



CURIOUS

THE UNEXPECTED
POWER OF A
QUESTION-LED
LIFE

.....
TOM HUGHES

Growth and understanding are both led by questions. Yet curious students are often seen as bothersome, naive or even disloyal, as if they exceeded some unspoken quota. Tom Hughes, in his insightful book *Curious*, shatters the false paradigm and invites us to a deeper understanding with questions that shape our faith and future.

WAYNE CORDEIRO

Author, *Leading on Empty*

Curiosity is a key trait of a person eager to learn, desirous of truth. Tom Hughes has captured the heart of the Kingdom leadership style Jesus modeled that shaped the disciples, confounded the religious, and drew the seekers. In an age inundated with information, may we never lose the wonder that causes us to ask questions about the things that matter most.

TAMMY DUNAHOO

General supervisor, The Foursquare Church

When I receive a new book, the first question I ask is, “Why should I read this?” Which, according to *Curious*, is the right question to ask. And here is my response: Because Tom Hughes has brilliant insights that will help us more consequentially impact the world. Don’t ask, just read.

GREG NETTLE

President, Stadia Global Church Planting

This book is full of wisdom and freedom! Every leader will walk away with a fresh new perspective that will enable them to not only endure the test of time but do it with lasting joy and purpose.

TOMMY WALKER

Worship leader

Tom has done something a really important with *Curious*. He has lifted the lid on the way Jesus taught. Jesus was a rabbi, and he used a rabbinical “question and answer” model to help people understand the truth. In this marvelous book Tom Hughes has elucidated this method for contemporary Christians. And he’s done it in a way that we can all understand! You don’t need to be a pastor or theologian to read this book; anyone with a bit of commitment can discover the huge treasury of spiritual truth found within.

MIKE BREEN

Founder and global leader, 3DMovements

This deeply insightful and creative book by Tom Hughes is, I believe, a resource that comes to us directly from the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit! It is not every day that we see such inspired, God-driven works—a tool that echoes and highlights for us the very character traits of Jesus. He who asked the questions that generated

life-bearing promise *continues* to do so in our lives. Those who remain sensitive and alert to His penetrating inquiries will reap the rewards of promised fruitfulness. This book helps lead the way!

GLENN C. BURRIS JR.

President, The Foursquare Church

If you want to *really* screw up in leadership, act like you've got it all figured out. If you want to put yourself in the place to lead successfully, read this book!

TIM HARLOW

Pastor, Parkview Church, Chicago

In a world where so many seek to offer neatly wrapped answers, we desperately need to rediscover the simple power of the question. In his brilliant *Curious*, Tom Hughes explores how humble, question-led faith, life, and leadership bring us a depth and integrity that easy platitudes are too insecure to reach.

JO SAXTON

Chair of 3DMovements

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FOREWORD

As every photographer knows, the lens we choose determines the image we see.

Consider how a wide-angle lens reveals things on the periphery we'd never see otherwise, or how a telephoto lens brings to life details too distant to be seen by the naked eye, or how a well-chosen filter changes our perception and even our feelings about a particular scene or setting.

It's the same with the questions we ask. They reveal things that would otherwise remain unseen and unknown. And that's why good leaders ask lots of questions, even when they think they already know the answers.

Jesus (the ultimate discipler and leader) was asked lots of questions. He obviously knew the answers. But surprisingly, he seldom gave the direct answer his inquirers were hoping for. Most often he responded to their questions with another question, a story, or some other response that forced them to think.

He also initiated lots of conversations with a question. Again, not because he didn't know the answer, but in order to reveal the deepest thoughts, values, and heart intentions of his hearers.

As Tom Hughes so brilliantly points out, Jesus-like questions are in short supply today. We live in a day and age when leaders are expected to provide all the answers—even before anyone asks.

The unfortunate result has been a proliferation of Jesus-followers who hold tightly to all the answers they've been given, but who have never learned to think or follow the leading of Jesus and the Holy Spirit on their own.

They've been taught the “priesthood of the believer.” But they've been discouraged from ever practicing it.

