



Serving the Truth in a Love Sandwich

Discerning Motives

Does it matter why they asked the question?

1st Peter 3:15 "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

This series of courses is about answering difficult questions about Christianity. As disciples of Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to be prepared to defend our faith. Certainly, there are many difficult questions. "If God is good why is there evil?" "Isn't the Bible just myths?" The list is almost endless.

It is impossible to have a book or a training course that has an answer for each and every question. Instead we must learn how to find the answers to the questions that do come up. We are going to practice finding the answers to the questions like those above. In the end you will not know the answers to every question but you will have a strategy or plan for dealing with any question that might be raised.

Course Text: Gospel of John (Mostly)

In this course in all of the examples, after the introductory lesson, the question is some form of "Who is Jesus?" and/or the answer is some form of "Jesus is" We look at how these are answered differently depending on the character and motives of the person asking, except in the final lesson. In lesson 8 we will talk about strategies for dealing with that most difficult question and the one most often asked – the question we don't know the answer to.

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Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. The final "Think & Pray" question should always be covered, because that is when everyone takes a quiet moment to listen to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Additional Reading

These lessons are designed for small groups or individuals to use without reference to other materials besides the Bible. However, a lot more could be gained if those involved would do some additional reading between class meetings. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/CC/Library.htm>)

We plan to provide specific recommendations with each course at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Adjunct/> We also hope to be making specific chapter recommendations from various Christian books that have helped us in our understanding of apologetics, but are not entirely about the topic of the course. Such as these books which would make good companions for this entire series of courses.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

The Case for ... series of books by Lee Strobel

Cold Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, and Forensic Faith – 3 books by J. Warner Wallace

Also, some books do dovetail nicely with particular courses. Any of these books would work very well with this course, Question Motives:

The Reason for God Timothy Keller

Humble Apologetics by John G. Stackhouse

Telling the Truth, Evangelizing Postmoderns by D. A. Carson

Truth in a Love Sandwich Series Introduction – Specks & Logs, Dogs & Hogs, and Holy Pearls

IMPORTANT: In this lesson, there are a lot of "fill in the blank" questions. If you start to run short of time, skip down to questions M to P. These are the ones which most set the context for the entire series of courses and it would be best if they are not missed.

Please read Matthew 7:1-6 and answer these 3 questions:

[A] How will we be judged? _____

[B] What must we do before we can help others? _____

[C] What are we not to give to dogs? _____

Please read Matthew 7:15-20 and answer these two questions:

[D] What are we to beware of? _____

[E] How can we tell if they are false prophets? _____

[F] In Colossians 4:5-6 what are we supposed to know how to do? _____

[G] In 1 Tim 6:3-5 what kind of interest do false teachers have in controversial questions? _____

[H] In 2 Timothy 1:12-14 what is Timothy supposed to guard? _____

[I] In 2 Timothy 2:14-18 what is Timothy supposed to avoid? _____

Please read 2 Timothy 2:23-26 and answer these 3 questions:

[J] What is Timothy to refuse? _____

[K] How are those who are in opposition to be corrected? _____

[L] Why are they to be corrected in this way? _____

Please read 1 Peter 3:13-17 and answer these 3 questions:

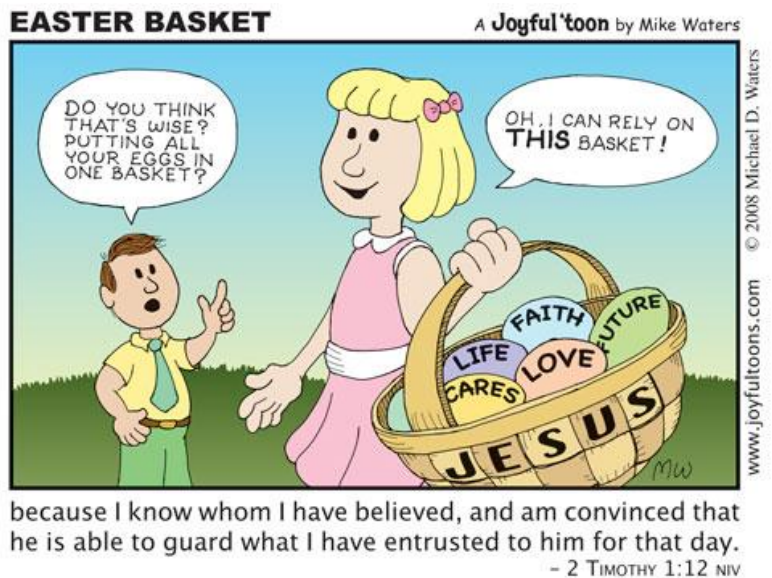
[M] Where are we to sanctify the Lord? _____

[N] What must we always be ready to do? _____

[O] With what behavior are we to give an account of our hope? _____

[P] Colossians 4:5-6 says we are to know how to respond. From the scriptures above it is clear we are sometimes supposed to answer with sound words and thoughtful gentleness and other times we are to just refuse to discuss it. How do we tell when to do which?

Think & Pray _____



----- ANSWERS -----

Truth in a Love Sandwich Series Introduction – Specks & Logs, Dogs & Hogs, and Holy Pearls

- [A] How will we be judged? The way we judge Mt 7:2
[B] What must we do before we can help others? Clear our own vision Mt 7:5 (See also Lk 6:42)
[C] What are we not to give to dogs? What is holy Mt 7:6
[D] What are we to beware of? False prophets Mt 7:15
[E] How can we tell if they are false prophets Their fruit Mt 7:16&20
[F] In Colossians 4:5-6 what are we supposed to know how to do? Respond to each person Col 5:6
[G] In 1 Timothy 6:3-5 what kind of interest do these false teachers have in controversial questions?
Morbid 1Tm 6:4
[H] In 2 Timothy 1:12-14 what is Timothy supposed to guard?
The treasure of sound words 2Tm 1:13-14
[I] In 2 Timothy 2:14-18 what is Timothy supposed to avoid? Worldly and empty chatter 2Tm 2:16
[J] What is Timothy to refuse? Foolish and ignorant speculations 2Tm 2:23
[K] How are those who are in opposition to be corrected? With gentleness 2Tm 2:25
[L] Why are they to be corrected in this way?
So they might come to their senses and escape the devil 2Tm 2:26
[M] Where are we to sanctify the Lord? In our hearts 1Pt 3:15
[N] What must we always be ready to do? Make a defense 1Pt 3:15
[O] With what behavior are we to give an account of our hope? Gentleness & Reverence 1Pt 3:15
[P] Colossians 4:5-6 says we are to know how to respond. From these scriptures it is clear we are sometimes supposed to answer with sound words and thoughtful gentleness and other times we are to just brush them off and refuse to discuss it. How do we tell when to do which?

