



## Facing the Reasonable Questions of a Skeptical Culture

### INTRODUCTION

Our desire for the "Q Series" is to reconsider our approach to questions from a skeptical world. Our patented responses, which are much more traditional than Biblical, are being exposed. The church's answers concerning God, evil, the ultimate authority of Scripture, ethics, morality, sin, sexuality, gender roles and distinctions, race, war, hell, right to life, pro-life movement, etc. are being viewed as obsolete, or even unintelligent. To the world, our Christian viewpoint is ignorant and closed-minded. We've been relegated to the status of the "crazy uncle." Our perspective is commonly met with eye rolls and disdain. Our voice might be heard. But no one is paying attention.

This response is not completely surprising. The church has promoted some pretty outrageous views. Consider the recent political scene. The "traditional" perspective in our evangelical community is, "all true and 'mature' Christians are Republicans." As if the Republican Party is "God's party." To make matters worse, every four years pastors and church leaders use their biblical platforms to promote a particular political platform. The world hears, "how you vote" is just as important as "who your faith is in." As if becoming a Christian includes faith, repentance, and, possibly, a change in political affiliation. In reality God doesn't care which party you're

involved in. Really, He doesn't! Even in the church, your brother or sister across the aisle might vote differently. But they are no less Christian (or mature) because of their political perspective. This traditional view is completely unreasonable. God has used Republicans and Democrats, Greeks and Romans, Israel and Babylon, for His divine purpose. The world has seen us unreasonably judge our spiritual standing by our political standing.

Taking the step to reconsider our traditional answers is frightening. They have been a safety net for so long. There's a sense of ease knowing our "tried and true" comebacks are ready at hand. Going off script is intimidating. What if we stumble into the wrong area and just create even more questions? What if we're caught flat-footed not knowing what to say? It's too risky. We stay in our safe zone and keep offering the answers that have seemed to work in the past.

Here's the problem. Our answers aren't satisfying the questions being raised. The world is asking one thing but we're giving a response for another. We just keep proving how "out of touch" we really are. Consider these traditional answers in light of the current questions.

- We give an answer for "Why is the Bible God's

word?" But the world is asking, "Why does the Bible have the right to be the only authority we follow?"

- We give the answer for "Why do people deserve to go to hell?" But the world is asking, "How can we be okay with the idea of eternal torture?"
- We're answering, "What's the role of women in the home and church?" The world is asking, "Does the church care about women's rights and gender equality?"
- We're answering, "How is homosexuality a sin?" The world is asking, "Why can the church tell someone whom they should or should not love?"
- We're answering, "Why do you need God to understand this evil world?" They're asking, "How can we believe in a God that would allow evil to exist in this world?"

At the end of the day, these questions are very reasonable. But we need to take a step back from the traditional approach and consider our responses once again. Our desire for the Q series is to do just that. Over the course of the series we're going to offer reasonable responses to reasonable questions. The questions probably won't be new to you. At one point, you may have even asked and struggled with them yourself. Regardless, we hope, in the end, you will be better equipped the next time you encounter questions from the skeptical world.

## Discussion Questions

What are some other answers we have traditionally given that might not be addressing the "right" question?

What is the one question that you hope no one asks you about God or Christianity? We all have that question we try to avoid because we don't know how to offer a reasonable answer. What's yours?

What is a question that you struggled with at one time but now have come to understand? Share your struggles and insights with the group.