That's why I find this book to be so valuable and needed. Tom's insights into question-led discipleship (and his specific questions for self-discovery and for leading others) are incredibly helpful.

Even if you understand the value of questions, his perspective and unique filter will help you see things you've not seen before. It did for me, and I'm confident it will do the same for you.

If you lead anything (a family, a small group, a ministry, or perhaps a group of employees, a department, or even an entire company), this book will help you lead better because it will help you ask better questions of both yourself and others. Questions that will reveal things you've probably not seen before.

Larry Osborne
Author and Pastor, North Coast Church

INTRODUCTION

“Stop asking so many questions. Your problem is that you are too curious.”

I remember the moment clearly.

I was a student in high school and had signed up to go on a ski trip that was the collaboration of several different churches’ student ministries. The hour-long drive to the ski resort allowed for some time to talk, and a small handful of us students got into a conversation with the two youth pastors on our bus. Normal chatter turned to questions of the meaning of life, God, Jesus, how prayer worked, why there was suffering in the world, if the Bible could be trusted, and more.

At that time in my life, I was not certain what I believed, or if I believed, in any god, let alone the God of the Bible. I had a lot of questions, and we had an hour to kill.

I was not alone in my questions. Some of the other students also chimed in with their own questions; others weighed in with their thoughts on the questions that were raised. But the responses of the two leaders could not have been more different.

One youth pastor was from a different church than the one I attended. He rebuked me for my questions. For him, it may have only been a passing comment; for me it was a flashbulb memory—the kind of memory that sticks with you in vivid detail.

Unable, unwilling, or uninterested in wrestling with the questions being bantered about, he gave up on the conversation and moved to another part of the bus. I moved on from the rebuke to enjoy the rest of the trip, largely because of the response of the other youth pastor who was present.

Jerry was the youth pastor of the church I attended. He stayed with us, sitting and listening as the questions kept coming. Sometimes he replied to a question with a probing question of his own, wanting to know why the question was so important to us. Other times, he answered what he could, shared from his own experiences, and sometimes simply said, “I don’t know. I’ve wondered that same thing at times.” Simply staying with us in our questions was a powerful symbolic act.

For that first youth pastor, a life of faith in God and a steady stream of questions are like putting ketchup on a bowl of cereal. They just aren’t meant to go together. In his view, it’s best to keep them apart. In his world, curiosity not only killed the cat, it can kill faith in Jesus. I have found that nothing could be further from reality. Jerry showed me that not every question needs to be answered in perfect detail in order to trust that God is real and will help us lead the lives he created us to live. Jerry is one of the people who showed

me that faith isn't always about having airtight arguments and answers; more often faith is about living your way into questions as they come up, trusting God to guide you along the way.

How our theology shapes our biography, and how our biography shapes our theology, is mysterious at times. The importance of asking questions to discover what is true or real has a long history. Socrates was so famous for his use of questions to illuminate ideas that his style of curiosity became known as the Socratic method. However, even Socrates noted his limitations. Socrates' foundation was that as a teacher, "I know that I know nothing."¹ Any wisdom that he had was gained through the communal questioning of his disciples. Socrates was searching for what has been called the logic of reality—that is, the logic that undergirds the truest reality.

Four hundred years after Socrates died, the logic that Socrates was searching for was discovered, but not as a proposition; it was born as a baby. The language that the Gospel writers use to capture the incarnation of Jesus is stunning. Luke's Gospel captures Zechariah's prophecy from the Holy Spirit: "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68). The word translated "visited" in Greek is *epeskepatō*—a combination of *skepatō*, from which we get the English word "skeptic," and *epe*, a prefix that means to move toward something or someone with helpful intent. In other words, Jesus' incarnation

shows us that God moves toward skeptics with the intent to help.

The logic of all life was born in Bethlehem. The Gospel of John seeks to capture the meaning of the incarnation by telling us that in the beginning was the *logos*, translated “Word” (John 1:1) and from which we get the English word “logic.” What does it mean for us to hear that the Incarnation is, in essence, the logic of all life coming toward skeptics with helpful intent?

