

## Where Are You? (And Other Questions)

Joe Slater

Questions may be used to seek information; our all-knowing God, however, asks questions for different reasons.

In Genesis 3:9 God called to Adam: *“Where are you?”* The Lord knew perfectly well where Adam was; He was not seeking information! Before he sinned, Adam had enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. Now, however, he and Eve hid themselves when they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden.

Like any loving father, God made His wayward son confront and confess his error. Adam said he was hiding due to fear because of his nakedness. God further probed: *“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree . . .?”* (3:10, 11). Nakedness had no negative impact on Adam and Eve until they became ashamed due to their sin. Now, forced to face what he had done, Adam played the blame game. It was his wife’s fault! And maybe it was God’s fault for giving her to him! The Lord would deal with him momentarily, but now He turned his attention to the woman.

Hear God’s heart-broken disappointment: *“What is this you have done?”* (3:13). Woman, the crowning jewel of God’s creation, had fallen into sin! Like her husband, she passed the buck. To paraphrase, she said, “The devil made me do it!” The serpent had, indeed, deceived her. Adam, however, knew exactly what he was doing (see 1 Timothy 2:14). Faced with the choice between following her and obeying God, he opted to sin.

*“Where are you?” “What is this you have done?”* God already knew their sins, and He knows ours. They suffered serious consequences here and now, and so may we. But God also held out the hope of redemption as the “seed of woman” (Jesus) bruised the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:14). That redemption is ours as well!

## Christians?

The story is told of two men who had been shipwrecked and were able to take refuge on an island. As they went about the island, considering their circumstances, they heard voices. Fearing that they may have been hearing cannibals, they crept closer, and found a group of men drinking, cursing and gambling. “Thank God, they’re Christians!” they exclaimed. To them, anyone who didn’t eat other men was a Christian.

The term “Christian” has taken a very broad meaning in today’s society. The media a couple years ago even tagged a terrorist in Norway a “Christian” though he claimed no relationship to Christ. To many, it has come to mean anyone who is not Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, etc. must be a Christian. This is certainly broader than the New Testament conception. The most important definition, however, is not to be determined by popular opinion, but by the Bible. How society uses the term is inconsequential; how the Lord would regard it is of supreme importance.

Acts 11:26 informs us that *“the disciples were called Christians....”* Jesus had commissioned the apostles to *“make disciples...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew 28:18-19). Peter, addressing those who had purified their souls in obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:23), admonished them, *“if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name”* (1 Peter 4:16, TEV). The disciples of Christ were those who responded by faith to Him in repentance and baptism, thus committing their lives to Him. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38) They were those who had been buried with Christ in the waters of baptism, and raised from the waters to *“walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3-4).

Living in what is sometimes referred to as a “Christian nation” does not make one a Christian any more than living in a chicken house would make one a chicken. Nor would even “joining a church”, in itself, make one a Christian. Following Jesus does. Are you a Christian—by the Bible’s definition?

--Ron Bartanen (Arthur, IL) via Bulletin Gold

## Wilted Roses

A young lady was surprised one day when she received a gift of roses from a wealthy woman in town. Upon opening the box she found to her bewilderment roses that were wilted and the petals falling off. Many things went through her mind assuming, for example, that the florist had failed to deliver them on time.

Later that day, she met the woman on the street and thanked her for the roses. The woman said, "I'm glad you liked them. I cut them last Monday and enjoyed them all week, but this morning when I noticed they were getting old and faded I thought of you and had them delivered to your door."

Seeing the puzzled look and hurt in her eyes, she continued, "The other evening I was sitting in the car while my husband went into the drug store. As you walked by, I heard you tell someone that you wanted to become a Christian later, but not now while you were still young. You said you wanted to have a good time first. In other words, you wish to give the Lord your life after the beauty, charm, and vigor have faded and you have become old and wrinkled. I thought these roses would be an illustration of what you are doing in relation to the Lord."

We would never, with a clear mind, think about giving God the crumbs, or leftovers, but isn't that what many do who wish to postpone serving the Lord? We must never forget that God has feelings too, and rejecting His love has consequences. There may never be another day when our heart is as tender to His call as it is today. After one rejection, the next is easier.

Let's give God our best, right now.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)