



O716
April 22, 2007

Trading Certainty For Mystery

Going from an arrogant, agitated "know-it-all" to a humble, happy "know enough"

(SERIES: Loving God Without Becoming An A. S. K. : 08 of 11)
by Dr. David Foster

"Jesus asked the boy's father, 'How long has he been like this?' 'From childhood,' he answered. 'It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.' " 'If you can?' said Jesus. 'Everything is possible for him who believes.' Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I DO BELIEVE; HELP ME OVERCOME MY UNBELIEF!'" (Mark 9:21-24 NIV)

"The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I've been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus. The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone, across the board. This is my life work: helping people understand and respond to this Message. It came as a sheer gift to me, a real surprise, God handling all the details. When it came to presenting the Message to people who had no background in God's way, I was the least qualified of any of the available Christians. God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities. And so HERE I AM, PREACHING AND WRITING ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE WAY OVER MY HEAD, THE INEXHAUSTIBLE RICHES AND GENEROSITY OF CHRIST." (Ephes. 3:6-8 Msg)

Desperately Seeking Certainty

God is great yet limited.

God is good yet restrained.

God is here while at same being there.

2 Perspectives On Life

You can live like life is a **question**.

"Put an end to their myths and fables, and their idea of being saved by finding favor with an endless chain of angels leading up to God--wild ideas that stir up questions and arguments instead of helping people accept God's plan of faith." (1 Tim 1:4)

"...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth." (2 Tim 3:7 NIV)

Using questions to **hide behind**.

Using questions to **avoid making a decision**.

"He who is not with me is **against** me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." (Mat 12:30 NIV)

You can live like life is a **Quest**.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (Phil 2:12-13 NIV)

Good Quest Questions Are Essential

Because the hunger for **truth** is a mark of **maturity**.

"Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and ASKING THEM QUESTIONS." (Luke 2:41-46 NIV)

Because God has a **perspective** we need to **discover**.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad. 'You are not yet fifty years old,' the Jews said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham!' 'I tell you the truth,' Jesus answered, 'BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS BORN, I AM!'" (John 8:56-58 NIV)

". . . God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything." (1 John 3:20 NIV)

Because firsthand faith includes both **certainty** & **mystery**.

"In the same way, WE CAN SEE AND UNDERSTAND ONLY A LITTLE ABOUT GOD NOW, as if we were peering at his reflection in a poor mirror; but someday we are going to see him in his completeness, face to face. Now all that I know is hazy and blurred, but then I will see everything clearly, just as clearly as God sees into my heart right now." (1 Cor 13:12 TLB)

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE." (1 John 5:13 NIV)

Because wisdom requires **struggle** & **honest confrontation**.

"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also **DESIRABLE FOR GAINING WISDOM**, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." (Gen 3:6 NIV)

Because life with God is a dance with **trust** & **love**.

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' 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.'" (John 21:15-17 NIV)