As Jesus grew up, it became clear that he was greater than Socrates. Jesus never said, “I know that I know nothing,” but rather, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Jesus was not limited to whatever wisdom and insight he could gain through questioning those around him. Instead, Jesus is himself the wisdom and insight that we are looking for in our questions. If there was ever someone who had the right to rebuke us for our questions, it is Jesus. And yet, as we will see, Jesus was the master of asking questions—yet not because he did not know the answer. Something else is going on here. There’s something about what he wants to shape in us that is not simply about getting the right answers in our heads, but living the right answers with our lives.

Curious is penned with two sets of people in mind. The first group is those who simply want to discover what it looks like to follow Jesus in everyday life. The launching point for each chapter is a question worth asking. Each of us has strengths and limitations that God has given to us; they help us discover

the story he has in mind to write through our questions and the answers that flow from his bigger story of redemption. When we humbly ask God our questions, we unleash his power to help us live into the life he created us to live.

The second group I have in mind with this book is those who not only want to grow in their own followership of Jesus, but who want to help others within their realm of influence do the same. These people may or may not have titles; they may be pastors, small group leaders, dads or moms. I call these people leaders, and I am convinced that most people are leaders in the lives of at least a handful of other people. The moment you desire to use your influence to move someone with you toward Christ is the moment that you become a leader.

Almost all the people I know in leadership got their start by watching someone else. Those are usually the good stories. However, I also know a much greater number of people who never stepped into formal leadership of any sort. Usually, when I talk with these people, they tell me stories of coming to the conclusion that they could not possibly ever lead others. When you ask them why they have come to that decision, their answers are revealing. Many saw someone leading and thought, *I will never have the confidence they have. I will never know enough to lead like they do. I will never be able “get a vision” like they do.* Do not sideline the influence God has given you simply because you fear that you do not know all the answers. Maybe you need to instead be willing to ask the right questions.

The lines between these two audiences blur, so at times the chapters of *Curious* do the same. You will also notice that I do not address many of the classic questions that come up on the way to initial faith in Christ. There are many great books that address those questions.² But this book is about asking questions that result in answers that are not so much written down as they are lived out. They are generative questions designed to help us ask our way to the world God wants. In other words, how does trusting the logic of all life lead me to incarnate my trust in him?

The book is organized in two sections. The first section helps us see just how often Jesus used questions to provoke and stir faith in people's lives. Questions are not the antagonist to faith, but actually the way to a more integrated everyday faith in Christ. This section also explores the power of the right questions in the life of those who seek to influence others toward life in Christ. A final chapter in this section considers how the right questions unleash creative momentum among groups of people toward living into the world God wants.

The second section of *Curious* is a set of questions that I have found to be worth asking in my own everyday followership of Jesus. They are questions that we ask God in prayer. For those of you who desire to influence others toward Christ, I encourage you to ask these questions first for yourself. From there, we are better equipped to help others ask them and live into the answers God has designed for each one of us uniquely. At the end of each chapter are some

questions worth being curious about to help you reflect on your own or discuss with a small group.

The logic of all life became flesh and dwelt among us with helpful intent. He often taught, led, and helped people live into the lives we were created for through the power of the right questions. A curious faith helps us discover and live into God's desire for us and our world. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it does wonders for living into the world God wants with us.

WHY QUESTIONS MATTER FOR THE LIFE OF FAITH

PART 1

1

THE UNEXPECTED POWER OF THE RIGHT QUESTION: JESUS' MOST COMMON LEADERSHIP METHOD

*A sudden bold and unexpected question does many
times surprise a man and lay him open.*

FRANCIS BACON

What are you looking for?

JESUS, IN JOHN 1:38 (HCSB)

I WISH YOU COULD EACH spend a week with Dr. Gregg.

Dr. Gregg was my high school physics teacher, an extremely nice man with one frustrating habit: He would *always* answer a question with a question. On lab days the room would be filled with high-school students running physics experiments, using items such as a marble and a ramp to make discoveries about mass, momentum, velocity, and acceleration. Sometimes we would send the same marble down the same ramp with the same height, and we would get a different result. We were in high school; none of us knew how it all worked.

