

## 17 The Reflective Christian: When You Can't Stop Asking "Why?"

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While on a long drive last week, I listened to one of my favorite audio recordings from Luci Swindoll (yes, Chuck Swindoll's sister) entitled "A Positive Look at Life" that aired somewhere around the mid-90s on Christian radio.

I've listened to this broadcast multiple times throughout the years, and every time I listen Luci recommends reading a book called "The Myth of Certainty" by Daniel Taylor.

So after all these years I went to order it on Amazon.

And discovered I'd already ordered it... back in 2013!

**So goes the ADHD life of good intentions that quickly go forgotten.**

We'd gotten some rocky news last week, and I needed something to help pick up my spirit. This broadcast definitely does that because Luci brings her genuine humor to a much deeper, more reflective conversation about savoring life and learning to experience the joy of the Lord regardless of the circumstance.

What stands out most to me is when Luci asked God why things were so hard, and His answer was: "Luci, listen up... when you came to California you based your whole life on a dream... **rarely does reality live up to your dreams.**"

We keep expecting things to be different somewhere else.

So we change environments – jobs, churches, friends, sadly sometimes even spouses. Sometimes we even move, hoping things will be better in a new city, a new state, a new life.

But life doesn't work that way.

Anyone remember the old saying, "Wherever you go, there you are?" I think they even made a country song out of it – in fact Luci mentions country music in this broadcast and says "It's like the book of Job revisited" because country music is often about the woes of life.

So after thirty-some years of being "prompted" to read Daniel Taylor's book, I came home and blew the dust off it from my library shelf, opened it up, and after the first chapter asked myself:

**"Self... why have you waited so long to read this?"**

### **God's Patience With Our Timing**

I am often surprised at how the Lord doesn't care much about time.

He is patient.

A friend reminded me this week of the verse in Isaiah 60:22: "**In its time I will accomplish it quickly.**"

We often miss the first part - "**in its time**" - and immediately jump to "accomplish it quickly."

But both matter.

The Lord doesn't mind waiting years - even decades sometimes - for our hearts to finally be open to Him.

And when the time comes, sometimes He moves quickly to accomplish His work in us.

Or to use my castle metaphor, for us to finally open the doors of the castle that were previously locked and let Him in.

Most of you know the story (or have seen the movie) *Beauty and the Beast*.

There was a whole wing of the castle the Beast would not allow anyone to enter.

Why?

Something precious resided there - but it was barricaded by years of pain and hopelessness.

Do you feel like the Beast sometimes?

Willing to show off certain parts of the castle that you've prepared for presentation to guests, but have cordoned off other parts that you won't dare allow anyone into?

**Not even the King of the kingdom who already knows what's there.**

### **Hiding From the One Who Sees Everything**

I have often found humor in the Genesis account after Adam and Eve sinned.

I know, I know – there is really nothing humorous about the act that separated us from God and sent our universe on a downward spiral of death, decay and corruption caused by the sin of two individuals and propagated by every human being ever since.

But think about it:

Adam and Eve were **hiding from God** in the Garden.

Really? Hiding? From **God**?

And as if there was some divine hide-and-seek game occurring, God decided to play along and ask:

**"Where are you?"** (Genesis 3:9)

Do you think God did not already know?

Of course He knew where they were.

But He wanted them to **reveal themselves**.

Just like He wants you to reveal those closed-off wings and doors of your castle.

Not because He doesn't know what's there.

**Because He wants you to stop hiding.**

### **The Reflective Christian**

When I opened Daniel Taylor's book, the first chapter made me sit down (and I was already sitting).

He writes about what he calls "the reflective Christian" – someone who thinks deeply about life, who can't turn off the questions, who needs to wrestle before they can rest.

And I found myself.

For the first time outside of C.S. Lewis and A.W. Tozer, I'd found someone who wrote with this level of honesty about faith.

Someone who understood that **some of us are wired this way**.

We need to go deeper. Not because we're better or smarter, but because that's how our brains work.

We're the ones who read a passage and immediately start asking "but what about..." and "how does this connect to..." and "wait, if this is true then..."

We can't help it.

It's not a choice. It's how we're made.

And here's what I've learned:

**There's nothing wrong with simple faith.**

Some people read "Trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5) and they just... do it.

And that's beautiful.

That's a gift.

But some of us read that same verse and our brains immediately ask: "What does trust look like when everything's falling apart? How do I reconcile 'lean not on your own understanding' with the brain God gave me that won't stop understanding?"

Neither approach is better.

**They're just different.**

## **When You Can't Turn It Off**

If you're a reflective Christian, you know what I'm talking about.

You can't just accept answers that work for everyone else.

Not because you're rebellious or prideful.

