

How to Answer Difficult Questions

The purpose of this chapter is help you answer any questions you or your members may have about the Christian faith.

Question: What do you do when someone asks you a difficult question or something you do not know the answer to?

- I ask the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom to reply.
- I thank the person for the question because it will help me to increase my knowledge.
- I always ask the person what he thinks the answer is to his own question.
- I do not start an argument because when that happens no one learns anything - I do not mind if the person is not willing to accept my answer.
- Sometimes, I admit I do not know the answer and tell him that I will try and find out and arrange to meet him again to discuss further if he is interested.
- Then I ask God to give me His wisdom.
- I search the Scriptures and I ask other pastors and church leaders.
- I try to understand both sides of the argument.
- Usually I find that both sides see some parts of the truth.
- Never be afraid to listen carefully to someone who disagrees with you – that person will improve your thinking.

If you have any questions that you would like to ask our writing team - please get in touch with us at <mms@methodist.org.sg>. Remember, the answers we suggest are meant to guide you - in the end you must find out the best answer for yourself. Here are a few difficult questions that people often ask. Many good and wise Christians have different answers to these questions. How would you answer these questions?

Question: What about other religions? Is Christianity the only true religion? Should we teach that “everyone who does not believe in Jesus will go to hell?”

- Romans 1:20 teaches us that God has always been revealing His truth to everyone through the beauty of His creation. So, we should not be surprised if non-Christians and other religions understand something of God’s truth.
- Jesus clearly said: “I am the way, the truth and the life - no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) We believe that Jesus is God. The best and complete truth about God is revealed in Jesus.
- But “God did not send His son to condemn the world” - so we should NOT preach a gospel of condemnation. We should invite people to respond to God’s love.
- In the end, only God will decide who enters His kingdom - and we can be sure that He is very gracious - His judgment will be fair.
- Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'”
- Matthew 25:34- 40 Jesus said: Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom

prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

- There will be those who think they should be included who will be left out and there will be those who will be surprised that God has welcomed them into His heaven.
- So, when my church member says to me: “Pastor, my mother has died. She was a very loving and kind person. She took very good care of all of us. She tried her best to help the poor. But she did not want to believe in Jesus and be baptized. I am so sad. Is there any hope that she may be saved? Is there any hope that she can go to heaven?”
 - I answer like this: “I cannot be sure whether or not your mother is in heaven. But I am very sure of this - our God is very forgiving and kind and loving and very, very fair. The Bible says in Romans 2:6,7 - “God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life.”
 - You looked after your mother when she was alive. Now that she is dead, we can confidently entrust her to our God - and pray that God will forgive her sins and receive her into His heaven.”

Question: Christians say that God is very loving and very powerful. Then why doesn't God use His power to end the suffering of so many people?

- We do not know the complete answer to this question - and one day when we meet God face to face we can ask Him.
- But what we do know is this: Jesus is God. When we see how Jesus faced suffering and evil, we get a good idea what God thinks about this.
- For a large part of Jesus' life, before the age of 30 - Jesus did very little about suffering and evil. Sometimes, God does nothing or very little to stop suffering and evil.
- Then for about 3 years, He did everything He could to heal people who were suffering from all kinds of sicknesses and deliver them from all kinds of evil spirits. Sometimes, God does many things to stop suffering and evil.
- After that, even though He could have called for an army of angels to save Him, He allowed evil men to torture and kill Him. This is very difficult to understand, but the cross teaches us that God overcomes suffering and evil by suffering Himself!
- Then after 3 days, He rose from the dead. For forty days, He met with His disciples before ascending into heaven. The hope of the resurrection and the reality of heaven helped Jesus to bear the agony of suffering and evil.
- Do you remember the teaching on the cross of Jesus? Why did Jesus have to die?
 - Jesus died because evil men killed him.

- God has given all men a free will – if they choose to do evil, He does not immediately stop them.
- Sometimes, God does nothing to stop suffering and evil.
- We do not know why God allows suffering and evil to continue.
- But we do know that like Jesus, wherever possible, we should reach out and help those who suffer.
 - We should pray for the sick and those who are oppressed - that they may be healed and delivered.
 - We should be actively involved in helping the poor break out of their poverty.
- One day, when He returns to earth, He will establish a kingdom where there is no more suffering or evil.
- Until that time, He clearly warns us to expect very difficult times - the main call of the Christian disciple is “take up his cross daily!” - to be prepared to suffer for the cause of Christ.
- In summary, this is Jesus’ answer (and we believe Jesus is God) to the question of suffering and evil:
 - One day, I will remove all suffering and evil - but the time has not come yet. If people choose to do evil - I will let them suffer the consequences of their own actions.
 - In the mean time - I want my church - my body - to do everything to fight against suffering and evil.
 - Be prepared to be persecuted and to suffer in this great fight - take up your cross every day!