A constant line of students would approach Dr. Gregg's desk with frustrated questions.

“I did the exact same thing twice. Why did I get a different result?”

“I don’t understand why this is happening.”

“The formula that we learned doesn’t seem to be applying in this case. Why not?”

We hoped for answers, but Dr. Gregg just offered us questions.

“Why do *you* think you got a different result?”

“What do you think may be a different way to approach the experiment?”

“Why do *you* think the formula you learned is not applying in this instance?”

Dr. Gregg was frustrating, irritating, and even enraging at times, but he was also memorable, because he would not play our game. “Look, just tell us the answers so we can know what to put on the test when it comes.” He provoked us not just to learn, but also to learn how to learn. He did not simply want us to regurgitate answers; he wanted us to ask the right kinds of questions.

I think Dr. Gregg was a bit like Jesus.

The Master of Question-Led Leadership

Jesus did not hold many question-and-answer sessions. More often he held question-and-question sessions. His response to a question was often simply another question. Throughout the four Gospels of Jesus, he is asked 183 questions. Of those 183 questions, how many do you think he answered

directly? Four. He responds to the other 179 questions with a question, a parable, or a cryptic remark that leaves those gathered with even more questions.

I'd imagine that right now some of you are thinking, *Well, what are the four questions that Jesus answers directly?* But I can hear the voice of Dr. Gregg: "Don't tell them! They will learn more if you ask them a question." So, what four questions do *you* think Jesus answered directly?¹

Clearly, questions were not the *only* way that Jesus taught or led people. He used many different ways to do that. He confronted some people with very direct words. Other times he launched into decisive action. Other times he did various miracles that testified to his words. Still other times he gave long sermons that were designed to help instruct large crowds of people. And yet, woven through Jesus' story is the recurring theme of asking questions to those he encountered.

Judging by the way he interacted with people, Jesus was not as committed to up-front clarity as we are. We can slide into thinking that Jesus is interested in always and only ensuring that we have the right answers. The reality turns out to be somewhat different. He seems more interested in ensuring that we are considering the right questions. In fact, if we include the questions that Jesus puts in the mouths of characters in his parables, Jesus himself asks an astounding 307 questions in the Gospels.² This can be an eye-opening bit of information if you have thought that Jesus was interested in only giving clear answers or resolving

people's dilemmas in life. Jesus created as many dilemmas as he solved for people.

Jesus upends our modern infatuation with clarity. The modern school of thought is that the clearest person in the room, the one who defines reality in the most compelling way, is the one we should listen to and follow. We organize ourselves around clear vision statements, clear mission statements, and clear core values. Certainly, there is some value to clarity. However, the shadow side of clarity is that it creates consumers, not disciples. And a consumer mind-set ends the generative, creative process of the spreading of Kingdom of God.

Jesus wants us to be his disciples, but that is not the end of it. He then invites us to *make* disciples too (Matthew 28:18-20). Discipleship is to see and hear who God is and what genuine reality is as God reveals it, and then to live our lives according to that reality. Maybe that's why Jesus so often declares, "Whoever has ears, let them hear" (Matthew 13:9, NIV; see also Mark 4:23; Luke 14:35; and elsewhere). To his disciples he says, "Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear" (Matthew 13:16, NIV).

I'm reminded of my days in my high school mathematics class when it was not enough to simply provide the correct answer to a question. In the words of my math teacher, we had to "show our work." That phrase meant we had to be able to explain *how* we arrived at our conclusion. The process mattered because how we found an answer applied to questions

we would encounter later on. Discipleship is the act of “showing our process,” not just having the right answers. I might know the “right” answer because I heard it somewhere, but I will not actually live from that answer until I ask the soul questions that help that answer become *my* answer.

