

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

April 24, 2016

Overview:

Rhetorical questions are used for effect and not to get an answer. A few examples of rhetorical questions are: “Is rain wet?”, “Do dogs bark?” or “What is the matter with kids today?” My favorite question is, “When are you going to mow the yard?” This question definitely doesn’t require a response. Sometimes the answers are so obvious they don’t need to be stated and other times there simply isn’t an answer. Either way rhetorical questions are used as a literary device to illicit an effect on the reader.

The Apostle Paul uses two rhetorical questions in 2 Corinthians 3:1. He starts by asking, “Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?” We think of commend as someone complimenting themselves. This is not what Paul meant. In this context the word ‘commend’ can be thought of as providing credentials or self introduction. Does Paul really need to introduce or provide credentials to the very church he founded in Corinth? The answer is so obvious it doesn’t require a response.

Paul’s second question about needing letters of recommendation was referring to a very common practice of that day. Letters of recommendation during Paul’s time were written for people when they traveled to give them credibility. Someone, usually of a high social order, would write letters of recommendation for those under them.

During Paul’s day if you traveled from one town to the next the only validity of who you are would be your own words. Letters of recommendation would provide trust and credentials to back up your claims. For the Corinthian Church to question Paul’s position as an apostle would be for them to question their own faith since he started the church. They can’t question Paul without questioning themselves. His credentials are written on their hearts.

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

1. Discuss some of your favorite rhetorical questions.
2. Some of you may remember reading this short poem before. What does it mean to be a letter of Christ for others to read?
“You are writing a Gospel, a chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do and the words that you say.
Men read what you write, whether faithful or true.
Just what is the Gospel according to you?”¹
3. Read 2 Corinthians 3:3. Explain the difference between just following the law and having the law written on your heart.
4. Read Hebrews 8:7-12. How do you get the word of God and the new covenant written on your heart?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6. What does it look like in your life to have confidence in Christ?
6. Discuss the difference between doing something because you want to and because you have to. How does this idea of wanting to and having to work in your relationship with God?
7. In what ways does God make you competent (sufficient) carriers of the New Covenant?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 482). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.