

Palisades Community Bible Church

Online Sunday School

Who Made God?

November 8, 2020

Little Timmy was hard at work on his homework when he got stuck. He went to the living room and asked; “Dad, how big around is the earth?”

“Wha? Uhhh... Gee, son, I learned that when I was your age, but I forgot it. Sorry.”

A bit later, Timmy returned to ask; “Dad, how hot is the center of a volcano?”

“Er... ahh....hmmmm. Sorry, I can’t help you there, son.”

Little Timmy came back again; “Dad, how many humans are on the planet, today?”

“Oh. Iuhhh.....gosh...I really don’t know that, either.”

“Dad?”

“Yes, Timmy?”

“Am I bothering you with all these questions?”

“Of course not, son. How else are you going to learn anything?”

When you first got saved, did anyone tell you that you were going to have to answer hard questions?

One of the common jokes among young military recruits is that, when they are given a particularly unpleasant job to do, they say; “Hey, this wasn’t in the recruiting film!”

And, the sinners' prayer for salvation does NOT include anything about hard questions. That comes later....when you start sharing your faith.

Unfortunately, most hard questions about Christianity come in the form of challenges. If they came gently and genuinely, like from a child, there would be a lot less pressure. It would be a lot easier to work with the one asking because, chances are, if you cannot answer it, you WANT to know it, too.

But, that's not how it works, most of the time. I was talking with a guy, who had actually started the conversation about God, and he asked what proof there was that the universe was created by an intelligent being. I asked him if he had any proof that it was NOT created by a....and he cut me off.

"OK, did Adam have a belly button?" he demanded. I started to say something and he asked me where Cain got his wife. And, if she WAS related to him, does God condone incest? What an attack!

The guy was clearly playing "Stump the Christian" and had no interest in any of the answers. So, I said; "Are those the important questions in your life?"

He asked what I meant. I said; "Do you just want to frustrate me and defeat me in this conversation, or do you have a serious question?" He stammered a very weak response that he was interested in the answers.

So, I told him there are answers to every question he can come up with, but that I was not going to be the yoyo on a string that only he was pulling. I told him that, if he has legitimate questions, we can work on them together. "Now, do you REALLY want to know if Adam had a navel, or do you want to know if God is real?"

That changed the tone of the conversation quite a lot.

So, dealing with tough questions comes in two components. First, you must be sure the person asking has a genuine interest. Second, you must know how to answer the question.....and, that does NOT mean you are an encyclopedia containing all knowledge. Answering the question does not always mean that YOU MUST ANSWER IT. Let's read what Jesus said:

Matthew 7: 6 “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

This speaks to the first component. Make sure the person's question is sincere. If not, you'll be wasting your time and giving them more ammo for the next volley. If they are not genuine, then the second component is:

Matthew 7: 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Too often, Americans just want the answer. Cut to the chase. Give it to me in a nutshell. Boil it down. Make it snappy. And, that puts a whole lot of pressure on the Christian who needs to do some study him/herself to answer the question!

Consider the parables Jesus told that caused his listeners and challengers to think, and even wrestle with, what he was saying. To

have given a pat answer would have denied the others of the education!

It's like the parent who does not allow their kid to struggle with anything. What they want, they get instantly, without any effort on the kid's part. You and I know that it's the hard lessons in life that teach us the most. How's the kid going to learn to spell if they are never told to 'look it up?'

Our oldest daughter was struggling to learn fractions. None of the exercises in the book were enhancing her understanding. Later, I had my lawn mower in the garage, and a selection of wrenches. She came out and asked what I was doing. I said I could use some help. I commenced to have her try various sizes of wrenches and figure out which would fit on smaller and larger bolts. Before long, she understood why $\frac{3}{8}$ is smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$, etc. She just needed to "handle the issue" for herself. Jesus was masterful at this kind of teaching:

Matthew 20: 15 Then the Pharisees went out and conspired to trap Jesus in His words. 16 They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that You are honest and that You teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You seek favor from no one, because You pay no attention to external appearance. 17 So tell us what You think: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

18 But Jesus knew their evil intent and said, "You hypocrites, why are you testing Me? 19 Show Me the coin used for the tax." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 "Whose image is this," He asked, "and whose inscription?" 21 "Caesar's," they answered. So, Jesus told them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 22 And when they heard this, they were amazed. So, they left Him and went away.

