

GREG'S STOCK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

With discussion, co-extensiveness is good. [Redundancy is good, too.] Linear logic is bad. Looking at the same question from multiple perspectives is good. Tangents are good when they focus attention on the participant's point of cognitive dissonance. It's good to throw out a fuzzy or debatable situation (a case study) in which the passage would be relevant, and see how people wrestle with it. Noetic restructuring is a good thing (Rom. 12). Have an aim in the discussion, but remember that the group knows more than you know by yourself. Reflect questions back on the group if possible. When someone asks a question, validate it: "That's a good question." Let the flow of conversation dictate the questions, only asking questions to further it. Good questions are open-ended with multiple non-obvious answers and require the participant to look to the text to interrogate it with new questions and experiences. (Think hermeneutical spiral.) Remember that when they leave, you want them to leave with Christ, looking outward to him, not to their own resources. Scripture points us to a Person, not just to propositions. Use these questions to stimulate your own questions for the text you're discussing. The four orange questions are the ones I pretty much always use. —Greg Johnson, Memorial PCA

I. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. **What strikes you about the passage?**
2. What are we missing in the passage?

II. INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

3. **What questions does this raise?**
4. What does it tell us about God?
5. What does it tell us about being human?
6. What does it tell us about following Christ? About the church?
7. What tensions do you feel in the text?
8. Where do you see the language of desire here?
9. What multi-sensory language do we find here (touch, taste, smell, hear, see)?
10. How does this fit with the rest of Scripture's teaching?
11. What [if anything] is repeated in this passage? Why?

III. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

[GENERAL]

12. Are there commands in this passage (indicative vs. imperative)? What are they?
13. How is this instructing us to love God? Love neighbor? Love our fellow Christians?
14. What examples are here to follow?
15. What can we do as a group to address this issue/concern?
16. How does this clarify the vision we need as a church?
17. Politics aside, what is God saying to us tonight? [Politics = "The problem is those people."]
18. What does this tell us about the kind of worship that God is pleased to receive?
19. What does God prohibit here? What does he require?
20. What would be "the cost" for heeding this instruction?
21. How does this change our expectations (whether lower or higher)?
22. In light of this, what kinds of things do you think we value too highly? Too lowly?
23. **What would it look like if we really took this to heart this week?**

[GRACE TO MOTIVATE]

24. What fallen condition was this passage written to address? Put yourself in the place of the original readers; what might they have been facing? What would it have felt like to be there?
25. **Where is the grace in this passage?**
NOTE A: Many evangelicals are trained to identify grace with forgiveness alone. Grace is multifaceted: adoption—language of Father and brother—or belonging, union with Christ, discipline, warning, conviction, comfort, encouragement, empowerment, God fighting our enemies, divine promises, etc.
NOTE B: Many Christians will identify law as gospel; when this is done, it is helpful to distinguish the two. Gospel is what God gives us to make us complete; law is what he requires of us.
NOTE C: Find the grace in THIS passage, including the context of the book.
26. How does the passage point us back to God's works? How does it point us to grace we have right now? How does it instruct us to wait on God for future grace?
27. How does this passage speak to the issues of the heart?
28. Does this grace make you more or less eager to live a Godward life? Why is that?
29. Can you help me brainstorm what sorts of things keep us from doing this?

[GRACE TO ENABLE]

30. When your back is against the wall and you're under intense temptation next Tuesday (or whenever), how will this enable you to trust and obey Jesus?
31. So how does this actually help us live lives of repentance toward God?
32. What does it tell us about sin's tactics?
33. The most common biblical motivation is God's promise of future grace. (Humble yourself, and he will lift you up; he will provide a way of escape, etc.) Contrast sin's promises with God's promises. How do God's promises help us?
34. Are there conditions to this promise, or is it unconditional? What are the conditions? What does that look like?
35. If God is restoring his image in us, in what ways might this passage help further our transformation?

[SITUATIONAL SPECIFICITY]

36. In what ways are we as Christians [in America] tempted to blow it?
37. When do we/you tend to face this temptation?
38. What kind of personality will have a harder time grappling with this? What kind of person will tend to find this easier to handle?
39. Imagine a world in which this were always consistently believed and acted upon. What would it look like? [This type of visual question fosters hope as well as giving context for application.]
40. What would it look like if things were right?
41. What would it be like if this were not true?
42. How have you experienced this?
43. Can you remember a time when this [truth] first really struck you?
44. What did it take to bring you to that realization?
45. Often when we struggle with sin, we focus on the more visible behavior issues, which are often secondary. For example, anger is a secondary emotion. Behind it usually lies fear, or shame, or a feeling of being disvalued, etc. What kinds of heart issues lie behind the behaviors this passage addresses?
46. How have these heart issues (see some below) shaped us/you?
47. How does this passage speak to the experience of fear?
.....the experience of shame?
.....the experience of guilt?
48.the experience of bondage?
49.doubt?
50.us when we feel overwhelmed?
51.grief/loss?
52.suffering? Pain?
53.our temptation to try to control other people?
54.your relationships at work/school?
55.your relationships with your family?
56.your relationships at church?
57.the way you drive?
58.
59.
60.

IV. GENERAL ACTIVE LISTENING QUESTIONS

61. So I hear you saying...
62. Why do you say that?
63. What else?
64. You seem to be asking... [Rephrasing a question]
65. If you wanted to argue the opposite point, how might you do that?
66. What do the rest of you think? [Also helpful in silencing an over-active participant.]
67. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
68. What do you guys think about that?
69. Why do you think that is?
70. Are there times when that's not true?
71. How does that make you feel?
72. What would you say to someone who felt differently?
73. What do you make of that?
74. Why does that tend to rub us the wrong way?