

MEMBER SNAPSHOT



PREPAREDNESS SCALE



TO-DO COMPLETION

_____ # completed / _____ # To-Dos due = _____ % completed

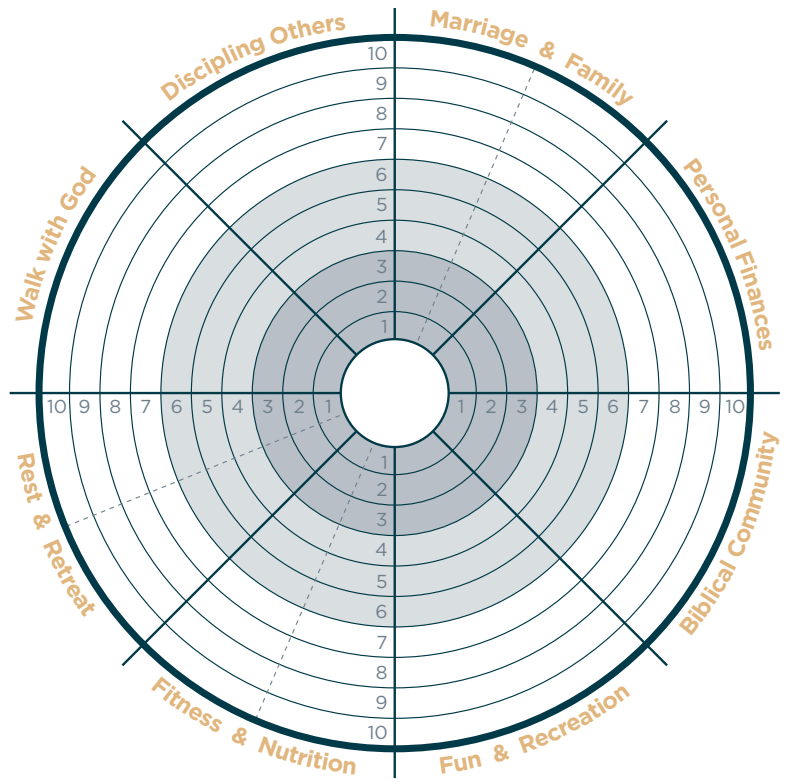
LIFE & LEADERSHIP BALANCE WHEEL

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” **-Colossians 3:17**

Share with the group:

- Your highest areas
- Areas in which you can celebrate improvement
- Your lowest areas
- Areas in which you would like counsel

Big wins and notable events:



5-POINT ALIGNMENT ASSESSMENT

	Behind Target	On Target	Ahead of Target
Revenue Generation Sales, marketing, product line management, and customer relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operations Management Product/service supply chain, fulfillment, technology, and administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizational Development Recruitment, job selection, talent development, talent management, and succession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial Management Goals, projections, metrics, controls, reporting, and cash management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ministry Kingdom impact/eternal fruit through the business (e.g., salvations, ministry giving, discipleship)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” **-Proverbs 16:3**

Application Guide

PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS: How can I pray for and serve my peers?

"[Pray] at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. [...] Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." -Ephesians 6:18



SYNC POINTS: What do I need to do or talk about with my team?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



DO>TALK: Based on my experience at today's Forum, what are my most critical To-Dos?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Devotion: Questions God Asks of Us

What Do You Want Me to Do for You?

*“Bartimaeus, a blind beggar [...] was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth [walking by], he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ And Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.’ And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **And Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’** And the blind man said to him, ‘Rabbi, let me recover my sight.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.”*

Mark 10:46b-52 [emphasis added]

Jesus asks Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” Since Bartimaeus was a blind beggar, the answer might seem obvious. But is it? Healing would change Bartimaeus’s life dramatically. With no education, training, employment record, or marketable skills, sight could actually make self-support extremely difficult for him in the short run.¹ Jesus’s question causes Bartimaeus to confront these implications. Did Bartimaeus truly want his life to be radically changed?

Jesus’s question is powerful because it is an invitation to transformation.

Jesus commonly asked questions when He interacted with people.² Since He knew all things, His questions often cut to the heart of people’s hopes, perceptions, morality, theology, concerns, and fears. He wanted to cause people to think, reconsider their ways, and choose the best path forward.³ Do we want mere relief from our circumstances, or do we want Him to transform our very being? Some of Jesus’s other probing questions include:

- “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” (Matthew 8:26)
- “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:46)
- “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15)

Even as Jesus is poised to meet our needs, we can be unsettled by the transformation He offers. Sometimes, we are more comfortable with the known (even if it is dysfunctional) than the unknown. Bartimaeus responds readily with faith and is healed. We, too, can experience transformation by listening to the questions God is asking us, trusting His offer of transformation, and responding in faith.



How would you answer Jesus’s question, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Does your answer reflect a desire for blessing—or for transformation? Why is His offer of transformation sometimes difficult to accept?

¹ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 174.

² In fact, the Gospels record Him asking 307 questions: Martin B. Copenhaver, *Jesus Is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014).

