you to be?

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Applicable Questions:

The focus in this newsletter is on a selection of few short questions from the Bible that could be interpreted and applied to various practical situations and circumstances of any life or person.

To gain the most from the content, imagine yourself standing in the presence of God and being presented with this barrage of questions. Assume that these questions are directed at you and have no reference to those in the Bible.

The School of Life

In educational institutions the combination of teaching and testing is regarded as training. Promotion and qualifications are awarded when the trainee has demonstrated (often through tests / examinations) that the lessons have been mastered. Theory and practice combines to determine progress.

God adopts similar principles to train and advance His children. However, this training does not usually take place in classrooms. God uses practical situations to test if we have learnt in practice what we have been previously taught in theory. Passing the tests of life brings divine promotion, but failure means we have to repeat the training for as long as it is necessary till the lessons are fully learnt.

God is not in a hurry about training. It took God two interludes of time each lasting for a period of 40 years to train Moses - the first in the palace, the next at the backside of the wilderness before he found him qualified to be used in the remaining 40 years of his life to lead the Children of Israel out of bondage to the promised land. This example also illustrates the fact that God places greater priority on training to get us into the right state prior to using us. If God is not in a hurry in His training programme, neither should we be in our learning programme. However, the quicker we learn, the earlier we would be ready for service and the more time we would have left to do exploits for God.

As students sometimes look sharp before examination, so also do believers sometimes feel super-spiritual until the



Divine training does not necessarily occur in schools but in practical normal activities and routines of life, and their tests often come unannounced.

tests of life reveal otherwise.

Our entire life on earth is God's training establishment. God will take us through various situations and circumstances to train and develop our characters but it is man's responsibility to cooperate with God in learning and retaining the lessons because the tests will certainly follow - and that, usually when least expected, and without a warning.

God already knows what the outcome of each test would be but if he were to tell us we would not believe. Like Peter we would argue vehemently till the outcome of the tests proves our arguments / confessions wrong (Luke 22:31-34,57-62). So really the purpose of divine tests is to prove to us who we actually are in reality.

Success, promotion and progress attain any one who passes divine tests which could cover different areas of life including:

1. **Deception of Prophets** - to establish how steadfast we would resist the deception of prophets while holding fast to the sound words of

God (Deuteronomy 13:1; I John 4:1; Hebrews 13:9).

2. **Difficulties in Poverty** - to know how much we are willing to endure for the course of Christ. God is able to supply all of man's needs but sometimes He waits a while to gauge our reactions (Deuteronomy 8:2,15-16; Psalm 91:7; Exodus 17:6,7).
3. **Delicacy of Prosperity** - In times poverty God tests our endurance but during prosperity he tests our faith (i.e. on how convinced you are of the God of the Bible). If you fail in both tests, you need to ask yourself "when will I ever pass God's tests?" (Exodus 16:4,16-27).
4. **Delay of Promises** - tests the believer's patience, calibre and love for God in times of delayed fulfilment of promises (Judges 2:21-23; 3:1; I Samuel 10:8; 13:5-14). Even when you are in charge, your patience and confidence in God can still be tested. It is terrible to fail this test - for if the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3).
5. **Days of Pressure** - tests and proves the commitment, tenacity and temperance of a believer (John 6:5,6; Amos 6:1).
6. **Decision on Priorities** - there are times God keeps silent as it were on important issues to test if we are capable of taking balanced decisions that reflect correct priorities. (2 Chronicles 32:22-31).

Who art Thou?

(John 8:25; II Kings 10:13)

Who are you? Jesus knew, accepted and boldly declared His identity despite intense opposition from those who would not accept it. This enabled Him achieve His mission in life. Ignorance of one's identity often result in a distorted self image, loss of confidence, a wrong philosophy in life, failure to live a fulfilled life / achieve our destiny. In a similar way, failure to accept our true identity results in confusion, disorientation, identity crises, unbalanced / uncoupled life and hypocrisy.

Do you know who you are and your roots? When man accepts the error that he evolved from a monkey, it makes him to behave like an animal and totally ignores his responsibilities towards God.

Many today are trying to be who they are not rather than face up to who they are. Some men are trying to become women and some women are trying to become men. Much time is wasted trying to emulate a role model rather than being satisfied to realising our God-given potentials. True liberty comes and real progress be-

Consider These Things:

- Where you are in life is a reflection of the questions / issues of life correctly addressed.
- Like the story of the Israelites in the old testament after their exodus from Egypt, many are wandering aimlessly in the wilderness of life on their way to nowhere for failing the tests of life and faith.
- The questions of life more often than not come through tests in practical life situations and circumstances.

gins when we stop trying to be and actually accept and fulfil our god-given roles in life (Galatians 6:3; I Corinthians 7:17-22).

What is thy name?

(Genesis 32:27)

Names are important. If it were not so God would not have had to change the names of Jacob to Israel, Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah and Simon to Peter, etc. As faith comes by hearing, so also does the meaning / value associated with names (person or town) get reinforced in our attitude and behaviours every time we call / or hear that name repeated; and if such meanings / values are negative they could have detrimental effects on the bearer and possibly the hearers as well.