The foundation of our love sandwich is our love for God. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts." The truth comes next from our treasure chest of "sound words" as we "give an account for the hope that is in" us. We spread "gentleness and reverence" all over it and then top it with our motive of love for them so that they might "come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil." The lost person is not the enemy. He is a prisoner of the enemy, Satan. We are trying to rescue them. Will it help to get mad at them? On the other hand, if they don't like the sandwich we have to offer there is no sense in giving them more sandwiches. Maybe they will like one made by someone else better. All we can do is all we can do. It is the Holy Spirit Who does the convincing. We just deliver the message.

How can you tell when to say what? Cover the conversation in prayer; trust the Holy Spirit to guide you.

For further thought:

- (q) Read Titus 3:8-11. What does this scripture teach about dealing with controversy?
(r) Compare Titus 3:10 with Matthew 18:12-14. When are we to do which?
(s) Read Proverbs 22:20-21 and 2 Timothy 2:15. How do we know how to correctly answer? Are you doing this?
(t) Compare Matthew 10:18-20 with 1 Peter 3:14-16. How can they both be true?

Lesson 1 – Motives – Course Introduction

The three questions they asked Jesus in Matthew 22:15-46 are good examples of some of the kinds of questions we will face in our Christian life. The first question about taxation is entirely malicious. It was designed by His enemies to discredit Him or even get Him thrown in jail. The second question about resurrection was designed to shut Him up because He annoyed them. The third about the greatest commandment was designed to engage Him in endless argument.

People have different reasons for asking questions. Sometimes they just want to make us look bad, like the Pharisees and Herodians. Sometimes they want to expose what they believe is our ignorance or our nonsense, like the Sadducees. Sometimes they just want to change the subject and control the topic of conversation, like the lawyer representing the Pharisees. But sometimes they really want an answer.

[1A] In Jeremiah 2:5 God asks his wayward people a question. What did they walk after and what did they become? _____ & _____

[1B] In 1st John 2:15-17 it lists three things that lure people to worldliness. What are they?

[1C] In 2nd Corinthians 7:8-13. What kind of sorrow produces real repentance? _____

[1D] In Ephesians 4:17-19 why are they excluded from the life of God? _____
& _____

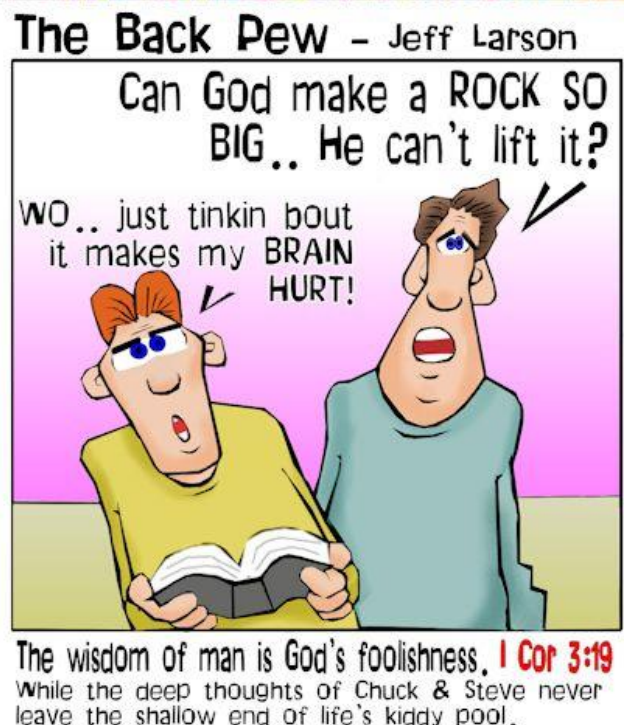
[1E] In 1st Corinthians 3:18-20 what must we do before we can become wise? _____

[1F] Why do you think unbelieving people are motivated to ask such hard questions?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

- (1g) Can you think of other motives people have that lead them to refuse to trust in God?
- (1h) Are the questions unbelievers ask good or bad? Why?
- (1i) What are the best motives we can have for answering difficult questions?
- (1j) How would you respond to this atheist's attack: "If you cannot tell me how you might come to know you are wrong about Christianity, then you have a blind, unreasonable, foolish faith. It is called 'falsifiability.' Any idea or claim without that quality or attribute is just a fairy tale that people believe because they want to."



Lesson 1 – Motives - Introduction

[1A] In Jeremiah 2:5 God asks his wayward people a question. What did they walk after and what did they become? Emptiness and empty

[1B] In 1st John 2:15-17 it lists three things that lure people to worldliness. What are they?

Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes and Boastful Pride of Life 1Jn 2:16.

[1C] In 2nd Corinthians 7:8-13. What kind of sorrow produces real repentance? Godly sorrow 2Cor 7:11

[1D] In Ephesians 4:17-19 why are they excluded from the life of God?

Ignorance and Hardness of Heart Ep 4:18.

[1E] In 1st Corinthians 3:18-20 what must we do before we can become wise?

Become foolish i.e Realize we are not wise, that we don't know 1Cor 3:18.