³ Cindi McMenemy, “10 Questions Jesus Asked (and Why They Matter Today),” *Crosswalk.com*, September 1, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3AzAw4j>.

Business: Asking Questions for Better Results

The Benefits of Curiosity in Business

Leaders often assume they must provide all the answers. The thinking goes that bold assertions exude confidence. When we “have the answers,” we are able to make quick decisions and run the business more efficiently. However, a growing body of research¹ suggests top-down leaders (i.e., leaders who believe they possess the answers) may actually limit the effectiveness of their teams. This type of leader can come across as arrogant, which can hinder collaboration and erode trust.

A better approach is to become adept at asking questions. **Curiosity, not certainty, is the hallmark of a great leader.** Questions create a culture of learning where teams take ownership, collaborate, and make informed decisions. Effective two-way communication is key to most critical business activities. Often, our challenge is delivering on the “two-way” piece.



Leaders who don't listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say.

—Andy Stanley



What is the most constructive question you have ever been asked by a business or spiritual mentor?

The Power of Questions

While some believe asking questions gives away power, the opposite is true. In reality, the power in a conversation is held by the one asking the questions. When followed by active listening,² asking strategic questions informs our decision-making and enables us to ask even better questions. Active listening also strengthens our relationships.

“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”

Proverbs 18:13

¹Alison Wood Brooks and Leslie K. John, “The Surprising Power of Questions,” *Harvard Business Review*, May–June 2018, <https://bit.ly/3AwWKUH>; John Hagel III, “Good Leadership Is About Asking Good Questions,” *Harvard Business Review*, January 08, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3Nk8gdE>.



²See the C12 business segment “Listening: The Neglected Half of Communication” (April 2015).

The following are 10 reasons leaders should ask questions:

1. The leader may not know the answer(s).
2. The leader may need their answer(s) questioned.
3. The leader desires to engage the employee(s) fully.
4. The leader wants to lead a productive problem-solving discussion.
5. The leader wants to model humility.
6. The leader wants to lower barriers for employees to challenge dogmatic beliefs.
7. The leader wants to listen before speaking.
8. The leader wants to teach thinking skills without calling it that.
9. The leader seeks to demonstrate a cultural value for a learning organization.
10. The leader knows that sincere questions reflect genuine respect and care that touch the employee's heart.

The 'Multiplier' Leader

Liz Wiseman's seminal book *Multipliers* reveals two very different types of leaders: Multipliers and Diminishers.³ Multipliers amplify the intelligence and talent of those around them, while Diminishers stifle their employees' abilities, fostering a sense of dissatisfaction within the team.⁴

<p>Teams under Multipliers</p> <p>Feel empowered to achieve goals using the full breadth of their intelligence</p>  <p>Multipliers access 70-100% of their team's capability.</p>	<p>Teams under Diminishers</p> <p>Feel "stuck" and micromanaged</p>  <p>Diminishers access 20-50% of their team's capability.</p>
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According to Wiseman, the biggest difference between Multipliers and Diminishers goes back to their curiosity and their use of questions.⁵



The most important role a leader plays is to shift the burden of thinking from themselves and on to their followers, their organizations [...] and so they ask questions rather than provide answers.⁶

—Liz Wiseman

³Liz Wiseman, *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper Business, 2017).

⁴See the C12 business segment "Knowing and Growing Human Capital" (March 2019) and Appendix A: "The Five Disciplines of the Multiplier."

⁵Liz Wiseman, "Multiplier Leaders Ask More Questions," Global Leadership Network, October 8, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3VdCtgi>.

⁶Alan Draper, "5 Seconds to Multiplier Leadership - Interview with Liz Wiseman," Business2Community, November 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/427Pr1r>.

Wiseman's Five-Second Challenge

1. After asking a question, wait at least five full seconds before speaking.
2. Allow awkward silence, prompting *them* to fill the void.
3. When they respond, consider whether they may be testing your sincerity.
4. Ask a second and even a third follow-up question, again with a reasonable pause, to provoke an authentic and deeper response.



Are you more inclined to ask questions or to give instruction and direction? Why?

Describe a time when a well-crafted question sparked a breakthrough for you or your team.

Types of Questions

Sometimes, leaders use questions ineffectively. Questions may be posed in ways that are unintentionally manipulative or biased (i.e., leading, loaded, or rhetorical questions)⁷. These kinds of questions will actually limit the input we receive from others.

For instance, when engaging someone to solve a problem, we can frame a question in one of the following ways, each of which communicates a different expectation for a response:

What we say	What we mean
<i>"Should we do X?"</i>	Simply weigh in on whether X will work.
<i>"Should we do X, Y, or Z?"</i>	Pick from these preset options.
<i>"What should we do, and why?"</i>	Offer a recommendation and rationale.

Notice that the questions become more effective as they become more open-ended. The second and third questions will elicit more engagement than the first.