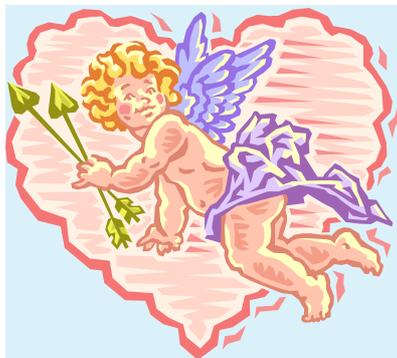
When God gave / changed names, He gave names that embodied the positive values / character He envisioned for such individuals and places. The repeated hearing of those names reinforced divine vision that enabled a fulfilment of divine will. Similarly, many bible names fulfilled their meaning in reality. For instance

1. Isaac meant 'laughter' and he brought great joy and laughter to the parents.
2. Barnabas meant 'son of consolation' and he brought tremendous consolation to believers in the early church.
3. On the contrary the name Nabal meant "folly" (I Samuel 25:25) and his actions were characterised by folly.

By extension we should expect that in contemporary times a person bearing the name of:

- Victor / Victory - should be victorious over sin, Satan, temptations and all negative circumstances of life.

- Courage - should act courageously in all situations of life.
- Mercy - should manifest lots of mercy in her interactions.



"Tell us we pray thee... What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou?" (Jonah 1:8).

- Comfort - should both enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit as well as be a source of comfort to others.

In Acts 11:26 we learn that the early disciples were first named Christians at Antioch because their lifestyles closely resembled that of Christ. The name Christian is generic and all believers answer to that name. Unfortunately, not every body who answers to this name reflect the true values and character of Christianity as did the early disciples. For example, a recent survey revealed that:

- (a) 18% of abortion patients claim that they are born again / evangelical Christians.
- (b) 90% of Christians are not committed

to practical Christian living.

- (c) There is very little difference in behaviour between the church and unchurched in such areas as lying, cheating and stealing, etc.

- * 91% lie regularly at work
- * 75% lie regularly to friends
- * 86% lie regularly to parents
- * 87% do not believe in the 10 commandments
- * 61% believe in premarital sex, etc.

These statistics raises a cause for concern as it reveals that many so called Christians do not even understand let alone live up to the meaning of their names. It is to such people that the Bible referred to in Romans 2:17-24 "... **Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?... thou that makest thy boast of the law through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of the God is blasphemed among the gentiles through you, as it is written**". In a nutshell, what is your name? And do you live up to the meaning of that name?

Definite questions demand definite answers, not just flimsy excuses! WHAT WOULD YOU ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS?

Whence comest thou?

(II Kings 5:25)

Though our past need not necessarily determine the future if there is a severance from all the negatives associated with it, yet where we are coming from could be as telling as where we are heading to.

In 2 Kings 5, Gehazi came and stood before Elisha as usual - as if nothing had happened. He lied when the man of God asked him of where he had been, because he was ashamed to disclose what had transpired while there. However, what he

tried to hide was already revealed to Elisha through the Holy Spirit.

So, when God, through the tests of life and faith asks you a similar question will you be unashamed to boldly and promptly narrate to Him all the places you have been and of all that transpired there today, this week, this month, this year and indeed, this life. Remember whatever man tries to hide on earth is an open scandal in heaven.

So when next there is a temptation to go

somewhere that is spiritually unhealthy or to be involved in some shady deeds, remember that even if nobody sees it **AN EYE IS WATCHING YOU!** As Gehazi was cursed, so too can you be if you are not careful of where you go and what you do. Blessings and curses are the choices we face depend-



"Is it a time to receive money, and ... Oliveyards and ... The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out ... a leper as white as snow." (2 Kings 5:26,27)

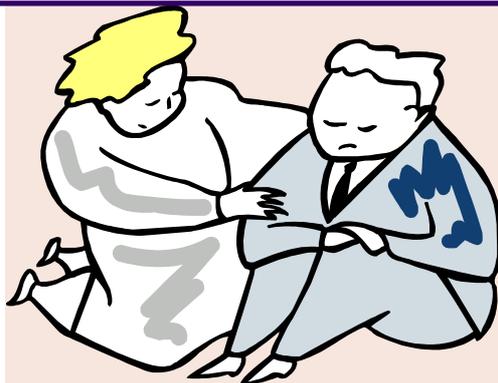
Who Brought Thee Hither?

(Judges 18:3)

The places, situations and circumstances we often find ourselves seldom come by accident. Often they are the culmination of a set of voluntary deliberations, decisions and actions.

In Judges 18, representatives from the tribe of the Danites found a Levite, not in service of the God of Israel who had called and separated them to a noble divine service but in the house of Micah serving as an idolatrous priest to one man. No wonder their question - *“who brought thee hither?”*.

This question is worth considering in all its ramifications. On one hand the Danites first question could be construed to imply *“Mr Levite, who brought you from temple / tabernacle worship into idol worship? Could you honestly say that the assignment / career that now occupy your time is the God ordained purpose for your life? Could you say you are at the right place that*



“When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, who brought thee hither? And what makest thou in this place? And what hast thou here?”

