

Get Answers Get Perspective

One of the issues I have observed, especially in the African culture is the way that children are treated – maybe it is getting better with time, but back in the days there was an approach that said children are to be seen and not heard.

That approach meant that children had no say, they were not allowed to question anything. You would agree with me that those who grew up under that environment, grew up knowing that there is no room to question authority.

Did you grow up in that environment and if yes, how has that affected your walk with God. Without realizing it, we have yes Christians who do what they are told to do without asking to get a better understanding.

Because of that way of thinking, a lot of Christians are shallow with regards to what pertains to their faith. This has resulted in weak Christians who shy away from engaging society concerning their faith.

God wants you to have faith that is based on knowledge – the bible says “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God...” Romans 10:17.

What you know will determine your level of faith and conviction – ignorance is not bliss.

In another place, Hosea 4:6 says:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

In the coming few weeks, we will be embarking on a journey of discovery, a journey that seeks to answer some questions that are fundamental to our walk with God.

I am not going to attempt to answer every question, but I will answer what I sense the Lord wants us to address in this season. It is not going to be a philosophy class either but a careful look at the word of God in search of certain answers to life questions.

The session is not meant to be an end to the means but a means to an end – it is meant to appetize, to create a desire to seek for understanding around certain things concerning your walk of faith.

The title of the series is – **GET ANSWERS, GET PERSPECTIVE.**

There is nothing new under the earth and in that regard, there are answers to questions of life.

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The bible says in *Proverbs 25:2* *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*

When you get an answer to something, it changes your view around certain things – when you get an answer around why there is suffering on earth, it changes the way you respond to pain. In other words your perspective to a situation is greatly influenced by how much information you have concerning the situation.

A perspective is a particular attitude towards or a way of regarding something

It is good that you should seek for answers to life questions but it raises another very important issue, the issue of the source of the answers.

At the center of answering life questions is the whole notion of worldviews – an answer to a life question depends on which worldview it is based on.

1. WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW

1.1. A worldview is

A worldview is a set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that ground and influence one's perceptions, thinking, knowing, and doing.

- To put it in a simpler way, a worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world – it is the lenses through which we view our world.
- Whether consciously or subconsciously, every person has some type of worldview – it affects your response to every area of life
- People get so attached to their worldview to such an extent that they will put their lives on the line to defend and propagate it.

1.2. Your worldview determines answers to certain questions:

a. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?

Do we see the world as created or autonomous, as chaotic or orderly, as matter or spirit? Do we emphasise our subjective, personal relationship to the world or its objectivity apart from us?

b. What is a human being?

Are we highly complex machines, sleeping gods, people made in the image of God, or "naked apes"?

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c. **What happens to a person at death?**

Is it personal extinction, transformation to a higher state, or departure to a shadowy existence on "the other side"?

d. **Why is it possible to know anything at all?**

Sample answers include the idea that we are made in the image of an all-knowing God or that consciousness and intelligence have developed under the pressures of survival in a long process of evolution.

e. **How do we know what is right and wrong?**

Is it because we are made in the image of God whose character is good? Are right and wrong determined by human choice alone? Or have the notions simply developed under the pressures of cultural and physical survival?

f. **What is the meaning of human history?**

Is it to realise the purposes of God or the gods, to make a paradise on earth, to prepare people for a life in community with a loving and holy God, or something else? – *Questions Suggested by Sire*

- The answers to the above impact on:
 - our goals in life - how we make judgments;
 - the way we treat other people;
 - the way we value ourselves;
 - our attitude to material possessions;
 - the way we face death;
 - what we think is wrong with the world and how we are going to put it right;
 - how we relate to human need, to family structure, to those outside our own community,
- A lot of people mean well but are usually betrayed by what they value most. When pressure is applied, what was coded inside comes out

1.2 What shapes our world view?

- Inherited characteristics,
- Background experiences and life situations,
- Family values, attitudes, traditions and customs -
- Habits developed over time
- Exposure to media – TV, radio, bill boards,
- Education – formal or informal

1.3 How our worldviews impact on our interpretation of life situations – Bible examples:

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a. Pilate's question: What is truth

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

- Among the wise of that time there were many opinions concerning truth; and some had even supposed that it was a thing utterly out of the reach of men.
- Pilate didn't wait for an answer because there was much debate over it; as a result Christ did not give him an answer.
- Many people today have different versions of truth – many appear desirous of knowing the truth, but have not patience to wait in a proper way to receive an answer to their question.

b. People's answer to who Jesus was

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

People had different answers based on what worldview they had and what had shaped that worldview:

- **Some say John the Baptist** Herod said so (Mt 14:2), and those about him would be apt to say as he said. This notion might be strengthened by an opinion they had, that those who died as martyrs, should rise again before others
- **Some Elijah:** taking occasion, no doubt, from the prophecy of Malachi (Malachi 4:5), Behold, I will send you Elijah. And the rather, because Elijah (as Christ) did many miracles, and was himself, in his translation, the greatest miracle of all.
- **Others Jeremiah:** they fasten upon him, either because he was the weeping prophet, and Christ was often in tears; or because God had set him over the kingdoms and nations (Jer 1:10), which they thought agreed with their notion of the Messiah.
- **Or, one of the prophets.** This shows what an honourable idea they entertained of the prophets; and yet they were the children of them that persecuted and slew them, Mt 23:29.

c. Pharisees' reaction to eating with unwashed hands

Mark 7:1 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed

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hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

- This was not according the law of Moses but
 - What had been handed down, communicated from father to son, as being proper and binding.
 - The elders. The ancients, not the old men then living, but those who had lived formerly.