

Mark #3 - Great Questions

The value of great questions –

Great interpretive questions in Bible study can open up DISCUSSION, UNDERSTANDING, and PEOPLE'S HEARTS.

The role of interpretive questions –

Characteristics of poor questions:

Obvious	Don't require knowledge of the text	Too long or complex
Irrelevant	Limited answer (yes/no, one-word answer)	Unclear
Rhetorical	Socratic (a series of easily-answered questions used to lead to a point)	Can't be answered by the text

Based on the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32), what is wrong with these interpretive questions?

1. What's up with the father? _____
2. What do pods taste like? _____
3. What kind of animal did the younger son tend? _____
4. Isn't the older brother a jerk? _____
5. What do you think of the older brother? _____
6. How does the older son refer to the younger son? What does this say about their relationship? _____
7. How long was the younger son away? _____

Instead, great questions are **TIGHT**

Text-dependent

Interesting

promote **Group** discussion

Highlight tension

Tie observations or sections together

Compare these two lists of questions. Both are for Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus heals the paralytic) but the quality of the questions is different. What do you notice?

POOR/GOOD

- Does the paralytic want to be there?
- What effect would digging through the roof have on the people inside the house?
- Who is questioning in their hearts?
- Why does Jesus say “Your sins are forgiven?”
- What does Jesus say to the scribes?
- Did the hole in the roof get fixed?

GOOD/GREAT

- What motivates the paralytic’s friends to commit vandalism?
- Describe the scene from the perspective of the people in the house
- Why does Jesus say “Your sins are forgiven” when the friends were hoping for physical healing?
- What bothers the scribes about Jesus saying “Your sins are forgiven”?
- How does Jesus handle the scribes’ displeasure?

Honing Questions

(hone [verb] 1: to sharpen or smooth 2: to make more accurate, intense, or effective)

a question from our model study (honing it together)
a new question about that same passage (just write what comes to mind, initial curiosity)
another new question about that same passage (try to write a good question)

Writing great interpretive questions takes time.

1. Study the text thoroughly
2. Identify tensions and hinge points
3. Write questions that cover key elements of the passage
4. Hone those questions by making them more TIGHT
5. Check for different types of questions and fill in gaps as necessary
 - Help us to envision the scene (SEE)
 - Make connection between ourselves and the characters (RELATE)
 - Explore the tensions or points of intrigue in the text (UNDERSTAND)
 - Reveal how different sections of the text relate to each other (UNDERSTAND)

The interplay between the questions a leader prepares and the group’s questions –