[1F] I have wasted a lot of time arguing with atheists. I finally realized there was nothing wrong with my evidence and arguments. It seems people would rather go to hell than lose an argument. In my experience unbelievers usually have one of four different reasons for their unbelief:

- (a) Something bad happened to them or a loved one and they blame God for it. A good God can not exist, since this terrible thing happened, they say. (See Jer 2:5)
- (b) They are enjoying the passing pleasures of sin too much to consider giving it up. If they allow themselves to entertain the idea of God's existence, it might lead to them losing their pleasure, so they just refuse to consider it. (See 1st John 2:15-17)
- (c) They feel so guilty about their behavior, that they do not think they can ever be forgiven. It becomes easier to deny God's existence, than face being accountable to Him. (See 2nd Cor 7:10)
- (d) They simply are not aware of, or do not understand, sound Biblical doctrine. The god they have been told about is not the real God. For instance, they have been taught about God as if He were Santa Clause or an indifferent old man in some distant place. Such ideas can not be defended rationally, so they do not believe them. A believer with doubts can be similar to someone in this category. (See Eph 4:18)

But sometimes they are in real need of answers. They do not know and need information. They do not understand and must have an explanation. They are hurting and are seeking comfort. They are in doubt and want assurance. They are honestly seeking the truth. How do we tell the difference? We can not see into their hearts like Jesus could. We need not concern ourselves with judging their motives. We just answer the question the best we can (which might be "I don't know") and then, explain why we do believe. Remember what it says in 1 Peter 3:15. Our purpose is not to dominate others or arrogantly demonstrate our own "rightness." Our purpose is to sanctify God in our own hearts by allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through us and to awaken or encourage the faith of others.

My further thoughts:

- (1g) There may be other reasons for unbelief. Certainly I have met people who claim that they are simply not convinced by the evidence. However, the existence of God is intuitively obvious to the most casual observer. Much of His nature is clear as well. (Romans 1:18-22) When these folks are willing to engage in rational discussion with me, I find that their claim of rationality is a veneer. When their irrational core is exposed, I either discover into which of the four categories they fit, or they close up and retreat, before I can tell which it is. However, I remain open to the idea there may be another category. I just have not seen it, yet.
- (1h) Every question is an opportunity. We hope it is an opportunity for us to give the gift of truth to others. But sometimes it is the Holy Spirit showing us a weakness in our own knowledge so that we have the opportunity to find the answer. Either way the questions others bring to us about God and His kingdom are a blessing.
- (1i) The kingdom of God does not need another building full of people who think they are right and everyone else is wrong. The fact is that compared with God, we are *all* wrong. As a disciple of the Lord Jesus we should be learning more about Him and the Bible every day. If we learn something today that means we were wrong about it yesterday. When we learn something tomorrow that means we were wrong about it today, and so on. If we are not learning we are still wrong because we are supposed to be learning. So, we are all wrong except God. Our answers must never be about some debate game we are winning or about dominating others through argument. We must offer our answers as a gift always expecting that those that hear us may, in fact, have a different or even better answer that will help us learn more about our Lord.

Lesson 2– Attacking Credibility – John 8:12-19

[2A] According to Deuteronomy 19:15 how many witnesses are required to establish the truth? 2 or 3

[2B] In John 5:31 is Jesus confirming or denying the scripture in 2A? Confirming

Please read John 8:12-19 and answer the following questions:

[2C] What did Jesus say He is? The Light of the World Jn 8:12

[2D] What will Jesus' followers have? The Light of Life Jn 8:12

[2E] Why did they claim they did not believe Him? Because He was His only witness Jn 8:13

[2F] What other witness does Jesus call on for testimony? God, the Father Jn 8:16 & 18

[2G] What question do they ask Him? Where is Your Father? Jn 8:19

[2H] This question is in the middle of an unrelenting attack on Jesus. He simply tells them that He is the Lord. When it is clear that your questioner is only interested in attacking and discrediting you it is pointless to give them long answers which just provide them ammunition for more attacks. You can do what Jesus did -- just declare the simple truth. They are not going to listen to evidence anyway. (See Jn 5:45-47)

My further thoughts:

(2i) I think they are talking about the same thing. Over and over again Jesus looks past circumstances and appearances and straight into the motives and thoughts of the people around Him. It is still the same. Hebrews 4:13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." All that stuff you do and say and think. He knows about it, and yet, He still loves you.

(2j) Four: John the Baptist, His miracles, God the Father, and the Old Testament all testify about Jesus. However, he did not call on them all here in chapter 8. It does not say, but I think He knew they would not be convinced by anything, so He just gave them the minimum required by the law. There is no sense wasting time on people who are determined to disbelieve. Love them, tell them the truth, answer their questions as best you can, and go on to the next thing. No one has ever been nagged into belief.

(2k) These reports were not believed but the Lord appeared and confirmed them. The people who were not believed were shown to have been telling the truth. The Bible does not report whether Mary and the two disciples were offended at this unbelief. It does not say if they tried to prove their case. Maybe they did, but what made the difference was the truth, not their ability to persuade. I think what we could learn from this is to speak the truth and let God worry about convincing people. Let the Lord manage the results.

(2l) The people gathering stones to kill Him in Jn 8:59 are called "those Jews who had believed in Him" in Jn 8:31. What happened? As long as they thought He was the Messiah who arrived on the scene to rescue them from Roman rule, they were happy as could be. But when He called them to a life of righteousness, they balked. How about you? How do you respond to the Lord's call for you to be righteous? But it was what He said in Jn 8:58 that turned them murderous. He claimed to be Jehovah or Yahweh. This claim leaves us with no middle ground in dealing with Jesus Christ. It is either a deliberate lie, the ranting of a mad man, or the truth. The "Jews who had believed in Him" decided it was the first choice, a liar and blasphemer. Of the three possible options, which is your choice and why?

Lesson 3 – Manipulation – John 10:22-30

Read John 10:22-30 and answer the following questions:

[3A] Where was Jesus? _____

[3B] Who asked Him a question? _____

[3C] What was the question? _____

[3D] Jesus calls on a witness to confirm His earlier answers. Who or what?



