

The Most Important Question You Will Ever Ask

by

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"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is God's powerful method of bringing all who believe it to heaven..."Romans 1:16 (The Living Bible)

I would like to ask you a few simple questions to make a point. Would you take time to answer them in your journals, or even verbally as if I were sitting before you asking these questions? Here goes:

- Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
- If so, what was it like for you before He came into your life? (*BEFORE*)
- What were the circumstances around you realizing you need Him in your life, and what did you do about it? (*DURING*)
- How has He shown Himself to you since that time, and are you convinced this was the best decision that you ever made? (*AFTER*)

After you have answered these questions clearly and concisely, I will make my point. It is this: You have just prepared yourself for sharing the Gospel (*The Good News*) as it relates to your life, and as a result there will be no argument that can trump your testimony or undermine the authority of the Gospel in your life. Why is this? It is because you have just presented that Jesus has made a difference in your life and you know this from personal experience. As you heard me say many times, "*Experience trumps theory all day long.*" I will also say that you have just prepared yourself to present a message that millions of ears want to hear, which is, "*Jesus Christ is real ... He is real to me ... He can be real to you.*"

We live in a time, especially in America, where we are being bombarded with a message that there are no absolutes, and that there is especially no absolute truth. In other words they say,

"Truth is only what you want it to be but don't trust what you hear, for behind the words is an agenda of untruth." Think of it: We have several generations of children who have grown into adulthood who have been taught this message. They've seen it confirmed with the numerous moral and ethical failures by leaders in schools, governments and even churches, where the leaders who have hidden lifestyles have been exposed. They've seen it with ethics violations on Wall Street, and in the Madison Avenue campaigns to get them to buy the latest thing they can't live without, they discover later that they could have done quite well without it, and especially the debilitating debt it brought to them. They've gotten to the point they believe only a small fraction of what they hear. Is there any wonder why radical Islamic leaders have tried to poison the perspectives of millions of their followers by dubbing America, *The Great Satan - The Great Whore*? Did we bring this on ourselves?

As a response to this negative message, younger generations in this Country have come to adore the "anti-hero." These ruthless thugs have emerged to become someone to mimic and to follow by the impressionable youth, rather than to avoid them. These "anti-heroes" are bad to the bone with their music, their lifestyles and with the violence that surrounds them. But they are perceived as being absolutely truthful, for they make no bones about being bad. There are no surprises with them, and this is attractive to new generations coming up. They think about these anti-heroes as "What you see is what you get," and that is what people who grow up in this message of "no absolutes" are looking for. They want something and someone who is absolutely straight with them, even if he is bad. They want to know there is real truth, even if it is bad. But the anti-heroes they follow lead them to destruction, for they are on that path themselves. They haven't figured it out. They have the press applauding them as "revolutionists" who have a new slant on things. But they are as bewildered as everyone else, and they want and need absolute truth just as bad.

Why is someone as corrupt as these entertainers and celebrities and movie characters attractive now days? It is because the younger generations are vulnerable, for at the heart of all people is to know a truth that will provide them love, significance, hope and a future. They just do not know how to find it. They are open, but ignorant. Because of this they are looking for answers, but since they are taught there are no absolutes, they are also told the answer is whatever you want it to be, even bad things. In their hopelessness, they run into distractions to take their minds off their hopelessness, and it goes from there. Little wonder we now live in a drug culture in this Country, as these disheartened people seek this distraction. What is the answer?

Influencers has an active ministry with incarcerated Christian men in prisons. Some of these men are good as they come. Most all of them are there because of the direct or indirect influence drugs and alcohol had on them while they acted out their crime. This is true across the nation. As an example, we in America have more violent deaths than any other wealthy nation. By in large, guns, alcohol and drugs contribute to six violent deaths per 100,000 residents in this Country, not counting woundings and such. What is not measured as a cause, but remains the underlying reason for the drug and alcohol abuse that we are seeing in increasing measure, is the hopelessness these people feel. A spirit of hopelessness makes them vulnerable. These people need hope, and the Gospel gives them this hope. However, if the Gospel is not shared, they cannot know there is hope and there can be no change in their lives or the homes and areas they live in if they do not have the Gospel in their lives. As a Christian and a follower of Christ,

I must understand that God has given to me the hope and absolute truth that these people long for. Therefore, **I cannot** be ashamed of the Gospel. **I cannot** hide it only for myself. **I cannot** be quiet. **I cannot** stay on the sideline. **I cannot** receive this truth that has given so much hope to me and has set me free from the bondage of sin, and not see the *sacred responsibility* that I have to share it.

How easy is it to share the Gospel? I have found that I can ask only three questions that generally opens the door for a discussion of the Gospel. It works almost every time. I begin by asking the person if they know the most important question someone will ever ask? I generally allow them to struggle with the answer, and when they don't get it I help them. I tell them that I think the most important question is:

"What is next for me after I die?" I have been given a lot of answers to my question, but everyone generally concludes that this is the most important question. *"What happens after I die?"* This is where I share the hope given to me (experience) that this question has been absolutely answered. I also share the hopelessness for those that do not have the question answered. This is where the questions I asked of you at the first of this devotional are shared, and they become very relevant to your conversation. It is a very gentle and non-threatening approach to sharing Christ with someone, and it works.

"What have you done about answering the first question?" This is where the first question becomes relevant to them, and if they agree it is the most important question, then doesn't it stand to reason that it requires the most immediate attention? When the second question is asked, you can see *hope* knocking on their door and this is why it is called *The Good News*. It gives them the absolute truth they are looking for, and it is reinforced by your life with Christ. You then become a representative of absolute truth which they are deep down longing for. They must make their own decision at this point. But they are now clear on the points and the personal response needed.

"What happens to a Christian while he or she lives their life?" This is where we convey another missing part of a life that has been taught that here is no absolute truth. We convey to them that they now have an ***eternal purpose***, once Christ has entered their life. What has been taken from the people of our culture because of the poisonous message of "no absolutes," and the damage brought about because of sin and separation from God, is also a **lack of real purpose**. Enter a prison and you will see that hope and purpose are missing, except for those who have found and walk with Christ. But not in prisons alone do we see this, for there are "prisoners" walking around in their own self-made prisons of addictions, hopelessness, and without purpose in offices and cubicles and manufacturing lines right next to us. They need ... no, they are even desperate ... for answers to the questions above. They are ready to hear you. Will you share your hope?

Finally, I will say that along with the powerful conviction that God has given to me to not be ashamed of the Gospel, is an awareness that I will be coordinating with His efforts in His outreach to someone if I will speak out. It is the sovereign right and call by God to a person that makes him or her desire God. God chooses them. It is His work to save them, and it is their part to receive His gift. But, it is my *sacred responsibility* to pray that they will hear Him, and be

willing to live out before them and share my hope in Christ. The burden is God's to convict, to convince, and to accept someone into His family. But the *sacred responsibility* is mine to testify to the truth of what He has done for me. Therefore, I am not ashamed of the *Good News* about Christ. Will you prove that you are not as well?