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# Space for Questions: A Review of *A Curious Faith*

Hannah Landman

September 29, 2022

**Title:** *A Curious Faith: The Questions God Asks, and We Wish Someone Would Ask Us*

**Author:** Lore Ferguson Wilbert and Seth Haines (other contributor)

**Publisher:** Brazos Press

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Discomfort with a lack of answers seems to be, if not universal, a pretty common complaint amongst students. We want to know what to expect; to have an answer laid out in front of us and then to go about our day. We want to be able to move on from tasks content that we've sorted out the matter completely. Unfortunately, faith doesn't work like that, and as Lore Ferguson Wilbert assures, that's not just okay; it's a good thing. As Wilbert lays out in his book *A Curious Faith*, there are questions God asks us that we haven't let ourselves sit with, questions we long to ask God and hear and answer from, and questions that we wish someone would ask us. These questions matter, and they lead us into deeper communion with God, our neighbor, and our self. It should be known at this point that answers are not Wilbert's endgame. The questions in this book are meant to lead to thoughtful contemplation and time spent reflecting on them. Instead of quick answers, Wilbert encourages continual inquiry and the putting on of a faith that is curious about our God, ourselves, and our neighbors.

This book is a place where you can *begin* to ask questions. In fact, there are many more questions that arise *after* reading this book. It is a good idea to read slowly, to take the book one chapter at a time and to sit with the lingering questions at the end of each chapter. Some questions weigh heavy. Some can lift a burden from your shoulders after a brief reflection, or even with an incomplete answer. However, most of the questions don't provide an answer because that's not the point. As Wilbert constantly reiterates, the goal is to encourage fostering a curiosity about God, ourselves, faith, communities, churches, friendships, and our lives.<sup>1</sup>

## Where are you?

The first part of *A Curious Faith* explores questions that God asks us. Wilbert uses biblical stories as a framework and ties in personal experiences, which makes inward reflection and contemplation inescapable in this section in particular. Insecurity, fear of isolation and

abandonment, and deep assurances of God's eternal presence and support are examined and fleshed out. This section encourages the reader to sit with questions that are often uncomfortable and confronting, and there is a beauty about the vulnerability that we begin to see, and a certain security with being okay not having all of the answers—even to questions about ourselves. We don't have to have an answer to understand God—or ourselves—better. Rather, the questions God asks us leads us to deeper communion with Him and our neighbor.

## **How can I be right with you?**

Questioning God may seem accusatory at times, like we are putting God to the test and requiring Him to not only listen but respond in a way we can understand. In addition to this, we don't always leave time for God to answer, and his answers are very rarely instantaneous and sometimes don't even make sense to us if we do get an answer. This second section encourages us to be still and listen after we question, to leave space for God's presence in our confusion, our hurt, our pain or our rejoicing. Sometimes it is enough when there are no answers, or at least when there are no answers that we can understand. Our reassurance comes from God's stability—his everlasting care and eternal presence with his people.

## **Can you wait with me?**

The last section explores questions we wish someone would ask us; the questions around ourselves and being honest with ourselves when facing our own healing, wellbeing, and wants. Here, a God who is personal, warm, and loving takes shape. These questions of healing and exploring our own hurt lead us to rest in his safety. In fact, Wilbert claims, "Knowing you are loved is better than knowing all the right answers."<sup>2</sup> The comfort of posing questions to a God who has and always will love us does not mean we put him on the stand, but that we get to *commune* with him. Our deepest longings may be to have God (or anyone, really) stay with us; to just be with us without an expectation of perfection or productivity. As we ask questions, examining ourselves, grappling with God, it is necessary that we sit with God as well. And as He stays with us, we are brought into greater understanding of His love and care for us.

Lore Ferguson Wilbert encourages us to live the questions. Not so much to require an answer but to leave space for questions that may not have one, and to sit in our doubts with a God who knows and who loves us as we are. The answers we might discover aren't always the point, but the relationships built on the way and the time spent with others and the Creator who knows us is sometimes more important than having all the right answers. So read slowly, think carefully, ask questions, and act in love. Perhaps, eventually, we'll begin to live the answers too, even if we don't realize it.

1. p. 25

2. p. 158