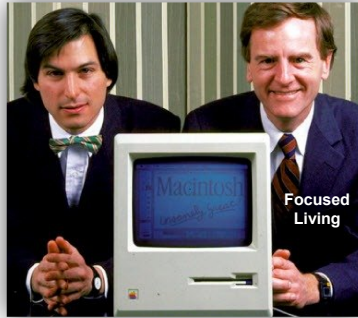


## THE MAKING OF A MAN #16 Elijah



For years the founder of Apple computers, Stephen Jobs, repeatedly sought to recruit John Sculley from being vice president at Pepsi-Cola in order to become the CEO of Apple. Each time Sculley declined, but Jobs would not give up! In one final appeal, Jobs met Sculley at his New York condo and with laser-like focus asked, “*John, do you want to spend*

*the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want to change the world?*” The rest is history as together they made Apple one of the world’s most impactful companies. **Why do HARD QUESTIONS make great chisels? What hard, well timed question(s) has changed your life’s direction, values, purpose, thinking, opinion, worldview, priorities or a relationship!**

**TRYING TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS (1 Kings 16:29-19:18)** When Ahab became king over Israel (16:29) he was one evil dude (16:30-33; 21:25-26) who “*did more to provoke the Lord God than all the kings before him*” (30, 33). He was married to a very evil lady named Jezebel (16:31-32; 18:13; 19:1-4) who, together for 22 years, killed God’s messengers of truth and led the people away from the Lord to worship Baal (god of fertility/sex). They wanted God to bless their lives but would not honor Him as Lord by living His way. In response, the Lord sent Elijah (1Kings 17:1. Yahweh is God) to turn them back to His heart of forgiveness for their sin and to warn them of judgment if they did not repent. Elijah asked God to withhold rain for 3.5 years (1 Kings 18:1; Jam 5:17-18). God answered his prayer in order to get the attention of His people and to deal with the wicked decisions of king Ahab (18:16-46). **Is there evidence that you are trying to have it both ways: saying you follow Jesus so God will bless you yet blowing off His truth to live the way you want in some area of life?** (Is 29:13; Matt 15:8; Titus 1:16) **How does cultural Christianity grow when God’s men try to follow God on the outside but chase the world on the inside?**

### CHANGING YOUR WORLD WITH A SINGLE QUESTION

**(1 Kings 18:1-21)** What powerful question does Elijah boldly ask the 950 spiritual leaders of Israel? Is God asking you the same question? How can honestly answering this hard question radically change your

life? How can this question reveal the hypocrisy of chasing after the world while trying to follow Christ? Where might you be wavering or hesitating between being obedient to or rebelling against Jesus? Do you know a Brother in Christ who also needs to answer this question?

**(1 Kings 18:22)** Where do you often feel “*alone*” like Elijah as you try to faithfully follow Christ and live according to the truths of the Bible in a world that is diametrically opposed? Are you ever really alone while obeying Christ (Josh 1:5; Matt 28:18-20; 1 John 4:4; Psalm 46:1-3, 10; John 14:7; Heb 13:5-6)?

**(1 Kings 18:23-25)** What test did Elijah propose to create a powerful show down to see if Baal or God would faithfully come through in the end? Where is God putting you to the test (morally, sexually, financially, relationally, professionally) to see if He can be trusted to come through for you? Where have you experienced God faithfully coming through for you even when the world or the odds say He would not?

**(1 Kings 18:26-40)** What was the outcome of this showdown? How does this encourage you? Name a time when Jesus came through for you and the world let you down?

**(James 5:16-18)** Why do you think Jesus’ brother, James, uses this event as a powerful motivation for us to pray and not lose heart when we find ourselves suffering (James 5:1-16)? For what do you need to ask a few Brothers in Christ to pray as you are in real need of God coming through for you and your family?

