

HOW TO

handle tough questions about God



We have all experienced times of doubt and of questioning God. And sometimes other people have asked us to answer some really tough questions about God, and faith. And if we are honest, these are questions we have grappled with too.

How Do I Engage Honestly with Tough Questions.

We need to recognise the value and importance of wrestling honestly with the tough questions of life. Finding a finite, simple, easy answer to life's tough questions is unlikely, so the value is not necessarily in finding the answer, but often in the process of wrestling with the question.

Because when we wrestle honestly with tough questions, we are forced to engage honestly with God. And often, our struggle is less about the issue itself, and more about the picture of God that is portrayed.

Trevor Hudson, in his book *Signposts to Spirituality* talks about drawing and redrawing our picture of God. He says that 'in each of our hearts and minds there is drawn our picture of God. Formed over the years through our interaction with parent figures, church representatives and our surrounding culture, and it significantly influences how we live our daily lives...A dysfunctional picture of God expresses itself in a dysfunctional way of living.' Very often we spend so much time wrestling with a difficult issue, when what we should be doing is wrestling with the picture of God that issue presents.

How can I draw and re-draw my picture of God?

One helpful, practical way we can engage with and wrestle with tough issues and tough questions, is for us to consider our own picture of God: how do you see God?

- Do you believe God wants to relate with you personally and individually?
- Do you feel God is for you or against you?
- When life goes wrong do you assume God is punishing you?
- Do you feel God is indifferent, or removed from your daily life experience?
- Is there an image or picture of God that comes to mind?

We can begin to re-draw our picture of God by:

- Remembering that God is mystery, we're not trying to understand or figure God out.
- Remembering that God has chosen to reveal himself to us in Jesus. And the best picture we have of Jesus is in the gospels. Christianity takes seriously the claim that God stepped into human history in the person of Jesus. If we want to get a clearer picture of God, we must look to Jesus.
- Taking some time to read the 4 gospel books in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Through Jesus' words and actions, through His dying and rising, He gives us a picture of what God is really like. Every idea we have of God must be measured against the person Jesus.
- Remembering the God whom we see in Jesus is a God of Love
- Taking the time to get to know Jesus
- Taking time to honestly explore life's and faith's tough questions. Talk to God about them in prayer, talk to others about the things you're struggling with, read a range of books. Engage using your head and heart. But don't be afraid of the struggle. Just as Jacob wrestled with God in Genesis, we too can wrestle with God, and be changed and have the opportunity to also be blessed.

Some useful resources

- Trevor Hudson's book [Signposts to Spirituality](#) has a great chapter on re-drawing our picture of God