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Missional Apologetics Training

Session 3: How to deal with challenging questions?

Session 1 Review

- ▶ Survey Review
- ▶ Discussion on Current Evangelism Methods
- ▶ Evangelism and Results
- ▶ Challenges in Post Modern Generation Outreach
- ▶ Methodologies
 - ▶ Agnosticism
 - ▶ Atheism
 - ▶ Rationalism
 - ▶ Fideism
 - ▶ Pantheism etc.

Session 2 Review

- ▶ Absolute vs Relative Truth
- ▶ Worldviews
 - ▶ Naturalism
 - ▶ Pantheism
 - ▶ Theism
 - ▶ Spiritism and Polytheism
 - ▶ Postmodernism
- ▶ Truth – God- Jesus –Action Framework

Session 3 Outline

- IS it Ok to have questions about faith & God?
- What should we do with all the questions?
- How does different views change the answers?
- Some guidelines for dealing with questions?
- Belief Systems – “isms”
- Questions about God
- Questions about Jesus Christ
- Questions about the Bible
- Questions about Christian Doctrines
- Conclusion

IS it Ok to have questions about faith & God?

- ▶ People will say “simply believe and don’t ask questions”
- ▶ IS God angry when we ask questions?
- ▶ Judges 6:13-16
 - ▶ 13 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” 14 The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” 15 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” 16 The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.” (NIV)

What should we do with all the questions?

- ▶ Ignore them? No, we should work on it prayerfully
- ▶ It is important for us as well for others including our children
- ▶ Many think Christianity is irrational because the Bible cannot answer questions like science.
- ▶ We should discuss, pray and come to right conclusions.

Some guidelines for dealing with questions?

- ▶ If someone else is asking, ask follow-up questions to understand the question and the context.
- ▶ If answering the question requires an understanding of the context then ask for it before answering. Example, the Bible passage related questions.
- ▶ Try to read all sources available before coming to a conclusion. Example- How did Judas Iscariot die?
- ▶ In many cases, the person asking the questions may already have some conclusions. It is important to understand if they have some conclusions which needs to be challenged or confirmed.
- ▶ Never pretend as if you know all the answers. If needed, feel free to ask time before providing a response so that you can give correct answers.

How did Judas Iscariot Die?

- ▶ Matthew 27:5

- ▶ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

- ▶ Acts 1:18

- ▶ Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.

- ▶ There is no contradiction surrounding Judas' death; rather, merely two descriptions given by two different authors of the same event.

Belief Systems – “isms” – Calvinism & Arminianism

- ▶ **Calvinism**--God ordained every future event before creation. God selected only certain individuals for salvation, based on nothing good or bad within the person. God changes the pre-selected people's hearts to love God. God's saving grace is irresistible. Jesus only died for the ones who had been pre-selected for salvation.
- ▶ **Hyper-Calvinism**--In addition to the above, God also actively causes people to sin or go to Hell.
- ▶ **Moderate Calvinism/Arminianism**--God sees the future. He knows who will respond to the Gospel and be saved. God enlightens sinners first, thus granting them the same freedom of choice that Adam had in the beginning. People can either accept or reject Jesus. Jesus died for all people, but it only applies to those who respond in faith.

Belief Systems – “isms” – Open Theism, Selective Open Theism & Molinism

- ▶ **Open Theism**--It is impossible for God to know the future free will choices of humans in advance. God knows everything which can be known. But this simply cannot be known in advance. So this is why God tests people, to see how they will respond. When God prophesies, He is not looking to see the future, He is stepping in to actively cause those events to take place.
- ▶ **Selective Open Theism**--God can choose to see any detail of the future that He desires. He has that ability. However, just as God chooses not to always use His full destructive power, God selectively chooses which things He wants to know about the future and which He does not.
- ▶ **Molinism**--God knows every possibility of every circumstance and every different choice a human might make. God chooses to allow only one of these potential choices to occur. Or He knows which one is more likely to occur. God maneuvers people's circumstances to cause people to make certain choices.

Questions about God

1. Why is the world full of suffering?
2. Is the risk of freedom worth all the suffering?
3. Why would an all-powerful God need our prayer?

Questions about Jesus Christ

1. Why should I trust Gospel accounts?
2. Aren't gospel's full of contradictions?
3. Why should I believe in resurrection?

Questions about the Bible

- ▶ Why are there so many different interpretations of the Bible?
- ▶ What about the “holy books of other religions”?

Questions about Christian Doctrines

- ▶ Do all non-Christians go to hell?
- ▶ How can another man's death pardon me?

Conclusion

- ▶ There are many questions with which people wrestle
- ▶ Some may be critical, while some may not be that significant
- ▶ Thinking about questions and working on biblical answers is very important
- ▶ You may struggle with answers to some questions but that should not discourage us from pursuing right and truthful answers
- ▶ We have to acknowledge that we are created beings trying to figure out everything about our creator.
- ▶ We are finite beings and have limitations

Questions & Discussion
