

Leading Questions

Chapter 1

Leading Questions

Whenever there is a conflict between two viewpoints, a thorough examination of all the proofs on both sides becomes essential. This is why the Courts of Law allow plenty of time for cross-examination to both of the sides.

Asking proper questions and getting an honest response is essential for discovering truth. While this procedure is always followed in Courts of Law, Christian Apologists often overlook this approach. Many of them feel that making affirmations is better than conducting an interrogation. This is a misunderstanding. While making affirmations is essential in all defense of truth, an Apologist should never depend upon it alone.

Human depravity biases people from accepting the truth. Thus in many situations the opponent can dismiss the entire labour of the Apologist with a simple, "I am not convinced". On the other hand, if the Apologist can lead his opponent through a series of questions, with each question bringing him closer to truth, then the opponent cannot easily get out of it. After all the conclusion now depends upon numerous assertions that the opponent has made.

The erroneous opinion of a person on a given subject often depends upon numerous other subjects and assumptions. Thus to show the truth to that person, it is necessary first to expose all those related assumptions in his mind that are false. This can be done only by questioning him on important assumptions, so that in the process of defending them his false stand is exposed. No amount of lecture or harangue in front of a person can force him to think. But when he is asked to defend his assumptions, he is forced to make decisions. Only this method can force a resistant or blind person to see truth. Thus the importance of asking Leading Questions.

Successful Christian Apologists should constantly strive to make their interrogation yet more powerful every day. Interrogation of the type mentioned in this chapter is called asking "leading questions". They are useful not only for the apologist, but also for anyone who is involved in bringing out truth. Thus parents, counsellors, news analysts, and many other kinds of people would also benefit from the information given in this chapter.

What Are Leading/Non-Leading Questions

Discussions and debates help people to discover truth. However, most of the times people are not interested in arriving at truth. Rather, many of them are more interested in establishing their viewpoint as true (even if it is not the truth). In such a situation, instead of becoming a tool for inquiry, debates become a tool for suppressing the opponent. Often the apologist has to work in this kind of a hostile situation.

All sincere inquirers must be shown the truth. This is an important responsibility of the Christian apologist. However, most people who argue against the truth of the Christian faith are not sincere inquirers. Thus they debate not to discover the truth, but to overpower truth with their own brute force techniques. In such a situation, mere affirmative or negative assertions made by the Christian apologist does not suffice. The opponent can always escape by saying that he is not convinced.

Rather than depending upon his own assertions, the Christian apologist should cross-examine the opponent to truth. This carefully planned cross-examination should proceed in such a way that the opponent to truth is forced to accept the weakness or falsity of his argument. He should be brought to a point where he is no longer able to defend himself. If possible, he should be made to confess that the Christian apologist's position is stronger than the opponents.

A cross-examination of the kind mentioned above has to proceed mostly through questions. Since these questions are aimed at leading the opponent into a definite direction, these questions are called "leading questions". It must be noticed carefully that all questions are interrogative in nature, but not all of them lead into a definite direction. It is possible to keep on piling a person with questions, yet not move in any specific direction. It is also possible for the questions to be very tough, and even look very intelligent, yet be useless for the over-all purpose.

In Apologetics, all questions must definitely lead everyone to the ultimate goal. Questions that do this are called "leading questions" while questions that do not attain this goal are called "non leading" questions. Even the most sophisticated-looking questions might not lead into any definite direction, thus every apologist must master the subject thoroughly for using this tool effectively. Every apologist must also make it a point to listen to the way in which more experienced apologists and communicators use this technique effectively and effortlessly.

Though the Christian apologist uses leading questions to arrive at truth, some clever radicals use the same tool to deliberately lead people away from truth. Thus the Christian apologist should listen also to those who use leading questions for sidetracking honest inquirers. This would give them great insight into the way critics misuse leading-questions.

The Need For Asking Leading Questions:

In addition to leading people into truth through effective cross-examination, leading questions offer many other advantages too. Since all of them ultimately lead to more successful Apologetics, it is helpful to know these aspect also.

TO CONSERVE TIME: Time is precious, and more so in the modern world. However, once there is a debate or discussion even on the most trivial subject, no amount of time might suffice to arrive at a useful conclusions. Once a certain amount of time is expended, the opponent might be able to escape defeat by appealing to the busy schedule and his need to go. Thus in spite of all the energy spent, the apologist might have to go home without coming to the real issues. At the same time, this incompleteness might give a false sense of pride to the opponent to truth who feels that by not losing the debate he has won his case.

