

Questions for Discussion

I Love God's Sense of Humor; I Just Wish He'd Let Me in on the Joke

By Stan Toler

Chapter 1: Don't Be Afraid to Take Baby Steps

1. What is the greatest obstacle you are facing right now?
2. The author asserts that "obstacles are part of the process." Why is it tempting to believe that our lives should be immune from problems?
3. This chapter lists several action steps for dealing with obstacles, based on the biblical story of Naaman. List a few of them. Which seems most important to you right now?
4. Describe a time when God helped you overcome an obstacle?
5. What are you doing now to increase your dependence upon God?

Chapter 2: Hold on Tightly, but Go Lightly

1. How would you define *disappointment*?
2. The author believes that we can learn through disappointment. Has that been true for you? How so?
3. Have your times of disappointment tended to strengthen or weaken your faith? Why?
4. Describe the interplay between disappointment, control, and trust.
5. What would you say to encourage a friend who had recently suffered disappointment?

Chapter 3: Jump In--Even If You Don't Know How to Swim

1. What makes you afraid?
2. The author lists several common fears, including fear of the unknown, of failure, of success, and of change. Which fear do you see as most prevalent in our society?
3. List some of God's promises that speak directly to the issue of fear.

4. Do you see the presence of fear as an absence of faith? Why or why not?

5. What practical step can you take to overcome your greatest fear? When will you take it?

Chapter 4: Stand for Something, or You'll Fall for Anything

1. Given that we face a personal enemy in Satan, our temptations can be personalized to our greatest weaknesses. In what situations do you find temptation to be the strongest?

2. Based on this chapter, describe the progression that temptation can take from initial thought to final action.

3. List some effective, biblical strategies for dealing with temptation.

4. What remedies are available to us if we should fall into temptation?

5. What advice would you give to a friend who is struggling unsuccessfully against temptation?

Chapter 5: Engage Brain Before Opening Mouth

1. Based on your experience, describe the effect of anger on a person's life.

2. The author describes three faces of anger in this chapter. What are they? Which have you encountered most frequently?

3. What is the source of anger?

4. Is there any such thing as "righteous" anger? If so, what distinguishes it from harmful anger?

5. List several biblical techniques for dealing with anger. Which one seems the most helpful to you personally?

Chapter 6: Sometimes I'm My Own Worst Enemy

1. How high is your level of self-confidence right now?

2. List some of the reasons why people may have a sense of inferiority? Which one hits closest to home with you?

3. Now list some of the biblical responses to those common feelings of inadequacy. How does God respond to each of our negative self-feelings?

4. What gifts and abilities has God given to you? Why do you think He gave them to you?

5. Based on the advice of this chapter, form a positive statement about yourself as a person in God's eyes. Share that statement with someone else.

Chapter 7: While You're Waiting, God Is Working

1. Do you think it is okay for a Christian to have doubts? Why or why not?

2. What problems, thoughts, or situations tend to cause you to have doubts?

3. The author sees a relationship between our level of obedience and our ability to cope with doubt. Do you agree? Why or why not?

4. Of the following tactics for dealing with doubt, which do you find the most helpful and why? prayer, Bible reading, confession, fellowship, persistence.

5. What advice would you offer a fellow Christian who was struggling with doubt?

Chapter 8: Get Your Thumb Out of Your Mouth, and Quit Whining--Get a Life!

1. What kinds of circumstances tend to make you feel sorry for yourself?

2. Why is self-pity so easy to recognize in others but not in ourselves?

3. How can we judge when we have crossed the line between taking our problems to the Lord for help and simply whining about them?

4. What reasons do we have for trusting God in spite of negative circumstances we may be facing?

5. List several positive actions you can take to refocus your faith when you are feeling self-pity.

Chapter 9: Two Steps Forward and Three Steps Backward

1. Recall a recent personal failure. Describe the emotions that it caused in you.
2. The author asserts that our unmet personal needs can be contributing factors to failure.

List some of the needs he mentions. Do you agree with this assessment?

3. What thoughts tend to keep people trapped in failure? What principles or affirmations tend to help them move forward from failure?
4. List some biblical heroes who suffered personal failure. What can you learn from their experiences?
5. In what ways can you learn or grow from your most recent failure?

Chapter 10: No Matter Where You Go, There You Are

1. Describe a time when you felt isolated or alone. What was it like?
2. What societal factors tend to cause isolation loneliness in people?
3. What is the difference between solitude and loneliness?
4. List several of the strategies the author lists for coping with loneliness. Which do you find the most effective? Why?
5. What practical action will you take this week to alleviate loneliness in yourself or in someone you know?