I'm not one to add or subtract from the scriptures, but I THINK the implication is that; "And, when they heard this, they were amazed. So, they left Him and went away; some had become smarter, and some were frustrated that they could not trap Him."

Another component of the lesson these folks learned was that they, being Jews, understood that they were created in God's image. When Jesus said; "...give to God what is God's" the implication was; "who's image is on YOU?" If God's image is on YOU, then you give to God what bears His image the same as you'd give to Caesar that which bears his image.

So, Jesus did not get all frozen up from the in-the-moment pressure of dealing with a challenge. He simply turned it back on His challengers and caused them to do their own thinking.

Our society has unwritten rules about questions. "If asked a question, you must answer." ("And, then, I'll decide whether you're right or wrong!") Other cultures are not so linear. Here, if you are asked a question, we assume you have the onus to answer it.

Well, no. No, you don't. If you share your faith and someone says; "All religions just want your money. What's so great about yours?" Instead of launching into the Roman's Road, or other salvation messages, why not just ask them the simple question: "What do you mean by that?" Get them to own their OWN point of view.

Ask them to explain their objections. Correct, or incorrect, you surely won't lose your salvation if you listen patiently to them. Rather than pressing yourself to have all the right answers, try to simply have a few right questions. Here are some excellent questions that can shift the pressure from YOU to the person creating it. Give them the opportunity to own their own learning curve.

- What do you mean by that?
- How did you come to that understanding?
- Is that what you believe to be true?
- Is that how you truly feel?
- How have you tried to get answers to that question before?

These are just a few, simple example questions that can help the other person to explore their own point of view. I believe you'll find, as have I, that most non-Christians haven't given much thought at all about their own beliefs – why they believe them, how they substantiate them, etc. Sometimes, just helping a person walk through what they believe leaves them on the precipice of a deep void.

In the example of Jesus asking whose image was on the coin, can you imagine how dumbfounded his detractors were? They thought they had it figured out; "This is gonna show everyone that he is either leading a revolt against Caesar, or is a fake prophet!" Jesus led them to the precipice of a void that only God could fill.

Try this on for size: Next time you see someone with a demonic looking tattoo, or a T-shirt with some evil looking message, just ask; "Excuse me. I couldn't help noticing your shirt. Could you please tell me what it means?" When they tell you, ask if they believe it. If they say they do, ask how they came to believe it. Can you see how this conversation can progress?

If you're going to be filling one of those shoe boxes, be on the lookout for an opportunity!

What a waste, if we Christians can only feel comfortable about our faith inside the church, or homes. What a waste, if we, who are saved, only gravitate to our Christian friends....like insecure schoolgirls huddling together, reluctant to talk to a new person.

If you walk with Christ, Satan's going to throw things at you. He'll challenge you so hard that you'll want to run away. He'll make sharing your faith so scary that you never do.

OH! Speaking of which; sharing your faith should NOT be scary! It will be lots of pressure if you make it YOUR JOB to get someone saved. It's not your job. It's your job to walk with Christ everywhere you go. It's your job to demonstrate the Gospel in your life. It's your job to tell the truth about Jesus, and the living God. It's up to the Holy Spirit to do something with your salt and light.

In that process, your faith will be challenged. You'll be asked, or told, things that will make you uncomfortable. Remember to ask questions. Invite them to share THEIR FAITH first. ("What does that mean for you?" "How did you come to trust in that?") Don't focus so much on your response as on helping them to understand the basis of their own convictions.

You may find that, by being a good listener, who knows how to ask good questions, the non-Christian may soften a bit and be interested in what you have to share. OR, they may curse you and walk away. Jesus warned us of this.

OH, and as for the opening question: "Who made God?" How would you answer that?

Or, better; what questions would you ask of someone asking you 'who made God?'

OK, I'll help out, here. Nobody made God. God always was, and always is. God created everything; time, space, beginnings, endings. God created the creation of things with beginnings and endings. None of this existed before God created them. It's hard for our mortal brains to

conceive of these ideas which are so much greater than we are. God is that great.

But, that's not the real question, is it?

What's your REAL question?

Lord God, you are so much MORE than we can conceive or understand.

Maybe the best way we can understand you is that you are SO MUCH of what we are not.

You've answered our real question.

Yes, you do love us!

Amen