⁷**Leading questions** express a point of view or attempt to manipulate the response. For example: "You enjoyed using our new product, didn't you?" **Loaded questions** presuppose at least one unverified assumption, putting the person being asked in a defensive position. For example, "Why don't you ever use spell check on your reports?" **Rhetorical questions** are figures of speech in which a question is asked to make a point, not to truly elicit a response. For example, "You say you're a Christian, right?" They are practically statements in the form of a question and often double as leading questions as well.

Interrogative Questions

The Right Questions framework⁸ helps leaders use questions more effectively by drawing upon the primary interrogative words and providing guidance on their multiple applications.

Interrogative	Use	Application
Why	Reason	Values, principles, priorities, passions
Where	Place	Situation (past and present), vision
What	Thing	Mission, end-state, success, unique selling proposition ⁹
Which	Selection	Options, courses of action, risks, reflection
How	Manner	Plan, route, tasks, resources
Who	Person	Self, team, network, relationships
When	Time	Timing, programming, prioritization

Open-Ended Questions

Leaders skilled in the art of asking questions generally opt for open-ended questions instead of closed ones. While closed questions are answered by a simple yes or no, a short fact, or an option from a list, open questions allow for longer, more expressive responses that tap into someone's perspective, creativity, and knowledge.

As demonstrated below, open-ended questions often begin with *what*, *how*, *why*, *describe*, or *tell me about*.

Closed

Did you have a good site visit with the customer?

I think we should do _____. Do you agree?

I need that project completed by the end of the week. Okay?

Open

How did the site visit with the customer go today?

I think we should do _____. What am I missing? Given all the available options, what do you think I should do?

In an ideal world, we would complete that project by the end of the week. Is that reasonable? If not, how can we work together for a mutually beneficial solution?



See **Appendix A** for a list of Socratic questions, which are interrogative and open-ended (page 15).



Share some examples of poor questions that you have seen in the workplace.

How do you keep your questions from being accusatory or manipulative?

⁸ Simon Ash, "The Right Questions Framework Guide," The Right Questions, October 21, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3LK5E7L>.

⁹ In marketing, the "unique selling proposition" is a marketing strategy that informs customers about how a brand or product is superior to that of competitors.

Applications for Questions in Business

As organizational leaders, some of our primary tasks are to establish core principles, align the team, set strategic priorities, manage direct reports, and solve problems. Facilitating these tasks through the use of questions cultivates a culture of learning where everyone feels safe to seek the best solutions.

Establishing Core Principles and Aligning the Team

Core principles—the company’s mission, vision, and values—serve as the guiding principles for our organizations.¹⁰ Whether we are defining core principles for the first time, revisiting them with new team members, or considering a revision in a strategic planning session,¹¹ asking questions is a more effective way to align the team than making declarative statements. Patrick Lencioni and Peter Drucker, both experts in organizational strategy, suggest questions for leaders to ask:

Lencioni’s Six Critical Questions¹²

1. **Why do we exist?** Beyond making money
2. **What do we do?** A common language description, mostly verbs about what we do
3. **How will we behave?** Behavioral norms or core values (few in number) that represent the DNA of leaders and star performers¹³
4. **How will we succeed?** Directional anchors that are simple and allow all levels of the organization to know how to make the best decisions
5. **What is most important right now?** A rallying cry or thematic goal (qualitative in nature) that, when accomplished collectively, will significantly advance the company
6. **Who does what?** Roles and responsibilities

Drucker’s Five Most Important Questions¹⁴

1. **What is our mission?** Every organization needs a reason to be. The effective mission statement is short and sharply focused. It should fit on a T-shirt. The mission says why you do what you do, not the means by which you do it.
2. **Who is our customer?** When you are clear on who they are, you can figure out what they value and how you can fill their needs.¹⁵
3. **What does our customer value?** What satisfies their needs, wants, and aspirations is so complicated that it can be answered only by the customers themselves. While this may be the most important of the five questions, Drucker says it is also the one that businesses most often fail to ask themselves.
4. **What are our results?** Drucker writes, “Progress and achievement can be appraised in qualitative and quantitative terms. These two types of measures are interwoven—they shed light on one another—and both are necessary to illuminate in what ways and to what extent lives are being changed.”
5. **What is our plan?** Drucker continues, “A plan [...] is a concise summation of the organization’s purpose and future direction. The plan encompasses mission, vision, goals, objectives, action steps, a budget, and appraisal.”

¹⁰ See the C12 business and ministry segment “A Four-Step Process for Strategic Planning” (September 2022).

¹¹ At your next company offsite or strategic planning meeting, consider kicking off the day with a two- to three-hour discussion around core principles.

¹² Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

¹³ See the C12 business segment “Compelling Core Values” (August 2019).

¹⁴ Peter Drucker, *The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask about Your Organization* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008); Peter Economy, “5 Essential Questions for Entrepreneurs,” Inc., March 16, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3LxksX5>.

¹⁵ See the C12 business segment “Assessing Market Position” (September 2019).



How does using questions when discussing core principles change the tone of the conversation?