The problem of time becomes more acute if the opponent is determined to sidetrack the Christian apologist. Thus some strategy to conserve time by eliminating unnecessary discussion is essential. Leading Questions play a very important part here by separating the significant from the trivial and the useless.

TO LEAD INTO A DEFINITE DIRECTION: As said before, though all interrogation involves asking questions, not all such interrogation leads into a definite direction. Leading involves aiming at a goal and then asking questions in a manner to lead the respondent into that definite direction. This can be achieved only if the general and

aimless questioning is abandoned and leading questions asked.

Anyone who has attended committee meetings knows that often a discussion can prolong endlessly, dwelling on trivial issues, without ever moving into any definite direction. At the same time, committee meeting chaired by able and perceptive chairmen does not suffer this problem because the chairman repeatedly brings them back on track with the help of rightly planted leading questions.

TO GET TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM: A logical analysis of statements, cause and effect, deductions, and other ways of reasoning often uncovers many hidden assumptions. Further, often the issues involved are so complex that the discussion goes on without ever touching the root of the problem. Only leading questions can expose the hidden assumptions and the root cause of the problem being discussed.

As mentioned in the previous point, committee meetings are a good example. Often the discussion might prolong for hours without actually discussing the root problem. Only the appropriate questions planted at the appropriate time can lead people to address the real issues. So in all discussions.

TO CONVINC THE RESPONDENT: Often the person responding the apologist is not convinced of truth, or is not willing to see the truth. Affirmations made by the apologist does not create much impact because the logical thinking and reasoning has passed only through the apologist's mind.

Often the issues involved are so complex, that the opponent is unable to see it unless he is forced to go step by step through his process of reasoning and deduction. At other times the willingness of the respondent is so opposed to discovering truth, he does not come to the right deduction unless he forced to reason step by step. Only leading questions can help the apologist to force the opponent to go through the steps needed to arrive at truth.

Chapter 2

Types of Questions

Once it is understood that only leading questions would help the apologist to lead discussions into meaningful directions, it is time to look at questions in general. Before going further into the details of leading questions, it would be good now to have a look at all the possible types of questions and their results. Leading questions can be isolated and studied after getting this general orientation.

Questions are of two types. Intelligence-based and intelligence-devoid. Both of have some more subsections, and it would be helpful to briefly study all of them.

1-Intelligence-Based Questions: Man learns a lot of things in life through curiosity. Curiosity creates many questions in his heart, and in seeking their answers he discovers much about his surroundings. This questioning eventually becomes such a part of his nature that often no intelligence is needed for asking random questions. However, such random questions do not lead into any definite direction. For that the person would have to ask questions that are more specific and goal-oriented. Since forming such specific questions needs intelligence and insight, they are called Intelligence Based Questions.

Not all Intelligence Based Questions are used for good purposes. Clever people can misuse them for destruction also. Thus the Christian apologist should clearly understand

the various types of Intelligence Based Questions, used for good purposes as well as for destructive purposes.

Intelligence Based Questions can be divided into the following categories:

INQUIRING QUESTIONS: Questions that are purposefully asked to inquire into a subject fall into this category. The progress of science, technology, philosophy, theology, and numerous other fields of knowledge and information depends upon asking inquiring questions. At the same time, not all intelligence-based inquiring questions lead into specific direction. Since moving into a specific direction is essential in many fields, often questions have to be asked with those goals in mind. This type of activity is placed into another category of intelligence-based questions, called leading-questions.

MISGUIDING QUESTIONS: Many debaters use questions to confuse their opponents. As mentioned several times in this book, often the observations, the real issues, their mutual relationship, and the correct deductions are all very complexly related to each other. In such a situation it is very easy for even knowledgeable people to get sidetracked into insignificant and irrelevant subject. Debaters know this weakness of people, and they often throw in questions to sidetrack everyone.

Misguiding questions do not come randomly. Rather, they are the products of clever minds. These people know that they would lose the argument if the issues are analyzed systematically. Thus they ask misguiding questions so as to confuse the whole debate. Since the real issues are avoided, these people emerge as the apparent victors.

LOADED QUESTIONS: Guns are loaded for firing and killing. In a similar manner, a clever person can use a judicious combination of words in such a way that they hurt the recipient. These questions are of such nature that whatever the answer the recipient chooses, he is hurt. There is no easy way to escape from the destructive effects of a Loaded Question.