But because your brain won't let you rest until you've thought it through from every angle.

You read the Bible and you notice the tensions, the paradoxes, the passages that seem to contradict each other.

And instead of glossing over them, you meditate on them.

You wrestle with them.

Sometimes for years.

You ask questions – not to undermine faith, but because you genuinely want to understand.

And sometimes, the church doesn't know what to do with that.

Because questions can feel threatening.

Wrestling can look like doubt.

And thinking deeply can be mistaken for not trusting God.

But that's not what's happening.

**You're not doubting God.**

**You're trying to understand Him better.**

## **The Castle You Build When Questions Aren't Safe**

Here's what happens when you're a reflective Christian in a church that doesn't know what to do with questions:

**You build walls.**

**The Tower** becomes where you retreat to think – alone, where no one can see you wrestling.

**The Dungeon** becomes where you lock away the shame of not having it all figured out – because everyone else seems so certain.

**The Storerooms** become where you stuff the questions you can't ask out loud – the ones that might get you labeled as “struggling” or “rebellious.”

**The Forbidden Wing** becomes the part of your faith you won't let anyone see – the doubts, the contradictions, the things you're still trying to reconcile.

Not because you're hiding from God.

But because you've learned that honest questions aren't always welcome in the courtyard.

I've lived in all those rooms.

For years, I thought something was wrong with me.

Everyone else seemed to have simple answers.

Certainty.

Confidence.

No wrestling. No questions. No sleepless nights trying to make sense of passages that seemed to contradict each other.

But reading Taylor, I realized:

**I'm not broken.**

**I'm reflective.**

And God made me this way.

### **The Questions Are Welcome (but may not be answered the way you expect)**

Look at Job.

Thirty-seven chapters of questions.

"Why did I not perish at birth?" (Job 3:11)

"Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden?" (Job 3:23)

"Does God pervert justice?" (Job 8:3)

For thirty-seven chapters, Job **wrestles with** "Why?"

He cries out. He questions. He struggles to understand.

And then God responds.

Not with answers.

**With questions.**

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4)

"Have you commanded the morning?" (Job 38:12)

"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades?" (Job 38:31)

For four chapters (Job 38-41), God doesn't answer Job's "why" questions.

Instead, He shows Job **WHO** He is.

How big. How sovereign. How far beyond our understanding.

And Job's response?

Not "Oh, now I understand why I suffered."

But "I see **WHO YOU ARE** – and in that seeing I despise myself and repent." (Job 42:5-6)

**We want answers to "Why?"**

**God gives us the answer to "Who?"**

Because once we understand Who He is, the "why" questions don't necessarily go away – but now we have greater perspective and are humbled before Him.

We don't need all the answers when we know the One who holds them.

Look at David.

The Psalms are full of wrestling:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1) (Jesus said these same words on the cross.)

"How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Psalm 13:1)

And yet God called David "a man after my own heart." (Acts 13:22)

Not because David had it all figured out.

**Because David kept coming back.**

Even with the questions.

Even with the doubt.

Even when he didn't understand.

Look at Thomas.

He needed to see the nail marks. Touch the wounds. Verify the resurrection with his own hands.

And Jesus didn't condemn him for it.

Jesus showed up and said, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (John 20:27)

But here's what's beautiful:

**Thomas never touched Him.**

Scripture doesn't record Thomas putting his fingers in the nail marks or his hand in Jesus' side.

Because the moment Thomas saw **WHO** was standing in front of him, the proof didn't matter anymore.

He fell to his knees and cried:

**“My Lord and my God!”** (John 20:28)

Like Job, Thomas asked for evidence.

Like Job, when he encountered the **WHO**, he didn't need the evidence.

**He just needed to see.**

Look at the father in Mark 9.

His son was possessed by a spirit. He brought him to Jesus' disciples, but they couldn't heal him.

Jesus said, **“Everything is possible for one who believes.”** (Mark 9:23)

And the father's response?

**“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”** (Mark 9:24)

What intellectually honest faith.

“I believe... help my unbelief.”

Both at the same time.

Faith and doubt in the same sentence.

Trust and questions in the same breath.

And Jesus didn't rebuke him.

**Jesus healed his son.**

**The reflective Christian asks questions – and God welcomes them.**

The reflective Christian wrestles with hard passages – and God doesn't condemn the wrestling.

The reflective Christian can say “I believe... help my unbelief” – and God meets them right there in that tension.

**Your questions aren't betrayal.**

**They're part of how you worship.**

Because you're bringing your whole self – faith AND doubt, belief AND unbelief – to a God who is big enough to handle them.

## **Opening the Forbidden Wing**

Remember the Beast's forbidden wing?