Setting Strategic Objectives

The company's annual strategic objectives flow out of its three- to five-year strategic vision and are supported by goals and key performance indicators (KPIs).¹⁶ Asking questions to our executive team during a strategic planning session will often uncover new insights and surprising opportunities.

Some good strategic planning questions include:

- What is a game-changing opportunity that could allow us to deliver more value?
- What are the emerging, unmet needs of our customers that could warrant a new business?
- What are our competitors doing right now? Should we be doing the same? Or how can we be different from them?
- How can we support our supply network to better respond to unanticipated disruptions in production or logistics?

Managing Direct Reports

As leaders, people management comes with the job. We need to oversee our employees' day-to-day productivity and equip them to grow so they can better serve the organization. Equipping others comes in many forms: teaching,¹⁷ coaching,¹⁸ mentoring, and discipling. In all its forms, equipping is an “ask, don't tell” process to help direct reports learn how to think and behave. Although leaders need to provide instruction, feedback, and counsel, open-ended questions maximize learning and ownership. Follow-up questions can link what direct reports have already learned to what they still need to learn.

The Check-In Conversation

Marcus Buckingham recommends leaders ask two questions about near-term future work in a brief conversation each week.¹⁹

What are you working on?

How can I help?



See **Appendix B** for a list of sample managing questions (page 16).

¹⁶ See C12's 2023 Strategic Planning Guide (C12 App > Member Resources > Tools).

¹⁷ See the C12 business segment “Training as a Fulcrum of Success” (March 2023).

¹⁸ See the C12 business segment “The Jethro Principle of Talent Development” (April 2023).

¹⁹ “The Check-In Conversation,” Marcus Buckingham, accessed March 30, 2023, <https://bit.ly/423XKv3>.

A One-on-One Exchange

Jenny is an executive at a large consulting firm. She highly values excellence and seeks to cultivate a strong reputation with the firm's clients. As a practice, she proofreads her employees' work before the reports are sent out. While reviewing a report by John, Jenny noticed some mistakes. In this coaching conversation, she intentionally tries to manage John by using questions.

"John, I received the report you submitted. Did you review it before sending it to me?" Jenny asked.

"Yes," John replied.

She asked another question: "Okay. What process did you use for reviewing it?"

"Our standard QA/QC process," John replied again.

"Are you sure?" Jenny pressed on, "Because I see some errors here, which is unlike your typical work."

"Yes, I am sure," John continued, trying to explain his thought process, all while recalling how this assignment was outside his skillset and on top of an already heavy workload.



What do you like about Jenny's approach? What would you do differently?

Solving Problems

Every day, we are presented with problems to solve. Questions can help us identify the true problem, uncover root causes, and decide upon a path forward.

Seven Questions to Identify a Problem

Sometimes, we can focus on symptoms and jump to solutions too quickly without identifying the core problem. Problem analysis seeks to understand the problem and its magnitude. Here are some questions to gain clarity around a problem:

1. What is currently happening?
2. When does it happen?
3. Why does it happen?
4. Who does it affect?
5. What is the impact on the company?
6. Is it worth solving?
7. What are the obstacles to overcome?

The ‘Five Whys’ Method to Uncover Root Causes

For entrenched problems (i.e., problems that persist despite multiple attempts at a solution), it can be useful to carry out a root-cause analysis.²⁰ The “Five Whys” method starts with the question: Why is this problem happening? After this is answered, it is followed by the question: Why is *that* happening? By the fifth “why,” we have likely identified the root cause of the problem.²¹

1. Why is this problem happening?
2. And why is *that* problem happening?
3. And why is *that* problem happening?
4. And why is *that* problem happening?
5. And finally, why is *that* problem happening?
6. Arrive at the root cause.

Seven Questions to Empower Team Problem-Solving

When we approach problem-solving by asking questions, we promote team ownership and empower others to propose solutions. “What if” questions challenge assumptions and help us imagine possibilities, and “how” questions lead us to discover different routes to improvement. Use these seven questions to empower your team to solve problems:

1. What is the problem?
2. Why is it a problem?
3. What if _____ would happen? Would this still be a problem?
4. What are the most suitable solutions?
5. What if we tried this solution?
6. If you were me, which solution would you try?
7. How would you implement this solution?



The Power of Asking: How Curiosity and Empathy Transform Business Relationships

After receiving challenging feedback from his team, Gary Archer wanted to improve his listening and communication skills. He turned to Jorge Chavez, a member of his C12 Forum, and Jorge helped him discover the power of asking questions.



C12 member: Gary Archer,
President²²

Company: Let’s Play Soccer

Industry: Entertainment

Headquartered: Oklahoma City, OK

Employees: 256

Year Established: 1986

Years in C12: 12



C12 member: Jorge Chavez,
President and Co-founder

Company: Topaz Sales Consulting

Industry: Sales Consulting

Headquartered: Austin, TX

Employees: 9

Year Established: 2015

Years in C12: 8

²⁰ LN Mishra CBAP, “Problem analysis vs. Root cause analysis,” LinkedIn, May 13, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3Hkeg2h>.