Our modern model of learning seems set on getting ready for a test. Jesus was not interested in getting the right answer *out* of people as much as he was interested in getting the right answer *into* people. The best way to do that is by asking a focused question at the right time. As John Claypool once observed:

Jesus realized that most people are not just empty vessels into which one pours answers directly. If a truth is going to make any difference in a person’s life, it is going to have to connect with where that person is already. Therefore, answering an inquiry by a further question is a way of probing the questioner more deeply, finding out exactly what is on their minds, and getting them involved in finding the answer they are seeking.³

Jesus’ questions are often unsettling. His questions are not idle. They lead us. They provoke us. When we offer only answers to those who don’t know Jesus, there is no space for them to deeply integrate the *implications* of who Jesus is and what he has done. They are not forced to wrestle with it, to digest it.

A Simple Question That Is Hard to Answer

Even with his very first followers, Jesus led by questions. He asked them something so simple that it is hard to comprehend, let alone attempt to answer.

The scene opens with John the Baptist and two (at first unnamed) followers (John 1:35-37). Up to this point, John was the man on the scene. He was the media sensation of the day. People looked to John for spiritual guidance and would come out from the towns and cities in droves to see him, hear him teach, and be baptized in the Jordan River.

It would have been easy for John to cling to center stage a bit longer. But he doesn't. John does two remarkable things.

First, he recognizes what God is doing around him—namely, that his half-cousin, Jesus, is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

Second, he chooses to get on board with God's agenda.

Great leadership not only knows when the time is right to take the reins; it also knows when the time is right to let them go. John knows his time is coming to a close, and he refuses to let his ego keep the spotlight on himself. John points people to Jesus at the expense of his crowd shrinking. The time has come for him to decrease so that Jesus might increase in the eyes of the people (John 3:30).

John tells his two followers, essentially, "Stop following me. Go and follow Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb of God." This is a decree—not very question-led. Declarations have their

purpose; they can be incredibly valuable. But often their purpose is to get the process of investigation and questioning moving forward. What follows after John's decree, for both him and his followers, is interesting. John eventually is imprisoned and moves from clarity to curiosity, as he asks Jesus, "Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:2-3, HCSB). In other words, "Was I right or was I wrong when I earlier said you were the Lamb of God?" Jesus doesn't respond with a question, but neither does he respond with a decree. Instead, he gives John more to think about: "The blind see, the lame walk, . . . the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news. And if anyone is not offended because of Me, he is blessed" (Matthew 11:5-6, HCSB).

In the case of John's two disciples, hearing that Jesus is the Lamb of God does not give them an immediate life-changing faith. Instead, it mainly sets the stage for a three-year investigation of John's claim and its implications for their lives. John's faith is enough to get them going, but it's not enough to keep them going. Along the way they will need to ask their questions and wrestle with John's conclusion to see if they too can come to that same trust. That investigation begins with their first direct encounter with Jesus.

When Jesus turned and noticed them following Him, He asked them, "What are you looking for?"

JOHN 1:38, HCSB

“What are you looking for?” is really a simple question, isn’t it? What astounds me is that the first question Jesus asks those who would follow him is not about sin, brokenness, politics, or family history. It is not even a question about God or what we believe God is like. It is a question that gives us a glimpse of the heart of God. It’s a question that also stops us to give us a glimpse into ourselves.

“What are you looking for?” is a stunning question—brilliant in its simplicity, vexing in its answer. Jesus does not tell them what they are looking for, or even direct them toward what they *should* be looking for; he asks them, and by asking them, he leads them (and us). We are all in search of something. We are all on a quest. Jesus invites their internal, unspoken reality to the surface with a single question. At the very core, it is the foundational question of discipleship, of leadership, of life. What are you looking for?

By asking his first disciples that simple question, Jesus alerts us that he is not some systematic theologian walking around teaching dogmas so that we can pass some heavenly multiple-choice exam at the pearly gates. By asking that simple question, Jesus is offering these two men conversation, engagement, relationship, thinking, wrestling, and soul awareness. By asking that simple question, Jesus wants to unearth something in us. We cannot answer that question without exploring our heart and soul a bit. The moment that particular question takes root in us we become students of

what matters most to us in life. Only once we have wrestled with that question can we even compare it to what Jesus might suggest we begin to look for with our lives.