God assigned to you? Is it God that brought you into this partnership with an idolatrous Micah? Are you in the absolute perfect will of God? How clean are the methods you employed to

get to your current position in life?”.

In today’s culture of blame it is all too easy to blame all our mistakes, conditions, misfortunes and predicaments on others even where they are not responsible for them.

For some, the general tendency is to rationalise their predicaments with ‘fate’ or ‘circumstances beyond their control’. The homosexual is quick to attribute his / her orientation to a ‘genetic’ condition. The drug addict could explain away his / her addiction to cultural heritage. I am sure if asked, Judas could have attributed his betrayal of Jesus to a need for money. Honesty demands that we face up to the challenges of this question and retrace our steps for the better.

“The stations of life we get to are not accidents of nature but the product of vision, goals and plans that we have followed or failed to follow!”

Wither goest Thou?

(Zechariah 2:2)

The courage to ask questions will change your life if you are prepared to face up to their answers. Zechariah saw something he did not understand. Instead of pretending to know everything (as some would be inclined to do), he asked a question that led to the revelation of God’s plan for man. This question is important because it also forces us to develop a goal, vision and plan worth living for in life.

Life is like a journey into the unknown and goals are like maps & compass that

guides one safely to the desired destination. A life without goals is like undertaking a long journey without any clear destination in mind - any road that such a traveller takes leads to his / her destination (i.e. nowhere). It is like going around in circles spending much energy but effectively accomplishing nothing.

So, where are you heading to in this life? What is your vision for living? What goals are you pursuing towards the realisation of that vision? And what plans have you put in place to enable

you achieve your goals? Do you have a plan for today, this week, this month, this year, for 5, 10, 15 years time, etc? Do you carefully and periodically evaluate your plans to see whether they are effective?



“Run, speak to this young man saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited...” (Zechariah 2:4)

What Seekest Thou?

(Genesis 37:15)

Everybody is seeking for something but only a few know precisely what they are seeking for, why they are seeking for it and what difference it will make to them when they have found it.

In this passage, Joseph sought for his brethren to refresh them with fresh supplies from home, but his brethren were also seeking for him for the wrong reasons - to prevent the fulfilment of his dreams so that he will not rule over them. Joseph’s mission was in obedi-

ence to the father’s will but the brethren’s were the exact opposite - something utterly distasteful to the father’s will.

What are you seeking for and how does that fit into God’s plan for your life and for this world? It is not wrong to seek greatness. In many places God actually encourages it. But do you know that if your plans are not in line with that of God, it is possible to seek to build an empire for yourself in the very place that God is going to destroy shortly. Remember Lot! In search

for prosperity he settled in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13) and ultimately lost all that he laboured for and acquired in life (Genesis 18) when God judged the sins



“And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh....” (Jeremiah 45:5).

Whom Seek Ye?

(John 18:4,7)

Here in the Garden of Gethsemane, multitudes gathered 'seeking for Jesus'! Among the multitude was Judas, one of the 12 disciples. He was also seeking for Jesus, and indeed kissed Him (Jesus) when found; but the search and the kiss were all for a different reason compared to those of the other 11 disciples.

So it is very possible for someone to be seeking for the right things (money, job, wealth, life, health, promotion and even Jesus) but for the wrong reasons.

In John 6:24-69, multitudes followed Jesus for the wrong reasons. When Jesus admonished them to follow for better reasons many deserted Him, because what He offered them was different from what they expected - so they were disappointed.

Similarly today, many flock to



churches, evangelistic programmes, gospel crusades, healing and miracle services, etc. While some are genuinely seeking for an experience with God many are there for entirely different reasons - perhaps to sell their merchandise, gain cheap publicity, pass the time, do something different, meet friends or

just for the fun of it, etc.

As birds go to rivers - some to drink, others to fish, some to bath and some merely following others, so are many worshippers today.

Why are you a Christian? Why do you follow Jesus? Why do you belong to a Church? When you do go to Church, what is your motive? Are you genuinely looking for God and heaven or are you merely seeking for religious satisfaction?

The reasons behind actions often determine its 'modus operandi' and the outcome. In John 20:15-18, Mary sought Jesus for the right reasons and was amply rewarded by being the first to see the risen saviour.

What Aileth Thee?

(II Kings 6:28)

Aileth is an old English word connoting trouble, feeling unwell, etc. Thus this question could be rephrased as "What is your problem?" or "What troubles you?"

This woman was in tears and deep sorrow. When the king asked her what her problems were, she was able to describe

exactly what has been troubling her. The famine in the land was terrible but the king perceived that this woman's problem was probably beyond the immediate concerns of the famine that everyone experienced - hence the question.

The answer of the woman revealed that her problem have been compounded by the methods she had employed to solve the initial problem of famine. If we are not careful we may frequently find our-

selves in similar situations - that while trying to solve one problem (by using our human wisdom rather than following God's principles) we end up complicating matters.

Even now, examine the problems you currently have. Could it be that you have unwittingly contributed to them while you were perhaps genuinely attempting to solve them?

What Meaneth This?

(Acts 2:12)

"And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12).