²¹ “5 Whys,” Lean Enterprise Institute, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://bit.ly/41YJaWh>.

²² C12 member Gary Archer was named one of the 2023 Bob Mack C12 Heroes in May 2023. See the C12 article “The 2023 Bob Mack C12 Hero Awards” (<https://bit.ly/3qsiXkQ>).



In your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss which of the “Applications for Questions in Business” (i.e., establishing core principles and aligning the team, setting strategic objectives, managing direct reports, or solving problems) would be most beneficial for your company to consider.



In which areas of our lives and leadership do we need to ask better questions of each other in this Forum?

Questions Require Humility

Sometimes, organizations are blighted by codes of silence. When employees feel shut down, they stop contributing and diminish the organization’s ability to improve. Joseph Grenny and the authors of *Influencer* write, “If you can’t talk about it, you can’t change it.”²³

Servant leaders will heed the wisdom of Scripture—to be slow to speak and quick to listen.²⁴ When we lead with questions, we create safe spaces for discussion and honest dialogue. We adopt a posture of humility. We seek to understand. We involve others in decision-making. While moving from a posture of directive communication to one of question-asking may seem small, it will lead to better work relationships and better organizations.

DO > talk



Priorities are what we do. Everything else is just *talk*.

Record your To-Dos at the bottom of page 2 and in the C12 app.

²³ Joseph Grenny et al., *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change* (McGraw Hill, 2013), 174.

²⁴ James 1:19.

Socratic Questions

Socrates, one of the most influential philosophers in history, believed that questions (not answers) stimulate learning. With Socratic inquiry, the leader’s role is to facilitate a productive discussion through skilled questioning, allowing participants to become more adept at critical thinking, listening, articulating their thoughts, and considering differing viewpoints.¹

Types of Questions	Sample Questions
Clarification	What do you mean by _____? Could you put that another way? Can you give me an example? Why is that? What happened next?
Probing Assumptions	What are you assuming by that? How did you choose those assumptions? How can you verify or prove that assumption? What might one assume instead?
Probing Reasons and Evidence	How does that work? What would be an example? Why do you think that is true? What do you think causes _____ to happen? Why? What would change your mind?
Viewpoint and Perspectives	What are you implying by that? What effect would that have? What is an alternative way to see it? To what extent is _____ important? What are the strengths and weaknesses of _____?
Implications and Consequences	How can we find out? Why is this issue important? What generalizations can you make? What other concerns do you have? What other challenges do you foresee? What would happen if _____?
Questions on the Questions	What does that mean? What was the point of this question? Why do you think I asked this question? How does X apply to our business?

¹ “Smarter Thinking: The Socratic Method,” Human Performance Technology by DTS, June 26, 2017, <https://bit.ly/40LICBk>.

Sample Managing Questions

B

Ineffective Closed/Diagnostic Questions

- Are you finished yet?
- Do you have a problem?
- Did you make that mistake?
- Will this really solve the problem?
- What made you think that was a good idea?
- That's clear enough, isn't it?
- Why didn't you do _____?

Open-Ended Questions

- What is keeping you awake at night?
- What is the goal of this initiative?
- How are you approaching that?
- How is it going?
- If achieved, how would this impact you/the business?
- Is that important to you?
- What obstacles are making that hard?
- What is driving this?
- Why is this important?
- If you could change just one thing about _____, what would it be?
- What is the status of _____?
- How can I help you?
- Can you tell me about what happened?
- Can you walk me through your thought process?
- What went well (or not so well), and why?
- What new understandings or perspectives can we learn from this?
- How can we improve our results in the future?
- What practical actions can you take over the next week?

Ministry: The Power of Questions

A Catalyst for Spiritual Growth

We have seen that question-asking is an essential tool in our leadership toolbox. It is also an essential tool in our spiritual toolbox. As believers, our motivation to engage in spiritual conversations comes from our obedience to Christ and our love for those around us. The use of questions helps us cultivate a safe environment to enter into spiritual dialogue.

Data suggests that the workplace may present our greatest opportunity for spiritual conversations.¹ In everyday business, opportunities naturally arise to:

1. Help nonbelievers explore the claims of Christ
2. Help other Christians become more like Christ
3. Practice Christ-like caring with those in need

When we ask questions with a Christ-centered heart,² we will effectively connect with others for evangelism, discipleship, and practical care.

Jesus: The Master Questioner

In His ministry on earth, Jesus often asked questions rather than making declarations. He used questions to point people toward God and encourage a search for truth. This practice helped Him cultivate a disarming environment for open and honest dialogue.³ Following His lead, we can use questions to help others explore faith, deepen their relationship with God, and share needs.

