

Making Discussion Questions-Imagination Method

Is the Bible difficult?

I heard someone saying that the Bible is difficult, and that made me think. Of course, we can't understand the Bible without the help of the Holy Spirit. It's His responsibility. However, is there anything we can do to help their understanding? I think I got a clue, especially in understanding the Gospels. In the Gospels we see passages describing the Jewish culture 2000 years ago. Jews in those times could understand the cultural references easily. However, we are reading them now, 2000 years later. It can be very natural for us to have a hard time understanding. It's a matter of time and culture.

I think a key to understanding is the power of imagination. For example, when we see a Western, we enjoy it although it is a story of old times in a different culture. In the same way, if we could imagine the situation of the passages in the Gospel, it might be easier to understand. That is what I thought of the passages, so I am trying to make questions to help people to imagine the situation.

Setting and Feelings

The keys are setting and feelings, so I make questions to focus on these two things first. Usually, Christians have more Bible knowledge than non-Christians, and it is not possible to discuss on equal terms in that sense. But when it comes to imagination, everybody has it and we can all exercise our imagination. Oftentimes, there is no correct answer to those questions, so we can have a fun time of discussion. When we focus on setting and feelings, we gradually imagine the situation of the passage. Then oftentimes, we are naturally led to an essential question. (See sample Bible discussion questions)

It is not as though someone is teaching and others are learning. Everybody should have a humble heart to learn, especially Christians who have more Bible knowledge and experience, and so need to exercise their self-control.

Making discussion questions

Choose the portion which you want to discuss. Parables are easy to start with. You might rather choose one story than a whole chapter. That would be too much.

You read the portion by yourself first, try to picture the scene and feelings of people

there, and listen to what Jesus is telling through those passages. You can do it in your devotion time or Bible study time. After you listen to the Scripture, list several questions you think helpful for discussion members to understand the passages.

Then choose 4 or 5 questions. You can do it by yourself, but if a few people could do it together, you might get better questions. Each person can prepare several possible questions and talk about each of them when you get together. That time of talking itself would be a good time of learning.

The discussion is neither "Teaching" nor "Being taught", but learning from each other. This is not Bible study, so I would call it Bible discussion. People can join easily even without any preparation. (It might be helpful for a discussion leader to read the passage beforehand.)

Bible Discussion (sample) John 9:1-7

Possible questions for discussion

1. This blind man was a beggar. What kind of road do you imagine he was sitting beside? Were many people passing by?
2. When Jesus saw the blind man, what feeling was in His heart? (v.1)
3. When the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man, did the blind man hear it? If so, how do you imagine he felt?
4. What did Jesus want to say here? (v.3)
5. When the man heard what Jesus was saying, how do you imagine he felt, though he did not understand fully?
6. How much saliva is needed to make clay? Did the blind man hear the sound of spitting? If he heard it, what did he imagine?
7. When Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, why wasn't he surprised?
8. Why did he follow what Jesus said to do? There were more than 500 meters to go to the pool of Siloam. What do you imagine he was thinking on the way?