What happened in the upper room at Jerusalem on this glorious morning was truly amazing - at least to the 'uninitiated', who did not know that prophecy was being literally fulfilled in their sight.

But it is also interesting to note that these spectators doubted and questioned what had happened. Genuine doubt and questioning are part of the guidance

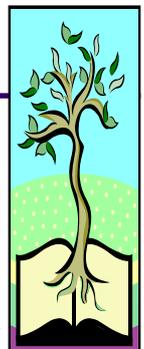
systems that God has given man as an aid to avoid dangers of wrong decisions.

In response, Peter did not condemn, dismiss or explain away their doubts and questions, but rather painstakingly showed from the scriptures the fulfilment of prophecy. Their doubts were fully addressed and their questions adequately answered. This resulted in the salvation of about 3000 souls.

There are things that must be taken by faith and there are those that deserve adequate explanation substantiated with

scriptures. The challenge to modern day Christianity is that dubious practices and questionable dogmas are all expected to be accepted by their followers by faith.

If challenged can you give Bible supported answers to your practices, styles, doctrines, ordinances, etc that clears all doubt?



"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..." (Acts 2:16-

How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions?

(I Kings 18:21)

Joel 3:14 talks of “multitudes in the valley of decision”. In this world today multitudes have sunk into the ‘valley’ of unpleasant experiences and backwardness because of indecision.

Elijah confronted this bunch of Israelites on their indecision and they answered nothing. Perhaps they first wanted to watch the contest and see who will win (whether God or Baal; Elijah or Ahab) before deciding for the winning side. Infact this is what they eventually did. When the fire came down from heaven they all shouted and proclaimed allegiance to the God of Israel.

Decisions that are based on external circumstances and miraculous experiences only often produce ‘miracle babies’ whose faith are not deeply rooted in the undiluted word of God. Spiritual



“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (I Kings 18:21)

maturity brings one into a position where his / her faith is not based on experiences but on the infallible word of God.

The world is full of multitudes in the valley of indecision. Many of these are Christians who frequently attend churches and claim to worship and serve God with all their heart but they find it extremely difficult to draw a line between

- (1) God and the occult
- (2) Holiness and worldliness
- (3) Faith and fantasy
- (4) Commitment and compromise
- (5) Transformation and conformity
- (6) Service and sensuality, etc.

This situation is encouraged by the trick of Satan through a subtle desire to appear ‘religiously correct’ and / or create a facade of unity and broadmindedness.

Tozer was right when he remarked that in times like these, what the church needs is not more ‘unity’ but ‘wise divisions’ based on full commitment to God and total obedience to his commandments, including the Great Commission, which for many has become the Great Omission.

Why Stand We In Jeopardy Every Hour?

(I Corinthians 15:30)

Many are undecided not because the facts are not clear and compelling but because they hope that perhaps by chance their indecision may enable them to enjoy the best of both worlds - it does not work like that with God!

God wants everyone to be clearly decisive - either hot or cold (Revelations 3:15-16). Any service rendered with a divided heart is classed as faulty by God (Hosea 10:2). A prayer that is offered with a double mind receives no answer from God (James 1:5-8). It may be fashionable in this world to adopt a

compromised position and appear to be accommodating to all sort of ideologies, beliefs, practices and orientations, etc but when it comes to issues of life and spiritually, indecision is the cancer that destroys life. The current trend may be encouraged by the modern concept of relativity, sponsored by the occult, where nothing is absolute but only relative to what one thinks are the outcomes. With God, the end does not

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Corinthians 15:19)

always justify the means.

Life is too short to be wasted in the valley of indecision. Let us examine the facts carefully and take the right decision for God. To be ashamed of God in this life paves the way for a rejection by God in eternity (Mark 8:36-38).

It is impossible to qualify for eternity in heaven and hell at the same time!

Why Stand Ye Here All Day Idle?

(Matthew 20:6)

An undecided person will invariably be an idle soul as their indecision will inhibit profitable action when the right opportunities present themselves. Though idle, they will always have loads of explanations and justifications for their condition.

Most idle people are extremely busy doing nothing! Their schedules are filled with useless activities that add practically no value to their life on earth

nor the one in eternity. The useless activities that fill their timetables blocks out the time that could have been allocated to valuable activities with profitable outcomes.

Have you ever sat down to analyse how you spend every minute of your last one hour? Extending the analysis to the whole day, week, month, year etc could yield uncomfortable surprises, but it is the type of surprises which if addressed,

could reorder ones priorities and eliminate all of the idleness that wastes life?

The greatest danger is to continue with the ‘status quo’. It is very easy to find explanation for failures and inconsistencies.



“... Because no man has hired us...” (Matthew 20:6)

How Shall This Be....?

(Luke 1:34)

The angel has just given Mary a promise that looked too good to be true. Mary was a firm believer in God but this promise seemed to stretch the level of her faith - hence her question. A person can believe in God and yet lack faith to enjoy divine provisions. God attested to Zechariah's righteousness and yet Zechariah lacked the faith to believe in God's ability to answer his prayers. He earned divine judgement that made him dumb till he saw the performance of the promises of God in his life.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is the channel for receiving from God. Sometimes our faith appears so strong until we are



"For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37)

faced with the realities of believing God for the impossible.