Consider Jesus's interaction with the woman at the well.⁴ When Jesus asked her questions, He did so with a loving approach. As we seek to engage in faith conversations with others, we must ensure that love is our motive. The aim is not to force our beliefs onto others but to obey the Great Commission.⁵

Questions allow us to move from surface-level conversations to spiritual conversations.⁶ Like Jesus, we can use questions to guide others through a journey of discovery, creating a safe place for people to be vulnerable and building a bridge of trust that can bear the weight of truth.⁷



What do you think about Jesus's strategy of using questions to engage people in spiritual conversations?

¹See the C12 ministry segment "Winsome Workplace Evangelism and Apologetics" (July 2022).

²1 Thess. 2:8, 19–20.

³Martin B. Copenhaver, *Jesus Is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014).

⁴John 4:5–30.

⁵Matt. 28:19–20.








⁶Kevin Beasley, "20 Discipleship Questions That Spark Awesome Spiritual Conversations," Our Best Story, September 12, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3mBQCa2>.

⁷See the C12 ministry segment "Models and Methods for Mentoring" (February 2022).

The Power of Questions in Spiritual Conversations

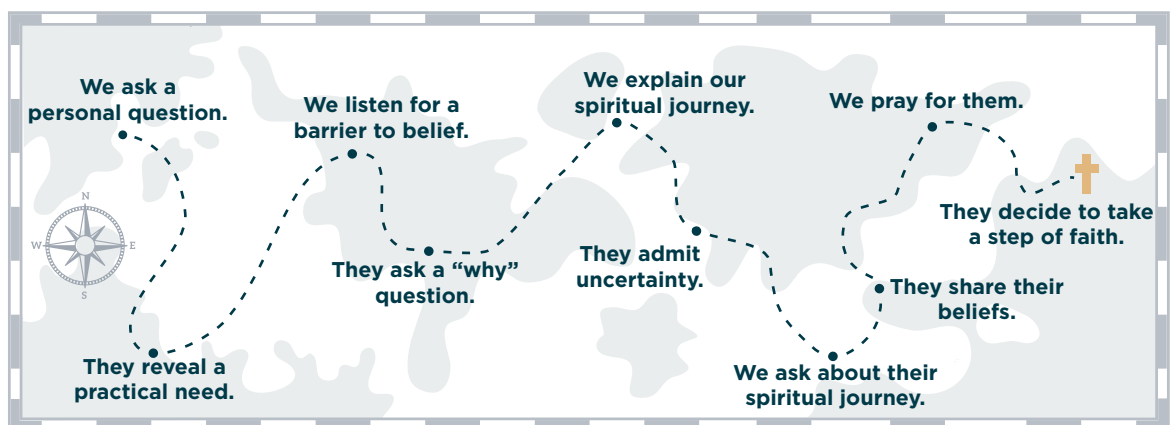
In the workplace, relationships naturally occur due to proximity and time spent together. While working to accomplish business goals, we naturally get to know our colleagues on both a professional and a personal level. Often, these conversations take a spiritual turn. By asking questions, we create space for people to vocalize their thoughts and feelings, allowing them to wrestle with their own ideas rather than simply presenting information to them.⁸

Consider the following scenario:

-  Bill: “Hi, Mary. How are you? How are the kids?” (As her employer, Bill knows a bit about her life.)
-  Mary: “Hi, Bill. Thank you for checking in. Life is sort of crazy right now.”
-  Bill: “Oh no, I’m sorry to hear that. How so? Would you like to talk about it?” (Note that Bill is letting Mary opt into the conversation.)
-  Mary: “Well, I don’t want to bring you down, but I feel like nothing is going right for me right now. You see, [conversation continues....]”
-  Bill: “I can see how that would be overwhelming. I’d be happy to share how I manage similar situations. Would you mind if I shared about that?” (Bill has now asked for permission to share his beliefs.)
-  Mary: “Sure. I need all the help I can get right now.”
-  Bill: “Well, I follow Jesus, and though He doesn’t give me every answer, and He doesn’t make every situation perfect, He gives me the path to follow and gives me peace through it all....”

This dialogue may seem insignificant, but it aims to create a conversation about spiritual matters. The questions about Mary and her family’s well-being establish a personal connection and show genuine interest in her life. This genuine interest ultimately leads to an opportunity to discuss deeper spiritual matters.

The map below illustrates how asking good questions can lead to spiritual conversations. Notice how the relationship involves both question-asking and active listening.



⁸Matt Dabbs, “How to Ask Good Questions in Discipleship,” Discipleship.org, <http://bit.ly/43r4Hb7>.



See **Appendix C** for a list of questions to spark spiritual dialogue at work (page 23).



What questions could you ask to turn an everyday conversation into a spiritual one? How can you make the conversation feel natural and not forced?



Consider a recent time when you could have moved toward a spiritual conversation but did not. What held you back, and how can you approach similar situations differently in the future?