[3E] What does John 10:19-21 tell us about their motives in questioning Him? What do their motives mean to us with regard to answering the questions that are put to us? (See also Mark 10:34)

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

- (3f) Do you have a cross reference in your Bible for Jn 10:22 that points to the Old Testament description of the "Feast of Dedication?" What does this mean? Couldn't a non-believer use this as a point of attack?
- (3g) In the next course we will talk about a common manipulative trick used; "Would a 'real' Christian (whatever they don't like)?" Certainly any illogical questions can be manipulative. Can you think of any other specific examples of manipulative tricks?
- (3h) In John 10:31-39 the Jews try to kill Jesus. Why?
- (3i) During a conversation with another Christian, if they say, "The Lord has told me that...." How can you tell if they are lying to you, lying to themselves or telling the truth?

Lesson 3 – Manipulation – John 10:22-30

[3A] Where was Jesus? The portico of Solomon. Jn 10:23

[3B] Who asked Him a question? The Jews Jn 10:24

[3C] What was the question?

"How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jn 10:24

[3D] Jesus calls on a witness to confirm His earlier answers. Who or what?

"The works I do in My Father's name." Jn 10:25

[3E] Their interest in the question seems to be more about settling their argument than about Jesus. The first question, "How long will You keep us in suspense?" is a manipulation tactic designed to try to make Jesus feel obligated to answer their question by holding Him responsible for their confusion. He was not responsible for their confusion. We are not responsible for our listeners' state of mind, emotions, or anything else they might try to make us feel guilty about. We are responsible to God to speak the truth in love at all times. We are accountable to Him for this, not anyone else. If Jesus' words did not make anyone understand when they were determined to disbelieve, we will do no better. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to guide, convict, convince and persuade. We are simply His tools. The success depends on the Workman, not the tools.

My further thoughts:

(3f) The Feast of Dedication was not established until after the close of the Old Testament writings. It was instituted by Jude Maccabeus, to commemorate the purification of the temple from the profanations to which it had been subjected by Antiochus Epiphanes 165 B.C., and kept for eight days, (around Christmas time). This is found in the Apocrypha, First Maccabees 4:52,56,59; and Josephus, Antiquities, 7.7.7. The fact that Jesus was in the temple during this time suggests neither His approval nor disapproval of the feast, the apocryphal writings, or anything else. It is just a date for the reader's information. It tells us that it was time of year when the days are shortest and the place was crowded.

(3g) "If God is good, why doesn't He (whatever they want Him to do)?" Sometimes the question is genuine appeal for information, but often it is a manipulative trick designed to make us feel responsible for solving whatever life problem they are facing. We have a course later in this series devoted entirely to this question called the Problem of Evil, but for now just remember, you are not responsible for their problems, you are not accountable for God's decisions, and He is good, very good.

(3h) Because in John 10:30 Jesus claimed to be God. Is He?

(3i) It depends a lot on the content of the message and the character of the messenger. If this phrase essentially shuts down the conversation because it implies that, since God has spoken a word, there can't be any further discussion, you should be on your guard. Don't be fooled by this trick; it is a form of spiritual manipulation. On the other hand if the Lord said the same thing to you in a dream the night before y'all could be in the middle of a very nice miracle. Questions to ask yourself: Does it conflict with any Scriptural truth? Does it work for the advantage of the messenger? (When you think of advantage don't think of just material or financial advantage. Sometimes the reward is pity, or accepting their excuse for irresponsibility, or something else that they value, that you would not.) What is the usual fruit of this person's life? What is the likely fruit of this "message from God?" (See Matthew 7:15-20 and First John 4:1-6)

Lesson 4 – Plea for Comfort – John 11:17-27

Jesus was friends with two sisters and a brother who lived in a village called Bethany. The brother, Lazarus died. Eventually, Jesus raises him from the dead. In this passage we read about how one of the sisters, Martha, first saw Him after the death of her brother, but before Jesus raised him.

Please read John 11:17-27 and answer these questions:

[4A] When Jesus arrived how long had Lazarus been entombed? _____

[4B] Did Martha ask Jesus anything? _____

[4C] What did Martha want Jesus to do? _____

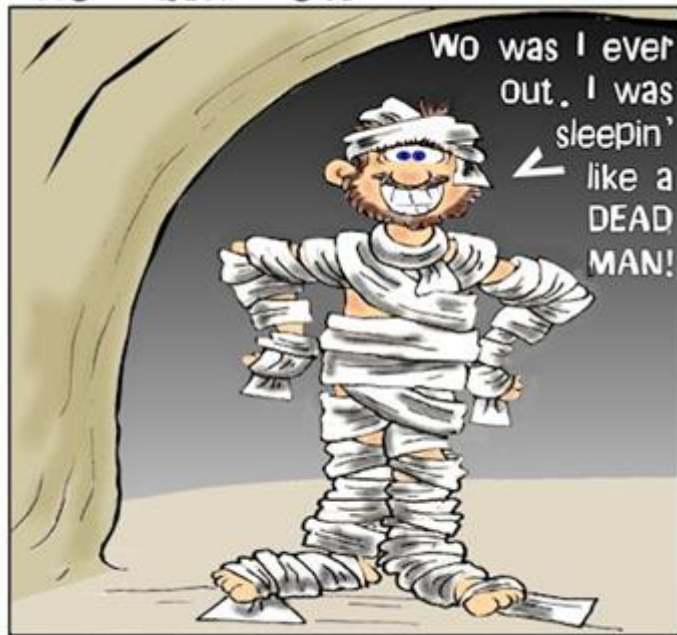
[4D] Who or what did Jesus say He is? _____

[4E] Who did Martha say that He is? _____

[4F] What can we learn from how Jesus responded to Martha?

Think & Pray _____

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



DEAD MAN WALKING – Is the story of John 11 and Lazarus.