The Pharisees, Judaizers, and even the Scribes at the time of Jesus were in the habit of asking Loaded Questions to hurt Jesus. For example, when they asked Him whether it was lawful to give taxes unto Caesar, a YES answer would have antagonized the Jewish hearers while a NO answer would have antagonized the Roman Rulers. Similarly when the woman caught in adultery was brought to Him, a suggestion to stone her (according to Old Testament Laws) would immediately antagonize the public who thought that Jesus was a teacher of love. On the other hand, asking them to leave her would immediately make him an enemy of the Old Testament Law, the infallible Word of God.

The ultimate purpose of Loaded Questions is to destroy the opponent, and unless the Christian Apologist is trained in detecting them, he cannot effectively counter the ill effects of this attack.

LEADING QUESTIONS: All difficult discussions have a way of going astray from the main point and confuse the entire effort. Leading Questions are those that lead the entire discussion into a definite direction.

If the opponent or the respondent is a dishonest person, a person given to crooked thinking, a person given to confusing the opponent, etc., it becomes very difficult to proceed in the right direction. At the same time, if the issues being tackled are quite complex and if they involve a large number of variable factors, then also it is possible for the discussion to go astray. In all such cases it is necessary to bring the discussion to the right direction and concentrate upon the right aim. Questions asked to achieve these goals are called Leading Questions. Such questions help every person attempting to find truth whether he is an apologist, a counsellor, or a researchers.

2-Intelligence Devoid Questions: Though it is assumed by most of us that questions can be posed only by people with reasonable intelligence, this need not always be true. Every human being is capable of asking questions, whether he be a moron or a super-genius. Thus not all questions can be called intelligence-based questions.

Further, not every person is capable of perceiving and analysing every subject in the world. Thus even the super-genius might be unable to understand the basics and fundamental issues of many subjects. Thus he might end up asking questions in that subject which might not be very intelligent. Further, it must be remembered that for correct interrogation, insight is also needed in addition to intelligence. When all these factors are taken into consideration it becomes obvious that in many situations even intelligent people can end up asking Intelligence-Devoid questions.

An inquirer for truth or an apologist must understand this possibility clearly lest he lose the battle to lead by erroneously assuming that all questions asked by people of intelligence are Intelligence-Based Questions.

The Intelligence-Devoid questions can be of many types, some of which are explained below:

IRRELEVANT QUESTIONS: In this case the inquirer might ask a lot of questions that seem to have an appearance of intelligence. In fact he might even have used much intelligence to formulate these questions. However, not having an insight into the problem under discussion, his questions become irrelevant in the given context.

In a mutual discussion many counsellors and debaters fail to come to a conclusion because almost all their carefully crafted questions leave them stranded without leading into any definite direction. Thus even though the interrogator might be an intelligent person, such questions are rightly labelled as "intelligence devoid". Further, since they are not useful for attaining their goal, they have to be labelled as Irrelevant Questions.

CONFUSED/CONFUSING QUESTIONS: Irrelevant and Intelligence-Devoid questions posed continually by intelligent people many time result in great confusion. What is worse, at times they confuse the issues to such levels that no meaningful discussion is possible anymore. Unfortunately this benefits only those who would like to confuse the issues and cloud the subject.

There are many clever debaters who resort to the tactic of asking "Confusing Questions" with the sole purpose of misguiding the discussion, and this tactic has already been mentioned. However, even sincere people often produce the same effect upon the ongoing discussion by asking Intelligence-Devoid questions that confuse everything and ultimate aid only those who would like to oppose truth.

Sincere people who in all sincerity ask Intelligence-Devoid Confusing questions can greatly hinder the process of debate. The Intelligent debater and Apologist must learn to spot these people and the harm they can cause because of their lack of insight. It is always advisable to keep this kind of people away from the occasions of serious debates.

Chapter - 3

Why Do People Ask Wrong Questions

There is a natural assumption in the hearts of many that humans naturally want to know the truth. Even believers fall into this trap of believing that people want to know the truth. This is a false belief. The Bible makes it very clear that man's natural tendency is

NOT to receive light but to oppose it. "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Since man's natural tendency is against wanting to know truth, and since his human wisdom works against the discovery of divine truth, it is obvious that the way people ask questions would only lead them AWAY from truth. This is the primary reason why people ask all the wrong questions, but very seldom the right ones. However, a growing believer can learn to see the truth and ask the right questions to bring out the truth.