**(Matt 17:1-3; Mark 15:66-72)** Knowing that Peter, James and John were all going to flee in fear, deny and then leave Jesus when things became tough at the cross (Matt 26:56), why do you think He was talking to both Moses and Elijah at the mount of transfiguration? Could it be that both Moses (Ex 2:11-15) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) were examples of caving to the culture yet recipients of God’s awesome forgiveness, mercy and grace? How would Jesus talking to Elijah be a great encouragement to be drawn back to Him when you cave to the culture acting like a cultural Christian?

## ASKING HARD QUESTIONS: LIVING TOUGH ANSWERS



Check a few of the 3,300 questions in the Bible! They will **change** your life and **chisel** your heart to make you more like Jesus! Which 2 most **challenge** you to stop “selling sugared water and come change the world” with Jesus?

**“Where are you?”** (Gen 3:9) This is the first question asked by God in the Bible as He pursues Adam after he sinned. The Lord wants both you and Adam to honestly understand your true spiritual condition and position so you can see your deep need for God’s saving grace.

**“Did God really say . . . ?”** (Gen 3:1) With this first recorded question in the Bible our enemy, satan, manipulates Adam so that he doubts the truthfulness, power, faithfulness and authority of God’s Word. Where do you struggle with doubting what He says is true?

**“Am I my brother’s keeper?”** (Gen 4:9) Like Cain, how might you question your responsibility to value others like God values us? **“Who is my neighbor?”** (Luke 10:29) is another question along these lines.

**“Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother who sins against me?”** (Matt 18:21-34) Who has hurt or screwed you over whom you need to forgive from the heart just as Christ has forgiven you?

**“Who do you say I am?”** (Matt 16:15) Borrowed beliefs have no power. Here Jesus is moving His men to clearly make their faith their own that they might follow Him fully when times get rough!

**“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** (Luke 18:18) and **“What must I do to be saved?”** (Acts 16:30) Perhaps you are asking this question since discovering a lack of purpose, meaning, joy, peace or hope apart from Jesus? Who do you know that is asking these same life changing questions? How will you answer?

**“To whom will you compare Me? Who is My equal?”** (Is 40:25) With resounding thunder our Holy God shouts, “No One! I alone am your Creator and the only One worthy of your worship with your life.

**“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”** (Mark 8:36; Eccl 2:10-11; I John 2:15-17) Ouch, what a powerful question by Jesus for those with one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock who can’t decide where their real eternal loyalty lies



**“Can anything separate us from the love of Christ?”** (Rom 8:38) After giving us a powerful glimpse of God’s grace in the first seven chapters in his letter to the Romans, Paul asks this question. He also answers it with a confident, exhilarating ‘NO!’ *“nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Rom 8:39)

**“Whom have I in heaven but You?”** Asaph asks if God is really enough to satisfy a man’s life especially when things aren’t going well. He answers, “No I don’t constantly need more because besides You I desire nothing on earth... You are the strength of my heart and my portion forever!” (Ps 73:25-26)

**“If God is for us, who can be against us?”** (Rom 8:31) God’s men will face opposition in this world (John 15:18) but God has promised that in following Him you will overcome (1 John 5:4; John 16:33). Do you act like you believe it?

**“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”** (Jer 32:27) Our Creator God is asking just how big you think He actually is as our concept of Him is often way too small.

**“Do you not care that we are perishing?”** (Mark 4:38) Men still want to know if God loves them even amidst their sin, failures, doubt and weakness and rebellion.

**“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”** (Is 6:8) After Isaiah was blown away by God’s glory and grace (6:1-7) the Lord asked if he was available and Isaiah responded with a resounding “YES, send me!” not “Here am I, send someone else.”

**“Peter, do you love Me more than these?”** (John 21:15-17) Jesus asks this great question for those of us who have in some way denied or betrayed Jesus and feel that He can no longer really use us or feel a 1000 miles away from His love.

**“What shall I do then with Jesus?”** (Matt 27:22) Like Pilot, men must decide who will be ‘King’ and have the final say in their life every day. Jesus is either Lord of all or not Lord at all!

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What question has God asked you lately and how did He use it to chisel you more into the image of Christ?