To Mary it sounded unrealistic that God should bypass the natural laws and give a virgin a child - hence her question **"How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"** This is often the reason that many cannot manifest strong faith in God. When God gives a promise, they try to figure out how naturally, scientifically, technologically, psychologically, etc God would bring it to pass. We need to remind ourselves that there are certain things that belong to the realm of faith and

those that belong to the realm of reason. As water complements oil in the sustenance of life and yet the two never mix together to form a homogenous solution, so also do faith and reason to spiritual life. Faith is not opposed to reasoning but faith has the potentials to transcend the boundaries of intellectual reasoning and bring to reality the substance of our belief.

When next God promises you something and the devil tempts you to ask **"How shall this be...?"** remember the answer that the angel gave to Mary **"The Holy Ghost...For with God nothing shall be impossible"** (Luke 1:35,37). Yes, whenever true faith is manifested, it brings the Holy Spirit into the scene - to bring to pass that for which we are believing God for.

Is There Any Thing Too Hard For Me?

(Jeremiah 32:27)

Sometimes what we profess and practice could be worlds apart from our level of faith in God especially in the face of adverse circumstances.

Jeremiah obeyed God and bought lands but the approaching destructive army made him wonder whether God's promised would be eventually materialised. Following his surmising, God asked him this pertinent question (which equally applies to all believers today) -

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: Is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).

It does help to remember that Jehovah is the God of all flesh. He created the entire world and sustains it by His power. He resurrected Jesus from the death and caused Him to ascend up to heaven against all natural laws. The power that performed all these is still operating today for the benefit of believ-

ers. In the face of adverse or hopeless circumstances let us rely on the faithful promise **"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** (Romans 8:32).

"Who art Thou O great mountain ? before Zerubbabel! Thou shalt become a plain" (Zechariah 4:7)

Is The Lord's Hand Waxed Short?

(Numbers 11:23)

It is often rendered in songs that "God has the whole world in His hands". A commentator once said that Christians usually lie when they do not believe and practice what they profess in songs. Moses was no exception to this. He obviously would have joined the singing by the jubilant crowd after the parting of the Red Sea after destruction of the Egyptian army. He has seen the power, provision and miracles of God almost on a daily basis but when God answered his prayers and promised to supply

enough flesh to satisfy the cravings of the Israelites by the following day, Moses fell into the same mistake we often fall into - that of trying to figure out by intellectual reasoning how God would do it. At a time he ought to have relied on the past faithfulness of God, he rather



God has the whole world in his hands

relied on his reasoning power.

Often we face similar situations when the needs for our lives, family, career, ministry far outweighs the limits of our resources. When God promises to provide in such situations, we must be careful not to ask the foolish question **"If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?"** (2 Kings 7:2). This individual saw but did not partake in the fulfilment of God's prophecy (2 Kings 7:18-20).

Can These Bones Live?

(Ezekiel 37:3)

When faced with dilemma and perplexities, our natural reactions and responses reveals where our faith level is. In a vision, Ezekiel was brought to a valley full of dry bones. He saw the condition of the dead dry bones and knew what the implications were. God then asked him a difficult question to which Ezekiel gave an answer that reflected his confidence in God.

If he were asked a similar question by man, perhaps his answer would have been different. His understanding of divine ability made him give an answer that left the prerogative to God on possible outcome. One thing we should note from this is that when we give a correct answer to God, He (God) will follow it up with a test, to confirm if the answer came from the head or heart. It is one thing to give a correct answer and it is

entirely another thing to support that answer with appropriate corresponding practical action!

Peter answered Jesus correctly on each of the three times he asked him 'Do you love me more than these?' (John 21:15-17). However, when Jesus commanded "Follow me" Peter looked around, and with reference to John, responded "Lord, and what shall this man do?" (John 21:20,21). This response revealed the inadequacy of his previous answers.

It can work the other way also like when a person asks a question



"And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest." (Ezekiel 3:7).

and fail to implement the answer given. For instance, a rich young ruler asked how to gain eternal life. On hearing the answer he ran away sorrowful because he was not willing to shoulder the associated responsibilities (John 18:18-27).

In the case of Ezekiel he passed the test by obeying subsequent instructions. The eventual outcome - the dead dry bones becoming a mighty army reminds us of the fact that God can do any thing!

If we are willing to follow divine instructions step by step, we will equally witness the resurrection of our 'dead dry bones' (of lost hope, damaged prospects, destroyed visions, etc) again and again and again! For with God nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:37).

Wherefore Criest Thou Unto Me?

(Exodus 14:15)

Old habits die hard. In Egypt the Israelites were used to crying about every problem, and now after they have been delivered they are still crying over every obstacle! When the commandment to go out has been given by God, it is no more time for crying but rather, it is time to march on to possess the promised land.

Let's consider the scenario in this text. Israel have left Egypt under the direction of God but have now encountered the problem of the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army. Forgetting the past faithfulness of

God and His mandate, they cried out in desperation. This is a great lesson to all.