But before we go further, it is helpful see some of the specific reasons because of which people ask wrong questions:

1-Because Of Human Stupidity And Blindness: The natural mind is not only enmity against God, but is also full of stupidity and blindness when it comes to discovering ultimate truth. True, man by his own abilities is able to discover a lot of bare information (as witnessed in science and technology), but this does not imply that he is able to discover ultimate truth related to the important issues of life. Else he would already have solved much of the human problems.

In fact in the last century there was an increasing optimism all over that in less than a century man's discoveries would finally help him to totally control his own destiny. However, at the dawn of the twentieth century everyone accepts that all the human progress that has come by ignoring God has resulted only in destruction.

The crime rate, the complexity of crime, murders, immorality, human viciousness, exploitation, corruption, and whatever else one can think of, have only degenerated. None wants this to happen, but it happens because humans by themselves are stupid and blind in matters of ultimate truth. This most people do not realize, and only appropriately asked leading questions can help people to see that their human thinking is not the answer to ultimate questions.

2-Because Of Spiritual Stupidity And Blindness: The rise of the Protestant Movement brought back Bible to the place that it should have occupied in the Church. Once the Bible became the supreme authority in all matters of Faith and Conduct, a new era of freedom dawned all over the world. Before this many of the European countries were controlled by the Roman Catholic church, and personal freedom for people was nonexistent. People lived and struggled under the discipline of iron rod and exploitations of the worst kind.

Once the Protestant Movement brought freedom, people looked forward to freedom. However, within centuries this hope was shattered. The basic reason was man's spiritual stupidity and blindness. True, the freeing of Bible from the clutches of the Romish dictators brought freedom, but soon people arrived at a situation where they did not know how to use this newfound freedom. The assumption that the new freedom for independent study and meditation of the Bible would bring freedom worked for some time, but not as long as they expected. The reason was spiritual stupidity and blindness.

Freedom alone does not guarantee bliss. To maintain freedom it is necessary to follow the Biblical principles of conduct. However, the spiritual people themselves forgot this. Instead of Bible as the source of truth they substituted human wisdom of spiritual people. Thus began the decline. Spiritual people are spiritual, but the wisdom from their own minds need not always be wise.

Many believers argue humanly upon spiritual matter and try to settle the issues using spiritual wisdom. This is foolishness, and that is the reason why many discussions lead to destruction instead of taking people to truth. Even spiritual people are blind and foolish when the discussion originates purely from human mind. Thus in all such situations the spiritually enlightened people have to repeatedly ask leading questions to lead others back to the Bible. This becomes even more important when a Christian Apologist, Communicator, or Counsellor tries to help people to see and embrace Biblical truth.

3-Because Of Ignorance And Confusion: The correct perception of many real-life issues and subjects might depend upon the understanding of several related subjects. People interested in a subject might not know that their discussion depends upon several other more foundational subjects. Still others might have some idea of things, but there might exist a confusion in their minds about the relative connection of these subjects. The net result would be an inability to deduce the conclusions correctly.

Thus when the subject of abortion for family-planning comes up, most people brought up under pure humanist propaganda might discuss the subject only by considering population-explosion as the foundation. On the other hand, a Christian knows that in matters of life and death the Sovereignty of God must also be taken into consideration. Unless this is done, one can never arrive at an answer proper for a child of God.

Ignorance and confusion of basic and foundational truths is common among believers, specially in our generation. Thus to open their eyes to the underlying truths it often becomes necessary to ask leading questions and show them the truths.

4-Because Of Deliberate Deceptions: Not all opponents in a debate indulge in deliberate deceptions, and thus the error on the part of most of these people can be attributed to the reasons mentioned above. However, the number of people who resort to deliberate deception in debates has been on the increase, more so in a generation where there is plenty of freedom to attack Biblical truths.

Opponents of Christianity, and opponents of all kind of self-evident truth, have in the last hundred years devised a lot of methods and strategies to attack truth. Truth hurts those who love error, and thus their deliberate deception. It is these people who place the greatest hurdles in the path of investigation. They use all tricks at their disposal to deceive the inquirers and oppose the Christian Apologist. Mere affirmations on the part of the Apologist is not enough in most such cases. Rather, the Apologist would often need to force this truth-twister to defend himself (which he would not be able to do).

