



TRUTH IN TENSION

GREG HASWELL

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KEEP ON

ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

In some cases we learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.

—Dallben, from The Book of Three by Lloyd Alexander

A thing becomes an idol when it is placed before, or in the place of, the living God. The idol can be anything—a piece of wood, the sun, the Bible, a person, or a system of answers that explains reality sufficiently for one's own experiences. . . . To come to God seeking anything but himself is to come with insufficient need. . . . When answers are idols, God is irrelevant.

– **John Fischer , True Believers ~~Don't~~ Ask Why**

and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

JOHN 8:3-9

To read the Gospels is to find the Son of Man free with His questions and careful with His answers. The Gospels read like a riddle. No one today speaks like Jesus. Jesus always seemed to send people away scratching their heads—even His disciples. He was not a man with easy answers. He was not a seminar leader. He never gave a three-point message; His sermons didn't fall easily into an outline. Jesus spoke in a way that demanded participatory listening. He did not go the distance to communicate to His hearers. He went so far but no farther, requiring an effort on the part of the listener to meet Him. His favorite phrase when speaking a public message was "He who has an ear, let him hear."

– **John Fischer , True Believers ~~Don't~~ Ask Why**

Hear. He used it as an activity—something that some people do with their ears, but not necessarily everyone. Apparently a person can have ears and not hear, and in such a case, Jesus is not going to go the extra mile to get that individual's attention. If people find something else to do with their ears, that's their problem. But ears are for hearing, and if there ever was a time for these marvelous instruments to be put to their designed function, it was when the Son of God was speaking.

– **John Fischer , True Believers Don't Ask Why**

QUESTION: Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?

ANSWER: Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?

MATTHEW 9:14-15

QUESTION: Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?

ANSWER: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

MATTHEW 11:2-5

QUESTION: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

ANSWER: What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?

MATTHEW 12:10-11

QUESTION: Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?

ANSWER: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?

MATTHEW 15:1-3

QUESTION: Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

ANSWER: Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?

MARK 2:24-26

QUESTION: Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?

ANSWER: What did Moses command you?

MARK 10:2-3

QUESTION: Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

ANSWER: What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it*?

LUKE 10:25-26

QUESTION: Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

ANSWER: Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?

LUKE 12:13-14

QUESTION: Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

ANSWER: Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God.

LUKE 10:25-26

QUESTION: Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

ANSWER: Why are you trying to trap me?

MARK 12:14-15

QUESTION: By what authority are You doing these things?

ANSWER: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?

MATTHEW 21:24-25

QUESTION: How can these things be?

ANSWER: Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? . . . If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

JOHN 3:10-12

QUESTION: PILATE: What is truth?

ANSWER: JESUS: No answer

JOHN 3:10-12

QUESTION: Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

ANSWER: JESUS: No answer

MATTHEW 26:67-68

After that day I saw him often. He explained to me with great insistence that every question possessed a power that did not lie in the answer

—Elie Wiesel from Night

**LET'S TALK ABOUT
TRUTH IN TENSION**

Desire (zeal) without knowledge is not good – how much more will hasty feet miss the way!

Proverbs 19:2

In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.

Proverbs 18:17

To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.

Proverbs 18:13

It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes.

Ecclesiastes 7:18

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:22-24

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Colossians 3:18

1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

1 Peter 3:1-6

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.

Ephesians 5:25-29

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7

4 **Do not answer** a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.

5 **Answer** a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

Proverbs 26:4-5

THE WEIGHTIER ISSUES

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected **the weightier matters of the law**: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Matthew 23:23

FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

LOVE GOD AND YOUR NEIGHBORS

**PREACH HIS GOSPEL
TO EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE**

FUNDAMENTALISM

1. **Tend to reflect black and white thinking.**

They have little place for ambiguity. Certainty must be established.

2. **Tend to have a fortress mentality.**

Those who disagree become enemies.

3. **They absolutize secondary issues.**

When the distinction between primary and secondary issues vanishes, each assertion of the Bible must have equal importance.

4. **Become irrationally afraid of compromise.**

There is a basic fear that if you “give an inch” you will “lose a mile.” Hence any compromise is thought to be potentially disastrous.

PETER MOORE (FORMER DEAN OF TRINITY COLLEGE) WRITTEN AFTER 9-11

FUNDAMENTALISM

5. **There is often a polarization over gender.**

Usually, this is reflected in the treatment of women as ipso facto inferior.

6. **Tend to be highly selective in their approach to scholarship.**

Only those views that confirm their ideology are considered worthy of study, while authors who start with different assumptions are simply not read.

7. **The fundamentalist mind thinks it is acceptable to impose its agenda on the world.**

The values of God's kingdom must never be foisted on others against their will. God's way is persuasion rather than compulsion.

8. **This mindset has an innate tendency towards legalism.**

The fullness of grace is denied in practice even when it is proclaimed in theory.

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