For further thought:

Questions g to k refer to John 11:28-46

- (4g) What is different between the way Martha and the way Mary approaches Jesus in Jn 11:28-35.?
- (4h) How did Jesus respond to the question some of the Jews asked in Jn 11:37?
- (4i) When Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave, He called him by name. (Jn 11:43) Why? Couldn't He have just said, "Come forth!"
- (4j) Why did Jesus weep in Jn 11:35?
- (4k) This sounds like a philosophical argument at first, but it is probably just a plea for comfort:
1. If God exists, then this God would love and help ALL
 2. Love and help is randomly observed for some.
 3. Therefore God does not exist.

Lesson 4 – Plea for Comfort – John 11:17-27

Jesus was friends with two sisters and a brother who lived in a vilage called Bethany. The brother, Lazarus died. Eventually, Jesus raises him from the dead. In this passage we read about how one of the sisters, Martha, first saw Him after the death of her brother, but before Jesus raised him.

Please read John 11:17-27 and answer these questions:

[4A] When Jesus arrived how long had Lazarus been entombed? Four days Jn 11:17

[4B] Did Martha ask Jesus anything? Not, directly. She made a comment that sounded like she was chiding Him for being late, and then hinted around that He should do something about the situation. Jn 11:21-22

[4C] What did Martha want Jesus to do? Raise Lazarus Jn 11:22

[4D] Who or what did Jesus say He is? The resurrection and the life Jn 11:25

[4E] Who did Martha say that He is? The Christ, the Son of God Jn 11:27

[4F] Martha is seeking consolation, assurance, comfort and hope, mostly hope. Even though Martha presents it in a manipulative way, Jesus gives her all of she wants by explaining who He is. People in emotional distress, whatever the question, or the way it is asked, need Jesus. While not ignoring the question or failing to answer the meaning of the question we must also give them Jesus.

My further thoughts:

(4g) Mary just gives the implied accusation of tardiness and leaves it at that. Martha had continued on to express her stedfast faith in Jesus. It is hard to keep believing when it seems all hope is lost.

(4h) Jesus ignored them. It was a manipulative implied accusation, designed to throw discredit on Jesus.

(4i) I don't know, but I believe if Jesus had left off the name of Lazarus everyone entombed in the graveyard would have come forth and started walking around. In fact, maybe all the dead people in the world would have come alive.

(4j) The Bible does not explain so we can not be sure. From gotquestions.org/Jesus-wept.html:

Two passages in Scripture teach that Jesus wept. In both instances our Lord was looking on man's misery, and both demonstrate our Lord's (loving) human nature, His compassion for people and the life He offers to those who believe. When Jesus wept, He showed all these things.

The first passage, John 11:1-45, concerns the death and resurrection of Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha and a friend of our Lord. Jesus wept (John 11:35) when He gathered with the sisters and others mourning Lazarus' death. Jesus did not weep over the death itself since He knew Lazarus would soon be raised and ultimately spend eternity with Him in heaven. Yet He could not help but weep when confronted with the wailing and sobbing of Mary, Martha, and the other mourners (John 11:33). The original language indicates that our Lord wept 'silent tears' or tears of compassion for His friends (Rom 12:15).

If Jesus had been present when Lazarus was dying, His compassion would have caused Him to heal His friend (John 11:14-15). But preventing a death might be considered by some to be a chance circumstance or (just) a minor miracle, and this was not a time for any doubt. So Lazarus spent four days in death's grave before Jesus publicly called him back to life. The Father wanted these witnesses to know that Jesus was the Son of God, that Jesus was sent by God, and that Jesus and the Father had the same will in everything (John 11:4, 40-42). Only the one true God could have performed such an awesome and breathtaking miracle, and through this miracle the Father and the Son were glorified, and many believed (John 11:4, 45).

The second passage, Luke 19:41-44, took place during the Lord's last trip to Jerusalem, shortly before He was crucified at the insistence of His own people, the people He came to save. Earlier the Lord had said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it" (Luke 13:34). So now as our Lord approached Jerusalem and thought of all those lost souls, "He saw the city and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). Here, "wept" is the same word used to describe the weeping of Mary and the others in John 11:33, so we know that Jesus cried aloud in anguish over the future of the city. That future was less than 40 years distant; in 70 AD more than 1,000,000 residents of Jerusalem died in one of the most gruesome sieges in recorded history.

Our Lord wept differently in these two instances because the eternal outcomes were entirely different. Martha, Mary and Lazarus have eternal life because they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but most in Jerusalem did not believe and therefore do not have life. The same is true today: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies'" (John 11:25).

Lesson 5 –Information Request – John 14:1-7

Please read John 14:1-7 and answer these questions:

[5A] How many dwelling places are in the Father's house? _____

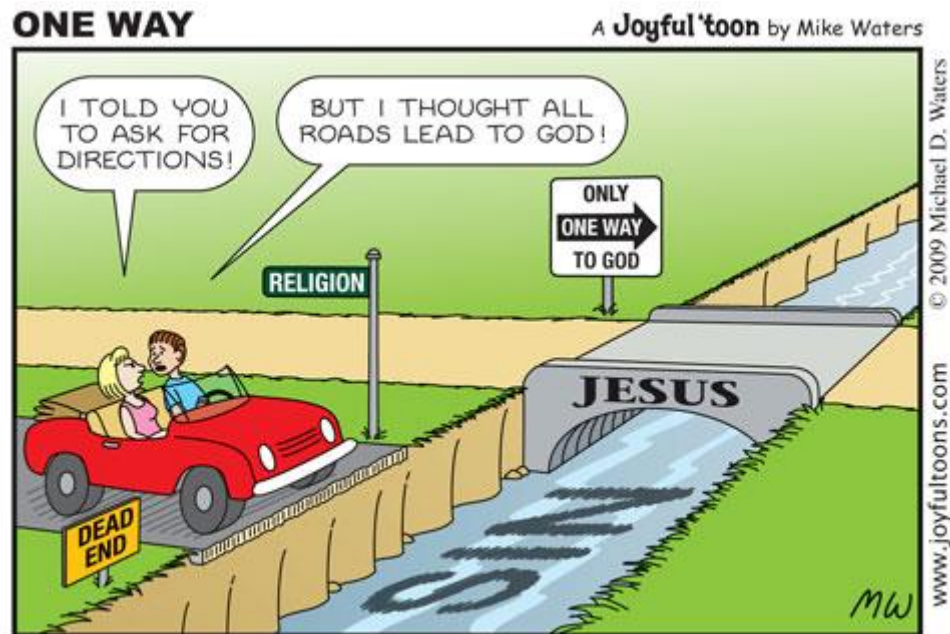
[5B] What was Jesus purpose in going? _____

[5C] What did Thomas ask Him? _____

[5D] How did Jesus answer Thomas? _____

[5E] What can we learn from the way Jesus responded to Thomas?

