

# Asking for a friend

Sunday, July 28, 2024

I think we all have heard the phrase "Asking for a friend" at some point.

- "Is it okay to eat ice cream for breakfast? Asking for a friend."
- "What would happen if I put dish soap in the dishwasher?"
- "Is it weird to still have a crush on your high school sweetheart? Asking for a friend."
- "How many cats is too many cats? Asking for a friend."
- "Do they let adults on the kids' rides at Disney World? Asking for a friend."
- "How mad would my husband be if I brought home another puppy? Asking for a friend."

It probably originated from public advice columns where people didn't want the appearance of being the person that the question was about...

We generally understand it is...

*Used when someone knows the [questioning is stupid](#) or embarrassing and doesn't want to take the blame for asking such a question. Everyone knows they're really asking for themselves, but they pretend their [conscience](#) is clear.*

I would say that it is also used to ask questions for which we already know that the answer is obvious (negatively or positively) but we don't like that answer so we ask it anyway (under the guise of asking for someone else) hoping to get a different answer or some sort of justification that will ease our guilt at not wanting to submit to what we know we should or should not be doing.

This morning, before we invite the Baptismal Candidates on stage and celebrate their decision to take this step of faith (and we will be asking them some questions right before they are baptized); I want all of us to consider these questions about ourselves, all of which the answers too should be obvious. And yet too often I find that they are questions we are afraid to ask about ourselves because it requires we examine ourselves too closely. Questions that we are more comfortable asking and/or answering about others than we are for ourselves; thus my tongue-in-cheek title for my message today.

First of all, let's consider if this something that scripture calls on us to do.

## KEY TEXTS:

### 2 Corinthians 13:5-6

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 6 And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.

### 1 Corinthians 11:27-31

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

### 2 Peter 1:3-11

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

10 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So how can we examine ourselves to see whether or not we are in the faith? One way is to honestly ask ourselves questions like the following... And remember, you are not "Asking For A Friend"

Do I believe in the one true God?

### John 17:3

3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Do I believe Jesus is His Son and died for my sins?

1 Peter 2:24

24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

Have I repented of my sins and been born again?

Acts 3:19

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

John 3:3

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

Have I confessed Jesus as Lord and invited him to live in my heart?

Romans 10:9-10

9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Have I been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

Acts 19:1-6

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

4 Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Have I changed?

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Am I different from the world ?

2 Corinthians 6:17

17 Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Am I becoming more like Jesus?

Isn't that what Paul was saying in Philippians 3:10... "I want to know Christ"

What fruit of the spirit is growing in my life?

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Am I hungry for God's Word?

Psalms 1:1-2

1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

Am I sharing my faith with others?

*“God forbid that I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them.” - George Whitefield*

Do I have a desire for spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 14:1

14 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.

Am I consistently saying no to ungodliness?

Titus 2:11-12

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,”

Am I allowing sin to continue to keep a foothold in my life

Ephesians 4:27

27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

## Am I Wrestling with the hard stuff?

- Loving my enemies,
- Turning the other cheek,
- Going two miles instead of one,
- Having only one master
- Not worrying about anything,
- Doing good to those who hate us,
- Forgiving seventy times Seven,
- Praying for those who persecute us,
- Taking up our cross and dying daily,
- Only one way to heaven,
- The reality of Hell

\*All these are things Jesus taught us and, though we are not perfect, It should be evident that we are striving to live out these truths in our lives

## Do I weep for the lost?

Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus and cried in anguish over Jerusalem

Romans 9:1-2

9 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

## Do I grieve over Sin in the world?

## Do my emotions, attitudes and actions support my Christian Testimony?

Jeremiah 23:11

11 “Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness,” declares the Lord.

Titus 1:16

16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him...

Psalms 139:23-24

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

## This is a baptism questionnaire from a church in South Asia.

- Are you willing to leave home and lose the blessing of your father?
- Are you willing to lose your job?
- Are you willing to go to the village and those who persecute you, forgive them, and share the love of Christ with them?
- Are you willing to give an offering to the Lord?
- Are you willing to be beaten rather than deny your faith?
- Are you willing to go to prison?
- Are you willing to die for Jesus?

### Philippians 3:10-14

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.