

Asking the Right Question

Ponder: How a question may be the wrong one.

Scripture: “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?” (Matt. 15:2a, NKJV).

Hats off to whoever originated the idea for the game show, “Jeopardy!” The host gives the answer, and the contestants respond with a question which is consistent with that answer. I feel so smug when I know the right question but none of the contestants gets it! My smugness evaporates, however, when I think I know the question but it turns out that I’m wrong. Fortunately, I have a plentiful supply of napkins to wipe the egg off my face.

People frequently asked Jesus the wrong questions. The Pharisees demanded to know why Jesus’ disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders by eating without a ritual handwashing. Jesus didn’t bother to answer their irrelevant question about human tradition. The important question was, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3). God’s commands outrank human tradition forever and always!

Noticing a blind man, the disciples asked Jesus, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (Jn. 9:2). This was a “loaded question” that presumed something that wasn’t so. It was like asking me, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” No matter how I answer, yes or no, it sounds like I’m a wife-beater! Jesus corrected the disciples’ assumption that someone’s sin had led to the man being born blind. How sad that they didn’t ask, “What can we do to help?”

Let’s be certain we’re asking the right questions. And let’s not feel obligated to answer erroneous questions. “Why don’t you use instruments?” (Better question: Why do you use them?) “Why don’t you baptize babies?” (Better question: Why do you baptize them?)

The right question is as important as the right answer!

Hymn: “Do All In The Name Of The Lord”

Prayer: Father, please help us to ask good questions and give good answers. In Jesus’ name, Amen.