Think & Pray _____



Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." — JOHN 14:6 NIV

For further thought:

(5f) What does John 14:2 mean?

(5g) What does John 14:3 mean?

(5h) What does John 14:6 mean?

(5i) What does John 14:7 mean?

(5j) *Skeptic's Attack*: Jesus is called the "son of man" in the New Testament but Psalm 146:3 says "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help" Jesus is helpless?

Lesson 5 –Information Request – John 14:1-7

- [5A] How many dwelling places are in the Father's house? Many Jn 14:2
 [5B] What was Jesus purpose in going? To prepare a place for us Jn 14:2
 [5C] What did Thomas ask Him? "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jn 14:5
 [5D] How did Jesus answer Thomas? "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me. If you had known me, you would have known My Father also, from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Jn 14:6-7
 [5E] Thomas does not know how he will know what to do when Jesus is gone on ahead. He is confused and in genuine need of information. Jesus' answer is one for us all. When in doubt just do what Jesus would have done. He is "the way, the truth and the life." The point is, when someone needs information, give it to him.

My further thoughts:

(5f & g) In Hebrew culture after a bride agreed to marry, the groom would go and prepare a place for them. Often this would be a room added on to his father's house, which the groom would eventually inherit. The church is the bride of Jesus Christ. (See Mt 9:15, Mk 2:19, Lk 5:34, Mt 22:1-14, Mt 25:10, Rv 18:23, Rv 19:7, Rv 21:1-9, Rv 22:17) Jesus is coming again. There is a wedding in our future.

(5h) *The way* – Jesus used the definite article to distinguish Himself as “the only way.” A way is a path or route, and the disciples had expressed their confusion about where He was going, and how they could follow. As He had told them from the beginning, Jesus was again telling them (and us) “follow me.” There is no other path to Heaven, no other way to the Father. Peter reiterated this same truth years later to the rulers in Jerusalem, saying about Jesus, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The exclusive nature of the only path to salvation is expressed in the words “I am the way.”

The truth – Again Jesus used the definite article to emphasize Himself as “the only truth.” Psalm 119:142 says “Your law is the truth.” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminded His listeners of several points of the Law, then said “but I say unto you...” (Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44), thereby equating Himself with the Law of God as the authoritative standard of righteousness. In fact, Jesus said that He came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). Jesus, as the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1) is the source of all truth.

The life – Jesus had just been telling His disciples about His impending death, and now He was claiming to be the source of all life. In John 10:17-18, Jesus declared that He was going to lay down His life for His sheep, and then take it back again. He spoke of His authority over life and death as being granted to Him by the Father. In John 14:19, He gave the promise that “because I live, you also will live.” The deliverance He was about to provide was not a political or social deliverance (which most of the Jews were seeking), but a true deliverance from a life of bondage to sin and death to a life of freedom in eternity.

-- From.gotquestions.org/way-truth-life.html

(5i) In these words, Jesus was declaring Himself the great “I Am,” the only path to righteousness, the only true measure of righteousness, and the source of both physical and spiritual life. He was staking His claim as the very God of Creation, the Lord who blessed Abraham, and the Holy One who inhabits eternity. He did this so the disciples would be able to face the dark days ahead and carry on the mission of declaring the gospel to the world. Of course, we know from Scripture that they still didn't understand, and it took several visits from their risen Lord to shake them out of their disbelief. Once they understood the truth of His words, they became changed people, and the world has never been the same. -- From.gotquestions.org/way-truth-life.html

(5g) In the Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew, it was using the phrase "son of man" to mean human being. The Hebrew word for "man" is "Adam." In the New Testament, written in Greek, son of man means the second person of the Trinity, when it is talking about Jesus.

Lesson 6 – Learned Helplessness – John 14:8-15

Please read John 14:8-15 and answer these questions:

[6A] What did Philip ask Jesus? _____

[6B] Does Jesus give Philip what is requested? _____

[6C] Why will believers be able to do greater works than Jesus? _____

[6D] What can we learn from the way Jesus responded to Philip?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought: (Please read John 14:12-21)

- (6e) An unbeliever once asked me "In John 14:15 Jesus equates love and obedience. Isn't that 'works righteousness' or 'legalism?' What about grace and mercy?" How could you answer him?
- (6f) In John 14:16-17 Jesus promises to send a Helper that He calls the Spirit of Truth. Is this the same as the Holy Spirit? How do you know?
- (6g) Is it really possible for us to do greater works than Jesus as it seems to say in John 14:12?