The right question can do that. The Trappist monk Thomas Merton once reflected:

God, my God, . . . with You it is always the same thing! Always the same question that nobody knows how to answer! . . . While I am asking questions which You do not answer, You ask me a question which is so simple that I cannot answer. I do not even understand the question.⁴

The opening question to these first disciples of Jesus is an invitation to take stock of their lives. It's an invitation to a holy pause. The question stops us long enough to take measure of whether the activity of our lives matches the deepest desires of our heart. Each of us must answer that question, and the earlier in life the better. There may be no greater tragedy than a life spent looking for the wrong thing. We all know people who have spent much of their life believing they were looking for something, only to find it, achieve it, buy it, or gain it and then realize it was not what they were actually looking for. It did not fill the void or end the quest. As the great theologian Bono once sang, "I still haven't found what I'm looking for."

Discovering What We Are Truly Looking For

Chris Brady and Orrin Woodward share a story in their book *Launching a Leadership Revolution* that is so helpful that it's worth repeating.

The legend is told of a young squire in the service of a great knight. The squire's lifelong ambition is someday to become a knight himself. Through the years, the knight trains the squire in techniques of battle and weaponry. Being young, the squire is impatient and is prone to ask the knight if he, the squire, is ready to officially become a knight yet. Tiring of these repeated questions, the great knight sends his squire high into the hills to seek out an old sage who had once been the greatest knight of all.

The squire finds the sage and announces what he wants: to become a knight. The sage silently leads the squire to a lake, where they board a boat and set out. When they reach the lake's center, the sage instructs the squire to get into the water. A little dubiously, the squire jumps into the frigid water.

Before the boy can reemerge, the sage reaches in the water and grabs the squire's head, holding him under. The squire kicks furiously and grabs at the still strong arm of the sage, but to no avail. The seconds drag into minutes, and finally the fight

is all but gone out of the squire. At that instant, the sage lifts the boy back into the boat.

The squire is furious and demands an explanation, which the sage calmly provides.

“When I had you submerged, what was going through your mind?”

The squire thought for a moment, his anger subsiding a bit.

“Air, I thought. Air. I’ve got to get air or I’ll die. That’s all I was thinking.”

The sage replied, “There you have it, then, young squire. When you want to be a knight as badly as you wanted that air, you’ll become one.”⁵

Sometimes desperation is the key to understanding what really matters to you. Discovering what we are each truly looking for is no small task, but it is possible. It often includes many false starts and restarts. However, if we stick with it, with God’s help we can genuinely discover what we are looking for.

What Is Your Air?

Jesus’ opening question to the first two disciples is like the sage and the squire. He is asking what they are looking for—what is their air? In time he will ask how desperately they want what they are looking for.⁶

One of these two men is named Andrew (some believe the other is the disciple named John, though we are never told specifically). In response to Jesus' question, they address him as "Rabbi," which means "Teacher." Though they have been John the Baptist's disciples, they are now in effect positioning themselves as Jesus' students, his disciples.

The word *disciple* means student, learner, or apprentice. God created us to be learners, and we are all learning from someone. Someone's thoughts, someone's teaching, someone's view of the way things "really are" in the "real world" is shaping how we do life, shaping our view of what matters in life, what is real in life. Someone is filling in the answer of what we are looking for and how to find it.

Oftentimes, the teachings we are conditioned by are filtered and spread through culture. In effect, our discipleship is usually not through a direct one-on-one relationship with a personal mentor as much as being bathed in the constant culture of thoughts that we are inundated with each day. Some of these might actually reinforce the teachings of Jesus, but of course, not all of them do. Some are in direct opposition to what the logic of all life taught and how he lived. It's not a matter of whether or not we will become a disciple. We already are. The only question is whose disciple we will be.

We expect students to ask the questions, but here the rabbi asks questions as well. Jesus' call to be his disciples is not a call from non-discipleship to discipleship. It's a call to switch

rabbis. You are free to learn from anyone, but you are not free to learn from no one. We were created for discipleship.