Only Leading Questions can force the truth-twister and logic-twister to defend himself, and only this would force him to grapple with monstrosities of his own making. Only this would enable the Christian Apologist to establish himself forcefully. This is all the more the reason why the Christian Apologists must master the art of leading erring people to truth.

Those who distort truth can in turn use it for two purposes, and identifying these can often be helpful to understand their motives. These motives can be:

TO FLEE FROM TRUTH: Many people do not like truth and run away from it. It might be because of their rebellion, because truth hurts them, or because of any number of such reasons. They hate at the thought of facing truth, and thus they purposely deceive their opponents in a discussion. Leading Questions can help the Apologist to firmly bring these people to face truth.

TO HIDE OR SUPPRESS TRUTH: Many people would like to hinder or suppress truth

because they know the consequences of the truth becoming known might hurt them seriously. It might hurt their name, fame, position, and prestige. They might have to lose face in front of people who have been respecting them for years together. Thus they might reason that suppressing the truth for as long a period as possible is better than exposure.

Whatever the motive of people behind suppressing truth, if it needs to come out in the open, the Apologist has to see to it that it come out. The best method that he has at his disposal to expose the falsehood and establish truth in such cases is to ask leading questions.

Summary

People love a lot of things, including 'some' truth, but not all the ultimate truths. Man by nature has a greater love for DARKNESS than for light. He will use all the arsenal at his disposal to dodge the truth. In such cases, the best approach might not be affirming truth. Rather, the falsehood has to be established first, and then truth has to be affirmed. Asking Leading Questions is one of the best approaches towards this goal.

Chapter -4

Formulation of Leading Questions

The discussion in the last chapter on Leading Questions might lead many to think that formulating Leading Questions should be quite an easy task. After all, they might reason, we all ask a lot of questions and after all Leading Questions are not different. They are mistaken.

The very fact that a whole chapter had to be devoted to introducing this subject indicates that Leading Questions are not ordinary questions. They cannot be formulated easily or without some instruction in this art. Thus in this chapter we would look at the different aspects of formulating Leading Questions.

Why Learn To Ask Leading Questions

Once in a while one might be able to meet an individual who intuitively asks Leading Questions, but such individuals are rare. The others have to learn it, and the following are some of the reasons:

1-Leading Questions Don't Come Automatically: Leading Questions require the interrogator to understand several things at the same time. He has to understand the confusion or deception on the part of the respondent, the actual issues involved, the best way of approaching the problem, and several other things. It is not easy to take all these things into consideration, and thus Leading Questions do not come automatically to the mind of the Apologist.

Much training is required in the fundamentals of theology, logic, science, philosophy, and many other fields before an Apologist can successfully formulate Leading Questions. Also, much insight and even exposure to the way in which other formulate such questions, is needed before one can begin to ask such questions. Even here, the greater the experience, the sharper would be the questions. All the above reasons put together demands that the Christian Apologist or Teacher should consciously devote time to learn the art of formulating and asking Leading Questions.

2-To Overcome The Destructive Effects Of Stupid And Sidetracking Questions:

As mentioned before, many seemingly good and intelligent questions are actually stupid in essence. Their net result is sidetracking the debate into non-issues, and even into discussion damaging to the cause of the truth. Thus it is necessary to eliminate all such questions and get the discussion going into the right direction.

Thus if more than the Apologist and the respondent are involved in the question-answer session, some people might ask stupid and sidetracking questions. The presence of people who ask such questions is damaging to the cause of truth. Enemies of truth love this kind of question-answer session where there is a lot of talk but no solid movement into the direction of truth. It is falsehood that emerges as the winner in all such undirected discussion. The Apologist can minimize the damages and lead the discussion in the proper direction only by asking pertinent leading questions.

3-To Establish And Defend Truth And Justice: It is more than obvious to any defender of Biblical truth that the world does not love God's truth. Thus all discussion on important subjects have a tendency to move into the direction of error and falsehood.

The aim of the Christian Apologist is not to start an animated discussion on any subject that goes into any arbitrary direction, but rather to discuss in a manner such as to arrive at truth. Also, he has to lead people to arrive at this truth in a manner that leaves a strong impact for truth. This can be done only when he eliminates all unnecessary discussion using Leading Questions. In this process he can exert tremendous pressure upon the opponent to come to grips with the truth.

