

PRINCIPLE THREE: Asking Good Questions

Why is it important to ask good questions?

Asking good questions helps us understand what a book of the Bible or particular passage says. Good questions then drive us deeper to understand what an author is saying through a text so we might be transformed by it.



What is a “good” question?

- A good question is one that identifies some aspect of a text that is necessary for understanding what its author is saying through it.
- Good questions lead us to where an author wants to take us.

How to ask good questions?

Begin by asking **basic questions** of observation about what the text says:

- What does the text say?
- When and where did any events in the text take place?
- Who are the characters mentioned in the text?
- What are the important connecting or transition words used in the text?
- What are the important comparisons or contrasts drawn in the text?
- Are there any repeated words or ideas that appear in the text?

Then go deeper by asking **bigger questions** about the meaning of the text, about what its author is saying through it:

- How has the author decided to communicate?
- What is the author’s tone toward the subject of the text?
- Why has the author decided to say this here? Why in this way?
- How has the author decided to structure the text?
- What is surprising about what the author says?
- How does this text point to or speak about Jesus?
- What is the overarching message of the text?
- How does the author want readers to respond to the text?

What should our attitude be in asking questions of God’s Word?

- **Curiosity.** Ask questions with the curiosity of a child.
- **Humility.** Allow the text to answer questions solicited by the text itself.
- **Discernment.** Ask questions that go beyond the basics.
- **Perseverance.** Pursue questions in order to get God’s heart.

Questions to Consider:

Read Jonah 1:1-17.

What are some **basic questions** to ask about this passage?

List out 12 **bigger questions** about the meaning of this passage. Then circle 2 or 3 of these that are especially helpful for getting at what the author is saying through the passage.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

If you haven’t already, take a minute to think through how the author of this passage would have wanted readers to respond to it and how you can respond to the message of this passage today.