Every journey has its ups and downs. And whenever we forget the original divine mandate, we will be driven to despair in the current problems. Israel forgot that they were delivered from Egypt so as to possess the promised land and that the problems of the Red Sea and of Pharaoh's army could not frustrate the plan of God.

The disciples of Jesus were in a similar fate when they cried out to Jesus, fear-

"Shall I smite them?"

(II Kings 6:21)

ing they would perish in the stormy sea. This happened because they too forgot Christ's original command *"Let us go over unto the other side of the lake"* (Luke 8:22-26). Let us not forget that if God has commanded us to cross over, no storm can sink the boat till we have crossed over!

It is therefore important that we focus on the commands and the promises of God rather than on the problems of life. The solution to the problem is in our hands already - let's use it by faith.

Where Is Your Faith?

(Luke 8:25)

God gave us faith so that we can use it to solve the multifaceted problems and challenges of everyday life. A faith as small as the size of a mustard seed is all that the believer needs to remove every mountain of problem(s).

When we encounter a mountain, our actions and language reveal whether we are making use of our God given faith or not. Often believers resort to feelings and expect God to move the mountains, which He has already given the believer dele-

gated authority over.

There are things that belong to God but there are also those that God has delegated authority to the believer to handle by faith, but faith only works when it is exercised. A dormant faith is a dead faith. As the body without the spirit is dead so also is faith without works (i.e. corresponding actions).



"... what manner of man is this! For he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him" (Luke 8:25)

Challenging the early believers James said *"shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works"* (James 2:18).

So when next you come across a storm that challenges your progress Jesus is asking you **"WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?"** And you can only answer this by your actions!

How Readest Thou?

(Luke 10:26)

Have you ever wondered why two or more people with similar levels of ability and intelligent quotients studying the same course at the same institution, under similar instructors and using similar study materials graduate with different grades?

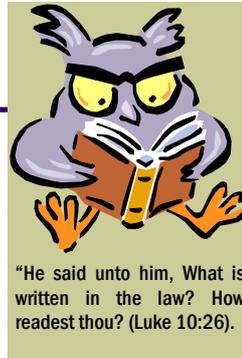
Have you ever asked yourself why it is that 12 disciples all received similar training with the Lord Jesus Christ over the same period of time and yet their achievements and productivities were all different? Indeed one became a betrayer of Jesus?

Does it bother you that all Christians on earth claim to serve the same Jesus Christ, aspire to get to the same heaven, read the same Bible, claim to be guided by the same Holy Spirit and yet we have so many denominations with so many divergent and sometimes opposing beliefs, doctrines, practices and behaviours, etc? For example some believe in holiness and some do not; some

believe in divorce and remarriage and others believe it is wrong; Some believe in eternal security and others do not; some believe in rapture before the great tribulation and some believe in rapture after the great tribulation - and so continues the list!

Have you ever pondered that even within the same church, some people fear God so much as to abstain from all appearances of evil but others can even justify murder, immorality, dishonesty, etc in the name of Christianity?

You that argue about key doctrines of the Bible and making excuses that you are not convinced, how readest thou the Bible? Did Jesus not say that ***“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself”***?



“He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? (Luke 10:26).

You that justify every shady behaviour and practices (including worldliness, spiritual filthiness, rudeness and every form of misconduct and corruption) in the name of Christianity, did you learn these from Christ? How readest thou?

You that ask about eternal life and pride in being among the number to inherit heaven and yet are not willing to pay the price to walk in the narrow way, how readest thou? Do you think you can qualify for heaven by mere argument alone?

You that claim to know God better than others and yet your disposition is full of anger and your language full of impudence, how readest thou?

How do you read the Bible that till now you have not seen enough light to get saved, sanctified and baptised with the Holy Ghost? How readest thou that after so many years of being ‘born again’ you are still a ‘baby’ Christian?

How Shall We Do?

(II Kings 6:15)

If God were to open our eyes to see all that is taking place in the spiritual realm (both good and evil) we would either be terrified to death or filled with perfect peace / comfort depending on what we chose to focus on.

The servant of Elisha was terrified because he only saw the chariots of the enemy surrounding their compound. But when the man of God assured / prayed for him, his eyes were open to see the heavenly chariots of fire providing supernatural protection for them

against the army of the enemy, then peace and confidence filled his heart.

God has promised to be with us all the time irrespective of where we are. We do not need our eyes to be opened to see the provision God has made for our protection before we can restfully trust in Him. We can learn from the example of David the psalmist who declared ***“At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee”*** (Psalm 56:3).

God has promised never to leave nor

forsake us (Hebrews 13:5,6) we can trust Him through all dangers!



“And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (II Kings 6:16).

How Then Shall We Stand?

(II Kings 10:4)

Your ability to stand against all of the odds that militate against you is not determined by History but by your relationship with God - for one with God is the majority.

The Israelites were no match for the armies of Egypt but their relationship with God ensured their deliverance and the destruction of their enemies.

Young David was not a match to Goliath in terms of size, age, experience or

armoury, yet his relationship with, and dynamic faith in God gave him victory over Goliath and deliverance to Israel.