I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.
- MARK 11:22 NIV

Lesson 6 – Learned Helplessness – John 14:8-15

- [6A] What did Philip ask Jesus? "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jn 14:8. It is really more of a request than a question, but it still goes to a theme of this course, asking Who Jesus is.
- [6B] Does Jesus give Philip what is requested? Yes and No. First He gently chides Philip for not already knowing the answer. Jn 14:9. Then He takes Philip through the thought process he could use to figure out the answer for himself. Jn 14:10-11
- [6C] Why will believers be able to do greater works than Jesus? Because He is with the Father Jn 14:12
- [6D] Sometimes people are like Philip. They ask questions to which they should already know the answer. Jesus does not let him off the hook. He gently chides him for it, but also patiently explains the truth and how Philip could have known the truth already. We do not have Jesus' insight into the hearts and minds of others, but we can still follow His example here. There is an old adage that says, "Give a hungry man a fish and he will be hungry again tomorrow. Teach him to fish and he will never be hungry again." The point is that we do not want to set ourselves up as some kind of wise man or guru that people need to seek out to get the answers. We want them to be able to go to the Bible and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit find their own answers. In fact, that is what Jesus discusses right after He answers Philip. (John 14:12-21)

My further thoughts

- (6e) No, it is neither "works righteousness" nor "legalism." Jesus says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." He does not say, "If you keep My commandments, I will love you." They are two completely different ideas. Before we did anything right, Jesus died for us. That is true unconditional love. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." How is that for grace and mercy?
- (6f) Yes, it is the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
- (6g) From gotquestions.org/greater-works.html: Jesus says it will be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. And how exactly does the Holy Spirit operate? Jesus continues: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13-14). This is a fantastic claim, one that ought to inspire and terrify. We Christians can enjoy the power of Christ's goodness on earth. Yet Jesus is not saying that our works will be greater than His in terms of power or majesty. After all, by definition, humans cannot surpass God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

Rather, most scholars agree that Jesus means we will do greater works because there are many of us. Therefore, Jesus is acknowledging the collective power His followers can display in God's Kingdom on earth. Commentaries indicate that Jesus preached and healed and raised the dead in Judea only. Now, billions of disciples exist worldwide, and through belief in Him and the agency of the Holy Spirit, many more miracles occur today than did in Jesus' time.

After His resurrection, Jesus tells His apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey His commands (Matthew 28:19-20). He commissions them to go out because "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18), and He passes on that power and authority to His disciples through the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Acts provides early validation of the miraculous power Jesus promises (Acts 5:1-10, 15, 13:11, 19:12). Acts 17:6 describes those who proclaimed Christ as ones "who have turned the world upside down." This turning of the world upside down is surely part of what Jesus was referring to when He promised that we would do "greater works" than He did. Many miracles were performed by His apostles and disciples, and many more would be, and are being, performed as the gospel of Jesus Christ spreads throughout the world.

Lesson 7 – Reversing Accountability – John 14:21-29

Please read John 14:21-29 and answer these questions:

[7A] Who asks a question? _____

[7B] What is the question? _____

[7C] Does Jesus answer the question? _____

[7D] This is not the Judas who betrayed Jesus, but another apostle about whom we find little in the New Testament. What can we learn from the way Jesus responded to Judas?

Think & Pray _____

OBEDIENT CANARY

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. — LEVITICUS 25:18-19 NIV

For further thought:

(7e) Compare Psalm 119:100 with John 14:26. Do they help bring any clarity to each other?

(7f) Compare Psalm 119:129-130 with John 14:23. Are they related?

(7g) *Skeptic Attack*: "Miracles? Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence!"

(7h) Can you think of examples of unbelievers trying to reverse accountability and hold others responsible inappropriately?

Lesson 7 – Reversing Accountability – John 14:21-29

[7A] Who asks a question? Judas (not Iscariot) Jn 14:22

[7B] What is the question? "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jn 14:22

[7C] Does Jesus answer the question?

No, not that I could see. He does offer Judas some comfort in Jn 14:27

[7D] Judas' question is demanding that Jesus explain his methods and motives. Since Jesus is not accountable to Judas, Jesus has no need to explain himself. He simply reminds Judas Who He is, which hopefully made Judas realize he had asked a pointless question. The point here is that no one really understands God until he begins to obey Him. The more we obey Him the more understanding He allows us to have. That means that no answer we can give will really help anyone until they make the decision to obey God. Our answers need to help them find that truth. We are not accountable to lost people for anything regarding Christianity. We have an obligation to explain why we hope in Him, but that obligation is to God, not the lost unbeliever. They do not get to render judgment on when we have explained ourselves well enough.

My further thoughts:

(7e) Yes, to me they make it clear that the more you obey God, the more He will help you understand.

You have to learn to add and subtract before you can multiple and divide. You have to learn to read before you can study literature. Until we demonstrate an understanding of the basics, why should God reveal more to us?

(7f) I think so. The more you obey God, the more room there is inside you for Him to fit, the more of your life He will bless. (See also Matt 7:24)

(7g) My answer: Why? Until you know something is true any claim is extraordinary. The rarity of the claim has nothing whatever to do with the nature of the evidence required to support it. If credible witnesses attest to it, why not believe them? If there is circumstantial evidence for it, it is evidence that should be considered on its own merits, not based on how incredulous the investigators happened to be. Suppose you were a doctor in a remote part of the world talking to a stone age tribe. They might be incredulous that your medicine might work, but wouldn't you expect them to be convinced by ordinary evidence?

(7h) Some atheists I argued with once insisted that I should investigate some Hindu guru in modern day India because of the miracles he was reportedly doing. Their tactics were designed to belittle the veracity of the supernatural in general. I would ask more questions now, but it went like this:

One of them said, "Sathya Sai Baba has witnesses to all his miracles, claims to be a god, and is still alive (not to mention, he has millions of followers). Considering the fact that Baba has more eyewitnesses, more miracles, etc. than Jesus (and is even on 'youtube') will you now become a Hindu?"

I answered "If you do not believe in Baba's miracles why do you bring them up? If you do, why do you not believe the ones in the Bible? I am in no danger of becoming a Hindu and do not feel at all responsible for debunking his miracles. I feel sure you can do that for yourself. This discussion began because you wanted to say that the miraculous accounts discredited the Bible. I do not believe the Bible because of the miraculous accounts. I believe it, because it is good testimony. I am certainly not going to go running around chasing every miracle I hear a rumor about."

