



Discussion Questions

THE REASON FOR GOD

by Tim Keller

Chapter 10: The Problem of Sin

1. Keller claims that Christian doctrine of sin can be a great resource for human hope (p. 168). Did this chapter give you hope? How can the Christian message that we are all sinners be good news?
2. Keller writes, “the primary way to define sin is not just the doing of bad things, but the making of good things into ultimate things”? (p. 168) and, “Our need of worth is so powerful that whatever we base our identity and value on we essentially ‘deify.’” (p. 169) What things are people tempted to deify (turn into an idol)? What are you tempted to deify?

Chapter 11: Religion and the Gospel

3. The author writes that evil and selfishness and attempts at self-salvation reveal themselves in two ways: 1) being very bad and breaking all rules, 2) being very good and keeping every rule and becoming self-righteous. (p. 183) Which way is your natural inclination? Think of an unbeliever you know; which direction do you think they lean? Would the way you engage with them be different, given this insight?
4. How might a person who sees their relationship with God as a contract (if I’m a good and nice person then God owes me a good life) react when they come face to face with suffering and difficult times? How would the reaction be of someone who believes they’re accepted by God solely because of his mercy and grace?

Chapter 12: The (True) Story of the Cross

5. How would you respond if someone asked you, “Why, then, don’t we just leave the cross out? Why not focus on the life of Jesus and His teachings rather than on His death? Why did Jesus have to die?”

6. At the heart of the cross is the sacrificial death of Jesus that brings forgiveness for our sins. When someone offends and harms you (or someone you love) you have two options: 1) demand payment or pain, 2) absorb the cost of that offense yourself. (Sharing the cost of the offense means you both pay or share the pain). Keller writes that when a wrong or debt has been incurred “in every option the cost of the damage must be borne by someone.” Do you agree? Share a time you were able to forgive something difficult, and how.

Extra: Did you have a favorite quote, and why? (give page #)