In terms of physical strength, Daniel was no match for the hungry lions but his uncompromising life, purity and relationship with God delivered him from death by lions.

Gideon’s army of only 300 ill-equipped soldiers were nothing compared to over 135,000 well equipped army of the

Midianites but God gave Gideon victory because of a special relationship with Him.

When next the odds are against you, remember who is with you!

“...How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...” (Hebrews 2:3)

What Do Ye?

(Judges 18:18)

If you knew that all of your actions would be published in a national papers or replayed over the national television network would you have lived and behaved the way you have done so far?

Action speaks louder than beliefs and words, and reveals both character and motives. Where actions contradict espoused values they discredit the values. God is deeply interested about our actions. When Christ wrote to the seven churches in Revelations 2 and 3, He told each **“I KNOW YOUR WORKS...”** - an indication that He gives priority to the evaluation of human actions.

However, sometimes actions can be deceptive as they may give the wrong impression. There are many people that appear innocent only because their true actions are not known. A person may act in such a way that gives an impression that hides his / her true character. Through careful actions a person may



Action speaks louder than words. Your actions could speak so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying!

gain special privileges and / or escape human detection and punishment but God will always find out the guilty because **“The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed”** (I

Samuel 2:3).

Footballers are fond of denying their misdeeds until a playback of the video proves them wrong. We often hear it being said that a picture does not lie. The same principle applies to all of human life on earth. From the cradle to the grave, all of our actions are carefully recorded by God. On the judgement day, God will play back all that has been re-

corded and our impartial God will render a true judgement according to every man’s work - whether it was good or evil.

In today’s world where the emphasis is on creating the right impression, ‘walking the talk’ and being ‘politically correct’ there are many wolves going about in sheep’s clothing! They are prepared to cut corners, cheat, indulge in sinful practices if they believe that they will not be caught.

But God never slumbers nor sleeps and His recording equipment never stops working day or night. **“...Wherefore, whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”** (I Corinthians 10:31); and remember that whatever you do God is posing you the question **“WHAT DO YE?”** and His camera-men are capturing the actions for posterity. When the record of your life on earth is played back on that day publicly, will you be proud of them?

Are These His Doings?

(Micah 2:7)

Jesus once said, **“it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord”** (Matthew 10:25). God created man in His image and sealed him with his spirit so that man can behave and act like God (Genesis 1 and 2). At salvation, Christ comes into the live of the saved soul and seals it with the Holy Spirit so that s/he can benefit from the guidance of the Spirit. However, more often than not, believers get involved in shady doings that can not be truly said to be the outcome of the influence of Christ or of the Holy Spirit.

Writing to the Ephesians Paul challenged them **“Ye have not so learned Christ”** (Ephesians 4:20). And to the Romans, he cautioned **“Thou that makest thy boast of the law through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?”** (Romans 2:23).

Of himself, Paul declared **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”** (Galatians 2:20). Can these be said of you? Can you truly say that every-

thing you do as a Christian has been guided, directed and authorised by the Holy Spirit? Are you Christ-like in conduct, language and actions?

“O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these his doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?... Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction” (Micah 2:7,10).

Are Ye Also Deceived?

(John 7:47)

The religious worlds have not changed much with time. Here the Pharisees labelled the followers of Jesus Christ as being deceived! Those in error are always very quick to blame, find faults and criticise those that are sincerely following the revealed truth of the word of God. The biblical truths about heaven, hell, judgement and eternal life are being ridiculed today even by so called believers who live only for the material things of this world. Holiness,

the righteous standard that qualify for heaven is being ridiculed as religious bondages of the super-spiritual.

Just like Ishmael persecuted Isaac and the Jews crucified Christ, so also do false believers persecute genuine ones today. Jesus even prophesied that a time is coming that those who kill believers will think they are doing God a favour! (John 16:2). If that is truly the case (and we know that the Scripture is)

who then is really being deceived? The truth may be bitter to swallow now but on the last day, it will be obvious who is being deceived. Unfortunately, by then it will be too late for some!



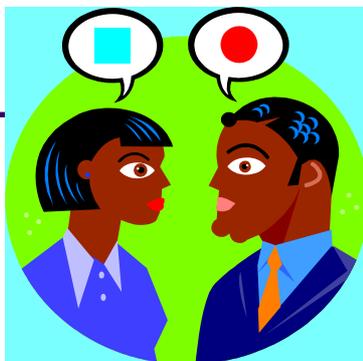
“But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed” (John 7:49) **“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish...”** (Acts 13:41).

What Say Ye?

(Judges 18:8)

Words are powerful in that God created the entire world with spoken words and has given man the authority to recreate the world around him by words (Isaiah 57:19). In Judges 18:8 the words of a few people provided substance for the action of many and resulted in a war. Words can produce war and peace. It is for this reason that God will hold us responsible for every word we speak (Matthew 12:36).