Of course, we can learn from more than one person. When those people or ideas part ways, the story of our lives will tell whose disciples we are, whether we ever articulated that choice or not. As Jesus once revealed, “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other” (Luke 16:13). If we are not a disciple of Jesus, then we are learning and accepting someone’s answer to the question “What are you looking for?” and making it our own.

The two men do not immediately have an articulated answer to the question; however, they start to live into the question the moment it is asked.

A Question with an Invitation

I live in the city of Los Angeles, a city filled with people from seemingly every nation and every part of the United States. We are all looking for something. “What are you looking for?” is a foundational question of life because we will wrap the days, priorities, and agendas of our lives around its answer. It’s safe to say that most of us are looking for things like security, significance, belonging, and love. Depending on whom we listen to, we will try to find those things in any manner of ways. If we trust that money is our security, then we will try to save our way to salvation. In looking for love, we will try to become what another person

finds lovable. We all are looking for something—often a cluster of things. The question becomes how do we actually find it.

Jesus does not tell his first two disciples what they are looking for or even how to get it. The logic of all life asks a question that begins to open their eyes and put flesh on their hope. He comes close to them to help them in their search. That same question today leads us to consider if we even know what we are looking for, and whether our lives match up to our quest. What we are looking for can be a moving target in our hearts.

In response to Jesus' question, Andrew and the other disciple ask, "Where are you staying?" (John 1:38). Seems like they fumbled that opportunity if you ask me. How about "John the Baptist said you were the Lamb of God. We are searching for the Lamb of God. Are you the Lamb of God or not?" Maybe they were being polite, were caught off guard, or were even a bit afraid. Maybe they were thinking, *Now that you ask that question, I realize I have no idea what I am looking for.* Instead they ask Jesus where he is staying.

For his part, Jesus follows his original question with an invitation: "Come and see." The Oxford don C. S. Lewis once remarked:

We can make people (often) attend to the Christian point of view for half an hour or so; but the moment they have gone away from our lecture or laid down

our article, they are plunged back into a world where the opposite position is taken for granted. As long as that situation exists, widespread success is simply impossible.⁷

This is a challenge for any teaching that is primarily based on information rather than relationships or lifestyle. I can know that it might be a good idea for me to lose some weight, I can know that this happens when I consume fewer calories than I expend, but the best guarantee of weight loss seems to be relationships with others who live in such ways to maintain a healthy weight. Information alone is not enough. It requires relationship.

“Come and see.” Those three words are pregnant with meaning, possibility, an opportunity for something more than just an answer. He could have given them the address where he was staying. But Jesus’ invitation shows them that he actually wants to *be* with them. In one short interaction, Jesus moves from a question that invites us to explore our lives and hearts, to an invitation to explore *his* life and heart.

Jesus is the master at leading us with questions. We are obsessed with clarity and answers. He often answers our questions by being intentionally vague. Maybe because he was interested in something more than people who could regurgitate the right answers but live the wrong lives. Maybe he knew that many of us don’t even know what we are looking for. He seems to be aware that we often tend to look for

the right things in the wrong places and in the wrong ways. Maybe he knows what we are looking for even if we do not. Maybe that's why he welcomes us: "Come and see."

The Power of Questions

Jesus was the greatest leader to ever enter history. He could have led in any manner he chose. Certainly, he led in different ways in different situations, but he most often chose to lead people with questions. Whether he was dealing with his closest friends or large crowds, whether dealing with men or women, young or old, rich or poor, sick or healthy, Jews or Gentiles, he asked questions. Even in his first interactions with his rising leaders-in-the-making, he asked a question. Cultivating curiosity might not be a new way to live and lead, but considering how often Jesus did it, it may be the best way.

One of the greatest gifts of humbly asking questions is the freedom to stop pretending that you know it all. We'll take a look at that next.

Questions Worth Being Curious About

1. How would you respond to Jesus' question: What are you looking for?
2. As you think about your life right now, what is your air? Do you want that to be your air or do you wish you were desperate for something different?

3. Is there anywhere in your life that Jesus is responding to the questions you are asking in your heart with an invitation to “come and see”? If so, what first step can you take to respond to his invitation?