Using Questions in Spiritual Conversations

Ask for Permission

Before engaging in a spiritual conversation in the workplace, it is a best practice to first seek permission. If the individual expresses interest in learning more, we can guide the discussion toward spiritual matters, sharing more about our personal faith journey and explaining how they can advance in theirs.⁹

Progressively Go Deeper

Once permission is granted, we can move into more vulnerable subjects. According to behavioral investigator Vanessa Van Edwards, these deeper connections will predictably move through the three levels of connection:¹⁰

Level	Description	Sample Question
One	Basic; surface level	“How are you doing?” 
Two	Invitational; exploratory	“What was faith like for you growing up?” 
Three	Deep; vulnerable	“Why did you decide to walk away from church?” 

Progressive in nature, these questions are meant to help individuals gradually share more about their faith journey. It is critical to meet our coworkers where they are. There is nothing wrong with remaining on levels one or two until the relationship matures to the point where we can ask deeper and more meaningful questions.¹¹

⁹ See “Overcoming Fears for Intentional Workplace Evangelism,” <https://bit.ly/3X66AY9>, in which C12 member Rachel Nguyen uses a question to open up spiritual conversations with her patients at Harmony Women’s Care. Her go-to question is “Do you think things happen for a reason?”

¹⁰ Vanessa Van Edwards, “Science of Connection,” Global Leadership Network, <https://bit.ly/3n9oxHz>.

¹¹ The Intentionality Map (IMAP) is a useful tool that can help us understand where individuals are in their spiritual journey, enabling us to connect with them at their current stage. To learn more, see the “Systematically Building Our Team for Ministry” appendix in the C12 ministry segment, “Working ‘On’ My Ministry in God’s Business: The Janitor, CEO & Our Workplace” (September 2013).

Encourage Growth in Fellow Believers

We can also use questions in our workplace interactions with fellow believers. Questions help us identify coworkers who share our faith perspective and thus foster mutual growth.

For newer believers, we can appeal to the Holy Spirit within them to encourage their growth in Christ. Invitational questions such as “Would you like to join our company prayer time?” can encourage participation in fellowship. Conversational questions like “Have you prayed about that?” or “When was the last time you felt close to God?” can illuminate a secular mindset and encourage growth.

With colleagues who share maturity in faith, the proximity of the workplace will offer opportunities for us to mutually encourage growth. We might say to a coworker, “What effect do you think your bad attitude has on your witness to other employees?” Or a fellow believer might ask us, “If you believe God will provide, why are you so worried about the company’s finances?” Challenging questions such as these can spur growth, both for ourselves and others.



What kinds of questions have you seen Christians in the workplace use to encourage others to become more like Christ?

Uncover Practical Needs

Over the years, many C12 companies have established caring funds and other systems to provide support for employees in need.¹² However, when employees report to work, it can be difficult to truly understand how they may be struggling. Many will show up, put on a happy face, and hide their needs.

Sensitive questions break through this veneer of self-sufficiency. We can train ourselves to look for signs of trouble in our employees. We can encourage those on our teams with gifts of mercy and insight to sensitively ask questions to get below the surface. When needs are uncovered, we can find appropriate ways to help. A well-timed question could uncover opportunities to love and care for those in our circle of influence.



What methods have you found to be effective in discovering the practical needs of your employees?

Prepare for Their Questions

“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15

¹² See the C12 article “Caring for Employees During Financial Hardships,” February 2, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3pUv89O>.

Many people have important questions that keep them from growing in their faith. When we care enough to engage in meaningful spiritual conversations, and do so—as the Apostle Peter advises—in a gentle and respectful manner, such barriers tend to fall away. Often, a person’s initial questions will lead to more difficult ones. But we do not need to fear. We have the Holy Spirit and a faith that can withstand questioning. Simple preparation will allow us to enter these conversations with confidence.¹³



Have you ever had someone come to you with a difficult question about faith? What did you do?



In your CEO/key player sync meeting, discuss where the Christians in your company need to become more skilled in asking spiritual questions with their coworkers (i.e., evangelism, discipleship, or practical care).

The Source of Our Answers

Our businesses are powerful platforms to testify to the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ The nature of workplace relationships naturally provides us with opportunities to engage in spiritual conversations. Thoughtful and well-timed questions can help us move past surface-level interactions and open the door to deeper discussions. We may be surprised to discover that many of our coworkers are earnestly seeking Truth. People are asking—and Jesus is the source of our answers.

DO > talk



Priorities are what we do. Everything else is just *talk*.

Record your To-Dos at the bottom of page 2 and in the C12 app.

¹³ Appendix C in C12’s July 2022 curriculum will equip us with “Winsome Responses from the Christian Worldview on Common Issues” such as identity, suffering, pain, anxiety, and justice.

¹⁴ See the C12 business and ministry segment “The Narrow Path” (January 2023).

Questions to Spark Spiritual Dialogue at Work **C**

In the workplace, we have numerous opportunities to engage in meaningful spiritual conversations. By purposefully asking thought-provoking questions, we can help nonbelievers meet Christ, encourage growth in fellow believers, and uncover tangible needs within our workforce.