Lesson 8 – Our Ignorance Exposed – John 9:1-41

Often we get questions whose answer is a mystery to us. I believe God brings us into these situations, so that we can learn important spiritual truths, which are new to us. There is nothing to worry about. The truth can stand up to testing. Please read John 9:1-41 and fill in the blanks below as you go. My answers can be found on the next page. Here we have the story of a man born blind receiving his sight. This story contains an important truth about our walk with the Lord and how to deal with that vast area of knowledge, we do not have.

In John 9:1-5 the story starts when the disciples ask Jesus a question. They want to know whose sin caused the man to be blind. They had a false belief that whenever anything bad happened to someone, it was because either the person or his ancestors had committed some sin against God for which God curses them and/or their family. Jesus answers in the most remarkable way. He says that the man's blindness is not related to anyone's sin. He says the man is blind so that the disciples and therefore, we, the readers of the gospel account, can learn something about God. This man has been placed on the earth to carry out God's purpose. His condition and circumstances were designed by God to make it possible for him to complete that purpose.

[8A] In John 9:6-7. What did Jesus use to heal the man? _____

[8B] In John 9:8-12 has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? _____

[8C] In John 9:13-17. To whom do they take the man? _____

[8D] In John 9:17-23, has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? _____

[8E] In John 9:24-34, whose disciple do the Pharisees claim to be? _____

How this once blind man responds is very interesting. Instead of focusing on what is not known and on their doubts and accusations, he looks at what he does know for sure. He knows that once he was blind and that now he sees. You know what you once were and, what you have become in the hands of almighty God. You were lost, and now you are saved. Focus on the evidence you do have, your own salvation.

[8F] In John 9:35-38. Has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? _____

In John 9:39-41 some of the arrogant Pharisees may be beginning to understand. "We are not blind too, are we?" They think they have God all figured out. Instead, they are always learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They use what knowledge they have of God as a tool to manipulate and control others instead of using it to more faithfully obey God. As a result they see nothing about God's reality. They know nothing of His love and grace. The lesson for us is simple. Trust what we know to be true. Do not expect that you will ever have all the answers. Be willing to say, "I do not know." Like the once blind man, you and I have never seen Jesus, but we know, by what He has done in our lives, that He is our Savior.

[8G] How can we speak for Jesus Christ when we harbor doubts of our own?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

(8h) Read the story of walking on water in Matthew 14:22-31. What does that teach us about our own Christian walk?

(8i) Pick one of these four passages and explain it
2nd Timothy 2:23 , 1st Timothy 6:3-5 , 2nd Timothy 2:14 , or Titus 3:9-11.

(8j) What was God doing before He created the universe?

Lesson 8 – Our Ignorance Exposed – John 9:1-41

- [8A] In John 9:6-7, what did Jesus use to heal the man? spit and dirt mixed into mud Jesus heals the man in such a way, that when his eyes begin to see, Jesus is no longer around. In that way, Jesus makes sure that the man could not, and did not, see Jesus. This becomes important later in the story.
- [8B] In John 9:8-12 has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? No His friends and neighbors, after some trouble believing it is really him who was once blind, want to know where to find Jesus. The man being blind at his last meeting with Jesus can not know. Jesus has made sure of that.
- [8C] In John 9:13-17, to whom do they take the man? Pharisees God has so arranged the blind man's circumstances so that some of his neighbors have some kind of relationship with the Pharisees. The Pharisees are upset because the healing was on the Sabbath day which is against Jewish law, at least, according to their interpretation. On the other hand it is clear, even to them, that a God sized miracle has occurred. Finally they ask the once blind man his opinion.
- [8D] In John 9:17-23, has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? No Even though he has never seen Jesus, he believes that Jesus is a prophet of God based on what He has done. The Pharisees are unconvinced. They call the man's parents to testify, and everything is confirmed. The parents are afraid of being thrown out of the synagogue and do not offer their opinion.
- [8E] In John 9:24-34, whose disciple do the Pharisees claim to be? Moses' Again they question the man. This time they try to change his opinion of Jesus. Because Jesus does not match their ideas of what God should be like, they reject the clear evidence of Who He is. Unbelieving people will try to do the same to you. Every time you do not know the answer to a question they will try to twist that into evidence that you are wrong. They will try to make your lack of an answer into doubts in your mind. They may do it maliciously and intentionally or in a desperate attempt to pretend they do not know they are the ones who are wrong. More likely they are just being human beings. It is a natural, though incorrect, way to think.
- [8F] In John 9:35-38, has this formerly blind man ever seen Jesus? No Jesus finds the once blind man and reveals Himself to him. The man, understanding Jesus is Lord, responds with worship. He was obedient in a little and was faithful with what had been revealed to him, so he is rewarded with more revelations. This is the way it really works. Obey what you understand about God, and more understanding will be given to you.
- [8G] Do not let a lack of knowledge block you from speaking for Jesus Christ. You had enough knowledge to accept him as your Savior. Just because you do not know everything does not mean you are wrong. The people asking you questions, do not know everything either. You have probably met very educated people in your life who were wrong. One of the leading causes of death is mistakes by very educated people in the medical profession. Every time there is a trial at least one very educated lawyer turns out to be wrong. This does not mean we should be happy with not knowing, or that we should not try to learn more in order to answer questions. It simply means that we should remain confident in what we do know while we gain even more knowledge. You and I are walking proof of the truth of Christianity. You know what you were like before you met Christ, and you know what you are like now. Often this difference is so deep inside of us that it is impossible for others to see it. That does not mean it is not real. Be patient. The truth will become known. There are answers to all the questions people ask.

My further thoughts:

- (8h) **Walking on the Water** Matthew is not explicit, so it is a matter of opinion, but I think it teaches that a successful Christian walk depends on Him, *not* us. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not your own fears and doubts.
- (8i) **Timothy & Titus - Futility of Debate** I think they all have the same idea: Do not argue. However, notice that all of these passages are talking about arguing about vain or unimportant things/subjects/words. There are some things in life that we *do* need to discuss; such as allowing God into our lives, following His word, living for Him.
- (8j) **Nobody knows.** Ignorance is a fact of all of our lives. No one besides God can know everything.