

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On March 14, 2012, we received the following comment which we believe is a reply to our response on March 13, 2012:

“The normal is that perhaps we are talking about something that appeared in the literature. We do not discuss spiritual issues. If we have questions, we must keep it to ourselves and wait for answers in the literature. But with interested we can discuss spiritual things.”

To the author, we want to express our sincere thanks to you for your inquiry and forthright comments. As a result of your courage and openness, we are able to discuss this very important issue with the entire body.

We must say that your comments touched us very deeply for it appears to us that you believe yourself to be a sheep without a shepherd, or at the very least, with a shepherd who has gone on a long journey. The idea that you must keep questions about spiritual things to yourself until the matter is randomly addressed in a future Watchtower publication is extremely distressing. And it highlights the importance of a website such as this one.

We are troubled to hear that when you get together with other like-minded brothers and sisters, you “do not discuss spiritual issues.” How will you apply the counsel of Paul?

“[T]hat there may be **an interchange of encouragement** among you, by each one through the other’s faith?” – *Romans 1:12*

“If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any **sharing of spirit**, if any tender affections and compassions, make my joy full in that you are of the same mind and have the same love, being joined together in soul, holding the one thought in mind.” – *Philippians 2:1-2*

“Therefore keep comforting one another and **building one another up**, just as you are in fact doing.” – *1 Thessalonians 5:11*

“And let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near.” – *Hebrews 10:24-25*

These scriptures are discussing, not formal public meetings (although they may apply to meetings), but personal brotherly interactions. You are counseled to discuss spiritual things among yourselves.

And how is it that you can discuss “spiritual things” with interested persons whom you meet in your ministry, but not with your brothers and sisters in the faith? All we can conclude is that you feel some fear in asking questions. But fear not! Jesus **requires** that we ask questions:

“Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and every seeking finds, and to everyone knocking it will be opened.” – Matthew 7:7-8

In fact, asking questions is the first action we must take in achieving the full grown stature of mature Christians. See our article entitled **“Expanding Your Spiritual Vision.”**

You remind us of the Samaritan woman who spoke with Jesus at Jacob’s well:

“Our forefathers worshiped in this mountain; but you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where persons ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her: ‘Believe me, woman, The hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you people worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation originates with the Jews. Nevertheless, the hour is coming, and it is now, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth**, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him. God is a Spirit, and **those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.**’ The woman said to him: ‘I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. Whenever that one arrives, **he will declare all things to us openly.**’ Jesus said to her: ‘I who am speaking to you am he.’” – *John 4:20-26*

She clearly had a love for God, and was worshiping in the best way she knew how, but only according to the things seen by the eyes. She worshiped at a particular mountain, no doubt coupled with the traditions and rituals that were a part of that worship. And she expected Jesus to tell her to worship at a different mountain along with the Jews and their formalistic and ritual worship. Instead, Jesus told her that the time had come for all persons to worship with “spirit and truth.” Jesus was redirecting worship from outside of yourself, to worship within yourself – your own connection with the Father as a spirit anointed son or daughter.

This new form of worship involves your own spirit and the truth that Jesus openly declared. It is as Paul said:

“So, then, brothers, we are under obligation, not to the flesh to live in accord with the flesh; for if you live in accord with the flesh you are sure to die; but if you put the practices of the body to death by the spirit, you will live. For all who are led by God’s spirit, these

are God's sons. **For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out: "Abba, Father!"** The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together." – *Romans 8:12-17*

To help us develop this spiritual way of worship, Jesus told his followers:

"I have many things yet to say to you, but you are not able to bear them at present. However, when that one arrives, the spirit of truth, he will guide you into **all** the truth, for he will not speak of his own impulse, but what things he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things coming." – *John 16:13-14*

Yes, Jesus wants **all** your questions answered. And while he provides "gifts in men" (*Ephesians 4:8*), he also provides his spirit of truth. Once you understand how the spirit of truth works (See "**Expanding Your Spiritual Vision**"), you will not need to be asking anyone any questions. It will be as John says:

"And as for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to be teaching you; but as the anointing from him is teaching you about all things, and is true and is no lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in union with him." – *1 John 2:27*

That is not to say that you will not need the "gifts in men." But your fellowship with God is different from your fellowship with your brothers. Socially, there will always be a need for a brotherhood, a fellowship, as shown above. Even the Proverbs tell us:

"By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another." — *Proverbs 27:17*

But not even these faithful men are lords over your faith.

"[T]here is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom all things are, and we through him." – *1 Corinthians 8:6*

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus." – *1 Timothy 2:5*

They are, instead, fellow workers, men working along **with you**, leading you, not to themselves, but to the Christ:

“What, then, is Apollos? Yes, what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers, even as the Lord granted each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making [it] grow; so that **neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters**, but God who makes [it] grow. Now he that plants and he that waters are one, but each [person] will receive his own reward according to his own labor. **For we are God’s fellow workers.** You people are God’s field under cultivation, God’s building.” – *1 Corinthians 3:5-9*

Yes, you are God’s building. And the men taking the lead are working **for you!** So, ask your questions! And keep on asking, and keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.

We are confident that the brothers in your congregation and at headquarters are likewise concerned about your spiritual growth. **That is the whole purpose for them being organized.** Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding that can be clarified by your asking. Again, you have nothing to fear. You are on sound and solid scriptural ground!

Notwithstanding all of the above, if you are so inclined, you may direct any of your questions to us as they relate to the Christ and our work as ambassadors substituting for Christ. We respond to ALL inquiries.

With our deepest affection and love, your brothers in the faith.

“Elaia Luchnia”