It is said of diplomats that they speak a lot and say very little in effect. If our many words say little in effect, our corresponding many actions will achieve minimal result. Woolly speaking produces woolly actions. A confusing message produces conflicting actions, and when people refuse to speak, it limits the amount of productive action that can be taken. When clear questions are not given cogent answers it is usually because something is wrong some-



"And they came unto their brethren... : and their brethren said unto them, what say ye?" (Judges 18:8).

where. For instance, when Elijah challenged the people on the mount they answered him not a word (I Kings 17:21) because they were living in backsliding. When Jesus, in attempt to answer the Pharisees question asked them, by what authority

John the Baptist preached, they feigned ignorance because they felt condemned by the truth; and Jesus failed to give them the answer they wanted. Again, when Jesus asked the disciples what they had been discussion on the way, they held their peace because they were ashamed of the answer.

Remember that your words can lead and mislead others and the impact can reverberate up to eternity. Therefore, seek the wisdom of God to always speak seasoned words that will minister grace to the hearers. Words are like seeds. What you sow today will germinate tomorrow. Be sure you are sowing what you will be pleased to harvest!

What Seest Thou?

(Zechariah 4:2; 5:2)

"Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keepeth the law happy is he" (Proverbs 29:18).

Vision is so important as it generate 'business plan' which if implemented results in progress and success. Vision produces mission. Looking and seeing are two different things. A person must look before he can see, but one can look without seeing all that God wants him to see. *"And the man said*



One's direction in life is largely determined by what he / she sees.

unto me, son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither" (Ezekiel 40:4).

The believer ought not only to see but also to be able to 'see through'. The 12 spies all saw the same physical things but only 2 of them saw through to the divine possibilities and took sides with God's plan

whereas the rest were discouraged (Numbers 13 & 14).

Moses accomplished his divine assignment because he saw through the wrath of Pharaoh to the future plan of God for Israel (Hebrews 11:23-29).

If we miss what God want us to see we will miss the fulfilment of our call and mission in life, and there will be something missing in the glory that should have been.

Will Ye Also Go Away?

(John 6:67)

If a person develops the attitude of running away from every problem and challenges that crosses his / her pathway in life rather than facing them squarely that person will ever be on the run, and remain an immature 'baby'. This is because s/he will continue to encounter the same things in other places untill s/ he learns to deal with them. Running away is never a solution. *"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord..."* (Hosea 6:3). He that endures to the end shall be saved.

These multitudes sought after Jesus passionately but when He preached to them the words of life they all ran away leaving only the 12 disciples to whom Jesus posed this question.

Many in the religious world today are like the multitudes in this passage. As 'rolling stones' they flow along with the crowd from church to church searching for the temporary *"meat that perisheth"* (John 6:27). If they are presented with the undiluted word of God

they run away because that is not want they were looking for in the first place. These are the sort of whom Paul said *"their god is their belly"* (Philippians 3:19).



"This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60)

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*“... Is not the Lord in Zion?
Is not her King in her? ... Is
there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician
there?...” (Jeremiah
8:19:22)*

Why Weepst Thou? (John 20:15)

A person may weep at the time he ought to be rejoicing if he is not aware of the true facts of the situation. Here Mary was weeping looking for the body of Jesus when the risen Lord was standing just in front of her! Often we weep over the very ‘problems’ that God has either already solved or has provided the means for their solution. Just imagine Moses and the Isra-



“For his anger endureth for but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5)

elites weeping before the Red Sea when God has already provided Moses with a rod for miracles. Imagine the disciples, cringing to the sides of the boat and crying “*Master, Master, carest thou not that we perish?*” because they were ignorant of the fact that God has already given them the faith to calm the storm; and that no storm can drown the ship where lies the Master. Imagine David and his 400 men weeping (I Samuel 30) when God was ready to give them a mighty victory. Just consider Mary and Martha weeping uncontrollably when Jesus has just arrived to raise up Lazarus from death. Their weeping even moved Jesus to weep for entirely different reasons (John 11:35).

Are your eyes full of tears? Why weepst thou?

What Lack I Yet? (Matthew 19:20)

The things that keep us away from our desirable prospects may only be small things that we consider negligible but then we value them too much to part with them. Like a technique used in catching monkey in a certain part of the world (i.e pebble inside a reined calabash with a hole big enough for the monkey to put its hand but not big enough for it to remove it with the pebble clenched in its fist) we hold unto what we consider a treasured price, not realising that it is the devil’s trap to keep us away from our desired destiny.

The rich young ruler meticulously kept all of the 10 commandments but lacked the assurance of qualifying for eternal life. When Jesus, out of love, revealed to him the one thing that kept him away from eternal life, he went away sorrowing!

What dreams are you pursuing in

life? How near are you to realising them? What plans did you set out to achieve at the beginning of your mission, this year, etc? How close are you to achieving them? What prospects / goals are driving your life? And how close are you towards reaching them? What are your potentials in life? How certain are you of realising them in the near future? Ever? What do you perceive is the call / plan of God for your life? Are you moving in the direction that will enable you fulfil them? How far are you down the line of fulfilling them? What is keeping you from being where you ought to be in life?

Small things matter a lot in life. Be careful not to allow small things block out the bigger picture and prospects from your view nor prevent you reaching them. If you are asking that question ‘What lack I yet?’ look inwards, the answer is there!



“It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.... He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:25,37-39).