Since Leading Questions leave very little opportunity to the opponent to manoeuvre himself out of the discussion, it forces him to admit that he is helpless to argue against Biblical truth.

How To Frame Leading Questions

Now that the importance of asking Leading Questions has been established, our next concern is: how to frame Leading Questions. The question arises because any intelligent person recognizes that most questions asked in a discussion are meaningless. This is so because framing and asking Leading Questions are not easy. Else all those who wish to defend truth would have done so.

There are several things to be understood before one can begin framing effective Leading Questions, and they are summarized below:

1-Only Experience And Insight Will Help: Conversation and eliciting information through language is not only a science, but also an art. Anything that is an art has to be learnt, and then has to be improved with practice. The same is the situation with asking of Leading Questions.

In the points that follow we explain some of the scientific aspects essential for formulating Leading Questions. However, experience and insight should be added to them for better results. The more one learns and reflects upon a subject, the greater is the insight gained. Also, observing others doing it, and learning from their insight also adds to one's effectiveness.

Thus every Apologist and Christian Communicator interested in defending the truth should make it a lifelong commitment to learn how to ask appropriate Leading Questions.

2-Biblical World-view And Norms/Standards Are Necessary: Even the wisest

human (even a believer) cannot by himself think correctly on issues of life and death. There is a vast gulf between God's thoughts and man's. Thus no Apologist can hope to ask the right kind of questions using his human wisdom or outlook.

Answers to questions dealing with holiness, righteousness, personal responsibility, choices and consequences, personal discipline, personal obligation, etc. look totally different to a person who looks at them humanly and to another who looks at them with a Biblical insight. Since a believer's mind is not changed instantly and automatically into a new one at the moment of salvation, even believers tend to look at life from human point of view instead of the divine. For example, many believers find it difficult to find why David was a man after "God's own heart". They see only his fallen side and evaluate everything on the basis of that.

This is the reason why Romans 12:1, 2 reminds believers to be "transformed through the RENEWING of their minds". Only this transformation would guarantee that the believer thinks rightly, and only a right-thinking believer can lead another person to truth. Thus the minimum that a person needs is acceptance of Biblical World-View and Biblical Norms/Standards before he can begin to do it all.

Biblical World-View refers to that collection of Biblical standards and outlooks which is used to evaluate everything in life. Obviously, this World-View comes only with much study and growth. Thus, to become a person expert at framing Leading Questions, the Apologist or Communicator must be a dedicated student of the Bible.

3-Study Human Nature (In The Light Of Bible): Human Nature and Human Behaviour are complex subjects. They cannot be studied and understood as though one is studying the functioning of a machine.

Since the human nature plays a significant part in creating problems, and since this nature prevents people from accepting or appreciating truth, an understanding of the basics of human nature is essential for leading anyone to truth. However, a mere psychological understanding of human nature is not sufficient. This is because psychology can tell only superficial things about the human behaviour. Only the Scripture can give an in depth and realistic account of human nature and behaviour.

Bible contains a large amount of information about human nature and behaviour. All this should form the basic framework against which human nature is studied. Such a study is made easy by the Bible itself. Both the Old as well as the New Testaments give numerous character stories, along with partial analysis of many of these characters and their behaviour. This partial analysis of some of these human stories provides us a lot of information about how to analyze the human nature in the light of a Biblical framework.

4-Learn To See Below Surface And Attempt To Bring It Into Light: Many of us tend to evaluate thoughts, actions and events as they are seen outwardly. However, many of them have deeper roots in human nature, attitudes, and expectations. Thus to make proper sense out of these things it is essential for the Apologist to go below the surface and bring out the underlying reality.

For example, when discussing the problem of abortion, many people bring the question of population-explosion as a supporting argument. However, that is only a ploy to hide human selfishness (and unwillingness to bring up a child) because the same people show utter neglect when it comes to other things that affect world population. Only probing questions can bring hidden motives to light, but the Apologist must have an understanding of these things in advance if he has to expose the undercurrents.

Bible is a believer's most authoritative guide to understand things as they are. Only the Scripture would help him to peer below surface and bring everything to light.

5-Understand Cultural/Linguistic Peculiarities: Even in a geographically small country like India there are tens of thousands of different cultures. Each cultural and linguistic group has its own peculiarities. Not only that, often a small linguistic group (say, the Malayalam-speaking Keralites) would have wide variation in manner of speech, expression, and expectation. Thus what is seen as normal by one person in this group might be seen as offensive by another person who hails from another region of the same small state.