Questions to Help Nonbelieving Coworkers Meet Christ

1. Do you believe that things happen for a reason?
2. Do you think there is purpose and meaning in life?
3. Have you ever felt a sense of peace or joy that you could not explain?
4. What role do you think religion plays in the world?
5. What has been your personal experience with faith?
6. What differences do you see between Christianity and other religions?
7. What do you think about Jesus?

Questions to Encourage Growth in Fellow Believers

1. Would you like to join our company prayer time?
2. Have you prayed about that?
3. When was the last time you felt close to God?
4. What effect do you think your bad attitude has on your witness to other employees?
5. If you believe God will provide, why are you so worried about the company's finances?
6. Do you consider your comments about that customer (or vendor or coworker) to be gossip?
7. How can you use your words to build up and encourage others?

Questions to Uncover Needs

1. Is everything okay with you?
2. You appear to be distracted. Is there something challenging that you have been going through recently?
3. Are you having trouble sleeping again?
4. How is your family life?
5. What have you done to try to get help? Was it successful?
6. How can I serve you best during this time?
7. What would "getting healthy" look like to you?

Additional Resources

Devotion: Questions God Asks of Us

Scriptures:

Gen. 3:8–10; Matt. 8:26, 16:15; Mark 8:36, 10:46–52; Luke 6:46; John 5:6, 20:15, 21:15

Books:

Jesus Is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered, by Martin B. Copenhaver

A Curious Faith: The Questions God Asks, We Ask, and We Wish Someone Would Ask Us, by Lore Ferguson Wilbert

Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels, by Kenneth E. Bailey

Business: Asking Questions for Better Results

Scriptures:

Prov. 18:13

Books:

Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change, by Joseph Grenny et al.

Secrets of Question-Based Selling: How the Most Powerful Tool in Business Can Double Your Sales Results, by Thomas A. Freese

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen R. Covey

The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever, by Michael Bungay Stanier

Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter, by Liz Wiseman

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business, by Patrick Lencioni

The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask about Your Organization, by Peter Drucker

262 Questions Paul the Apostle of Christ Asked, by Bob Tiede¹

Great Leaders Ask Questions, by Bob Tiede

Leading with Questions: How Leaders Discover Powerful Answers by Knowing How and What to Ask, by Michael J. Marquardt and Bob Tiede

Videos:

“The Power of Asking: How Curiosity and Empathy Transform Business Relationships” – Gary Archer and Jorge Chavez (C12 YouTube)

Previous C12 Segments:

The Jethro Principle of Talent Development – April 2023, Business

Training as a Fulcrum of Success – March 2023, Business

A Four-Step Process for Strategic Planning – September 2022, Business and Ministry

Assessing Market Position – September 2019, Business

Compelling Core Values – August 2019, Business

Knowing and Growing Human Capital – March 2019, Business

Listening: The Neglected Half of Communication – April 2015, Business

Leading by Asking Insightful Questions – March 2015, Business

(Resources continue on the next page.)

¹ Bob Tiede's e-books and audiobooks are available for free download at <https://bit.ly/3IDdPRF>.

Ministry: The Power of Questions

Scriptures:

Matt. 28:19–20; John 4:5–30; 1 Thess. 2:8, 19–20; 1 Pet. 3:14–15; 2 Pet. 3:9

Books:

You Gotta Ask: How to Have Meaningful Conversations With Anyone Using Compelling Questions, by Jon and Pam Strain

Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions, by Gregory Koukl

Jesus Is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered, by Martin B. Copenhaver

About My Father's Business: Taking Your Faith to Work, by Regi Campbell

Let God Speak: A Timeless Method for Sharing Jesus, by David Collum

Videos:

“Overcoming Fears For Intentional Workplace Evangelism” – Rachel Nguyen and Dean Harrington (C12 YouTube)

“Conversation as a Spiritual Discipline” – Vince Vitale (C12 YouTube)

“How to Have a Conversation: Basic Principles” – What Would You Say (YouTube)

Previous C12 Segments:

Biblical Fluency – March 2023, Ministry

The Narrow Path – January 2023, Business and Ministry

Winsome Workplace Evangelism and Apologetics – July 2022, Ministry

Models and Methods for Mentoring – February 2022, Ministry

Sharing God's Story & Asking Life-Changing Questions – March 2015, Ministry

Working 'On' My Ministry in God's Business: The Janitor, CEO & Our Workplace – September 2013, Ministry

Monthly Thematic Resources

Readitfor.me Summaries (readitfor.me/C12):

Relevant book summaries are curated monthly and available on Readitfor.me, including:

Multipliers, by Liz Wiseman

The Coaching Habit, by Michael Bungay Stanier

Influencer, by Joseph Grenny et al.

RightNow Media @ Work (app.rightnowmedia.org):

Relevant videos and materials are curated monthly and available on RightNow Media @ Work, including:

“Feedback” – video series by Henry Cloud

“What Are the Toughest Questions Christians Face?” – video series by Bobby Conway

“Tactics” – video series by Gregory Koukl