

Questions God Asks Us

Chapter 3: What is that in your hand?



Welcome

- What question or insight from the last gathering have you continued to think about or wonder about (if any)? Have the readings or discussion changed how you connect with God or with others in any way?

Opening Question

- What is something that others have told you that you are good at (even if you don't think so or if it seems natural and easy to you)?
- Tell about a hobby or a creative activity that you enjoy. If time and money were not a concern, what new hobby or activity would you like to try?

Responsive Reading – Psalm 139

One: O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

All: *You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.*

One: You search out my path and my lying down

All: *You are acquainted with all my ways.*

One: Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

All: *If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.*

One: If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

All: *Even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast. Amen.*

Bible Text

Read Exodus 4: 1-13 (NRSVUE)

¹Then Moses answered, "But look, they may not believe me or listen to me but say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" ²The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." ³And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw the staff on the ground, and it became a snake, and Moses drew back from it. ⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and seize it by the tail"—so he reached out his hand and grasped it, and it became a staff in his hand—⁵"so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their

ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

⁶ Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” He put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, his hand was diseased, as white as snow. ⁷ Then God said, “Put your hand back into your cloak”—so he put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored like the rest of his body— ⁸ “If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign. ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.” ¹³ But he said, “O my Lord, please send someone else.”

Questions

1. What did you notice in the Bible reading or in the chapter? What spoke to you or surprised you? What resonated with you? What was a new idea?

Allow for a few minutes of silence as you gather your thoughts.

2. Can you name a person in your life who believed in you, helped you to recognize your abilities, and encouraged you to move outside of your comfort zone by using them? What did that mean to you?
3. Name one ability that others value and appreciate in your life. (Remember, each of us has something!). If someone struggles to name something about themselves (and the group knows one another), a group member may want to jump in with an ability of that person that is valued and appreciated.
4. What is your reaction to the numerous excuses that Moses offers in Exodus 3 & 4? Is there one that you can identify with the most? What are some of the most common excuses (or reasons) that we give to avoid the challenges that come from God’s calling?
5. Describe one resource that you bring to others because of your unique life experience.
6. How have feelings of inadequacy led you to greater dependence on God? How has God been faithful?
7. How will you reflect on God’s question in the week ahead? In what ways would you like to have God use you to make a creative difference in the world around you?

What's Next?

- At the end of the small group or between gatherings, spend some time in silent reflection using "Answering God's Question" at the end of the chapter.
- Make a list of the things you find "in your hand" in the course of a day or week. Think about how those objects might be used to bring joy or love into someone else's life or simply make the world a better place. For example, a cooking spoon for preparing a meal for someone who is having health issues.

Once you've made your list, pick one thing to put into action. What excuses or barriers get in the way? Pray about anything that might prevent you from using "what's in your hand".

Closing Prayer - *Share the date, location and reading for the next gathering.*

Creative Spirit of God, you have blessed us with gifts to be used in loving service. Give us the grace of encouragement to find ways to share our gifts with the neighbor and stranger, alike, so that all people have an opportunity to experience your grace and love. Amen.

One: God is with you no matter what. Go, now, in God's presence and love. Amen.

Thank you to Pastor Josh Allen from Brentwood Hills Church of Christ (Nashville, TN) for writing many of the questions and reflection prompts in this guide and for sharing permission to use them with the Incarnation community.

This outline is to be used alongside Questions God Asks Us by Trevor Hudson. Some of the questions and reflection prompts questions listed here also come from Questions God Asks Us.

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