Thus the Apologist should be careful when he speaks with a person who is from even a slightly differing group because the cultural and linguistic peculiarities might often hide a lot of information. A sensitivity to these differences would enable a person to ask more accurate leading questions.

Sensitivity to cultural and linguistic peculiarities is particularly by Christian communicators and counsellors. Personal problems are expressed differently in different areas of the same country or region. For example, recently there was the story of a counsellor who was approached by a lady asking for a remedy to the problem of "hurting bed". The counsellor thoughtlessly answered that "changing the hurting bed" would be the best, which was a totally erroneous counsel in this case.

Fortunately, a counselling-assistant stepped in, and explained to the counsellor that in some local regions the expression "bed" is also the equivalent of sexual relationship. Thus the linguistic and cultural meaning of the question posed was totally different from the apparent meaning. Of course this is not common occurrence, but there are times when an awareness of cultural and linguistic differences helps Christians to minister better to others.

6-Ask The Person Questioned Or Counseled To State Conclusions And Evaluations: People hate to accept truth, specially when it is contrary to the stand that they take. Thus in a losing debate many respondents would prefer to remain silent rather than accepting that they were wrong. However, if at all possible, the Christian Apologist should try to elicit a verbal response from the respondent.

A verbal response from the respondent offers several advantages. First, he cannot claim disagreement or lack of understanding at a later stage. Second, the Apologist can know for sure whether his leading questions have led the discussion in the right direction. And finally, such an oral response puts the burden of taking action (upon the truth discovered) totally upon the respondent.

Examples Of Leading Questions

The discussion of principles related the framing and asking of Leading Question might be sufficient for many of our readers. However, all the observations and suggestions given above might not make sense to some readers if we do not give some examples. Thus we would now give some examples from practical life.

Often people argue that God does not exist, or that Bible is full of errors and is therefore not to be taken seriously. If a person argues in this manner, the Apologist must always ask him in the following order:

1-Do you firmly believe in what you have stated ?

2-If yes, then please give me some concrete proofs !

3-If you have no concrete proofs, how can you be so firm in your beliefs ?

4-Do you know that beliefs without sufficient proofs are called blind dogmatism ?

In a counselling session, to someone many people say that they have been facing a problem (Devotions, Laziness, Lust, Bad Language, Temptations, etc.). They want a solution, but are often not willing to implement these solutions. They are willing to listen to the counsellor, but are not willing to change. Their problems are self-created, but they somehow want the counsellor to say that others are responsible for these problems.

In such a situation the counsellor has to expose the root causes before he can do anything. The following sequence of questioning would be very helpful in such cases:

- 1-What habit(s) of yours aggravated the problem ?***
- 2-What have you done so far to solve the problem yourself ?***
- 3-What are you going to do now (specially after this person accepts his wrong/sinful involvement)***

Many who come for counselling or discussion find it very difficult to open up and speak out. To open up such persons during a counselling session you might ask:

- 1-What is the present condition of your spiritual life ?***
- 2-How is your prayer life ?***
- 3-Are you enjoying intimacy with God these days ?***

Many times people pass comments or make evaluations about Bible, Christianity, Christians, or about spiritual subjects with improper and non-sincere motives. Often it becomes necessary to expose their motives before any further conversation can take place in a meaningful direction. The following questions are helpful in such situations:

- 1-Do you mean that you CAN'T do that or that you are NOT WILLING to try or pay the cost.***
- 2-Did he says that to build up, create harmony, due to his brotherly love, due to his concern, etc.***
- 3-Am I (you) doing, speaking, or choosing it out of competition, for status, for ego, etc ?***
- 4-Does this action, attitude, phenomenon contribute more to the solution or to the problem ?***

At times it becomes essential to evaluate an action, a movement, a movie, a book, a song, or a gathering of people. The following questions can help:

- 1-Does it encourage wholeness, holiness, pure conduct, etc.***
- 2-Does it in its totality bring glory or shame to the Lord.***

Summary

Formulating Leading Questions is neither an automatic phenomenon, or does it come easily. Much experience, insight, and wisdom is needed before a person can start asking Leading Questions effectively. Taking the steps mentioned in this chapter can help every interested Christian Apologist and Leader to get started effectively on the path of asking effective Leading Questions.

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