

## Questions That Matter

The right question at the right time can be incredibly powerful. Jesus has a way of removing all distractions and getting to the heart of the matter. This is wonderful and terribly frightening, at the same time. Wonderful because we don't want to waste time on things that aren't important, side issues, and meaningless distractions. Frightening because we are at once stripped of our excuses, our motives laid bare, and our hearts feel a bit exposed. Thankfully, Jesus asks every one of his questions with love at the center. His questions illuminate a God that wants the very best for us — guiding us toward a full and fulfilling existence.

This summer we will focus on one question that Jesus asks each week. As we travel on our vacations to new and familiar destinations, as we visit with family and friends, as we experience routines, holidays, and the long days of the summer season, we hope that these questions will do the work described by the author of Hebrews:

***For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*** Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

*Are you traveling to a fun destination this summer? Snap a picture of your adventure (and include this journal in your picture) and send it our way! We'd love to show some church family summer vacation photos throughout this series. Send your photos to Phil — [philvaughan@castleoaks.org](mailto:philvaughan@castleoaks.org)*

### **A Castle Oaks Summer Message Series** Summer, 2024

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## Do you want to get well?

### John 5:1-14 (NIV)

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. [4]

5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, **“Do you want to get well?”**

7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

8 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, 10 and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

11 But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

12 So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” 15 The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.



## Questions | Do you want to get well?

### Why did Jesus ask this question?

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### What are the issues addressed by Jesus' question?

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### How would you answer the question Jesus asked?

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## Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

### Luke 12:22-34 (NIV)

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?* 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

27 “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.



**Questions |** *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?*

*Why did Jesus ask this question?*

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## Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?

### Mark 7:1-23 (NIV)

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

9 And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 "Are you so dull?" he asked. "**Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?** 19 For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

20 He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

**Questions** | *Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?*

*Why did Jesus ask this question?*

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*What are the issues addressed by Jesus' question?*

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## Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

Luke 6:46-49 (NIV)

*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?* 47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."



**Questions |** *Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?*

*Why did Jesus ask this question?*

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*What are the issues addressed by Jesus' question?*

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## Do you still not understand?

### Mathew 16:1-12 (NIV)

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' 3 and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

#### *The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees*

5 When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. 6 "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 9 **Do you still not understand?** Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

### Mark 8:11-21 (NIV)

The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. 12 He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it." 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

#### *The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod*

14 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. 15 "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." 16 They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

17 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied.

20 "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." 21 He said to them, "**Do you still not understand?**"

## Questions | Do you still not understand?

### Why did Jesus ask this question?

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### Why do you involve me?

**John 2:1-12 (NIV)**

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

4 “Woman, *why do you involve me?*” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”

5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside

10 and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.



### Questions | *Why do you involve me?*

*Why did Jesus ask this question?*

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## What do you want?

### John 1:35-39 (NLT)

The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "**What do you want?**" he asked them.

They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

### Matthew 20:20-28 (NLT)

Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. 21 "**What is your request?**" he asked. She replied, "In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left." 22 But Jesus answered by saying to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?" "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!"

23 Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen."

24 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant.

25 But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 26 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. 28 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."



## Questions | What do you want?

### Why did Jesus ask this question?

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## Do you understand what I have done for you?

### John 13:1-17 (NIV)

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. 12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. **"Do you understand what I have done for you?"** he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



## Questions | Do you understand what I have done for you?

### Why did Jesus ask this question?

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## Do you believe this?

### John 11:17-44 (NIV)

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. 21 “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. *Do you believe this?*” 27 “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” 28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. 35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

### *Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead*

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

## Questions | Do you believe this?

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## Do you love me?

### John 21:15-23 (NIV)

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, **do you love me** more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, **do you love me?**” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, **do you love me?**” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “**Do you love me?**” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

22 Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”



## Questions | Do you love me?

### Why did Jesus ask this question?

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## *Prayer of Examen*

*A review of my day:*

*As I am about to review my day, I ask for the light to know God and to know myself as God sees me.*

*I begin with gratitude:*

*Thank you God, for this day. Specifically, today I am thankful for...*

*As I review my day, I am aware of my feelings, my words, my actions, and my interactions with others.*

*Consolation:*

*God, today I felt the closeness of your presence at these times, and in these ways...*

*Desolation:*

*God, I also felt an absence of your presence in these moments...*

*My Response:*

*God, I ask for your help to become more aware of your presence tomorrow that I may reflect your love and light to those around me.*