Something precious was there.

Hidden away.

Barricaded.

But it wasn't meant to stay locked forever.

The same is true of your castle.

God is asking the same question He asked Adam and Eve:

**“Where are you?”** (Genesis 3:9)

Not because He doesn't know.

**Because He wants you to come out.**

He wants you to unlock the Forbidden Wing.

Open the Storerooms.

Come down from the Tower.

Walk out of the Dungeon.

Not because your questions are wrong.

**But because you don't have to hide them anymore.**

God can handle your wrestling.

He can handle your doubts.

He can handle the parts of your faith that don't make sense yet.

Job questioned for thirty-seven chapters – and God showed up.

David wrestled in the Psalms – and God called him “a man after my own heart.”

Thomas needed proof – and Jesus gave it to him.

The father cried “I believe... help my unbelief” – and Jesus healed his son.

**Your reflective faith is still faith.**

And the God who made you with a brain that won't stop thinking, won't stop questioning, won't stop wrestling...

**He's not asking you to turn it off.**

He's asking you to bring it to Him.

## **Why Am I Writing This?**

Because after thirty-some years of being prompted to read Daniel Taylor's book, I finally did.

And I found language for something I've always felt.

### **Reflective Christian.**

Someone who thinks deeply.

Who can't turn off the questions.

Who needs to wrestle before they can rest.

And I realized: **I'm not alone.**

There are others like me.

Taylor. Lewis. Tozer.

And maybe you.

If you've ever felt like you think too deeply for easy answers...

If you've ever been told to "just have faith" when you needed to understand...

If you've ever felt isolated in a church full of people who seem so certain while you're still wrestling...

### **You're not broken.**

### **You're reflective.**

And your reflective faith is still faith.

Because you're not hiding from the hard questions.

You're bringing them to God.

## **The Castle Doors Can Open**

I've spent most of my life building my castle and I've realized the same rooms can hold something different.

The Tower where I could think alone.

The Dungeon where I locked away the shame of not having it all figured out.

The Storerooms where I hid the questions I thought "good Christians" shouldn't ask.

The Forbidden Wing where I kept the doubts I was too afraid to voice.

But God has been patient.

He waited thirty years for me to read Taylor's book.

He waited twenty-six years for me to finish writing about the castle.

He waited through my rogue nation years when I ran from Him.

He waited through decades of me thinking something was wrong with me for asking so many questions.

And now – at fifty-six – I'm finally understanding:

**The questions aren't the problem.**

**Hiding them is.**

God already knows what's in the Forbidden Wing.

He already knows the doubts in the Dungeon.

He already knows the questions in the Storerooms.

He's asking "Where are you?" not because He doesn't know.

**Because He wants you to stop hiding.**

### **What's Next**

Here's something I'm beginning to understand:

Many who are neurodivergent tend to be reflective Christians.

Brains wired differently.

ADHD brains that can't stop connecting dots, jumping from thought to thought, seeing patterns everywhere.

Autistic brains that need to understand the system, the logic, the framework before they can accept it.

Brains that quite literally **can't** turn off the thinking.

Not because we're rebellious or prideful.

**Because that's how we're wired.**

And the church – bless it – often doesn't know what to do with us.

We're the ones who ask "why?" when everyone else nods along.

We're the ones who can't do small talk in the church lobby because our brains are still processing the sermon.

We're the ones who feel like outsiders even when we're surrounded by believers.

And I'm learning: **that's not a fault.**

### **That's how God made us.**

So in the coming weeks, I'm going to write about that.

About what it means to be neurodivergent and Christian.

About why our brains work the way they do.

About why the church struggles with us – and what we can do about it.

But first, I needed to write this.

To say: **If you're a reflective Christian, you're not alone.**

Your questions are welcome.

Your wrestling is valid.

Your "I believe... help my unbelief" is honest faith.

And the God who made you with a brain that won't stop thinking?

**He's not asking you to turn it off.**

He's asking you to bring it to Him.

### **Come Out of Hiding**

So wherever you are in your castle right now – the Tower, the Dungeon, the Storerooms, the Forbidden Wing – God is calling:

**"Where are you?"**

Not because He doesn't know.

**Because He wants you to come out.**

The Beast eventually opened the Forbidden Wing.

And what was locked away wasn't something to be ashamed of.

**It was something precious.**

The same is true of your reflective faith.

Your questions.

Your wrestling.

Your need to understand.

**It's not something to hide.**

**It's something precious.**

So open the doors.

Let the King in.

Bring Him your questions, your doubts, your “I believe... help my unbelief.”

**He can handle it.**

He handled Job’s thirty-seven chapters.

He handled David’s Psalms.

He handled Thomas’s need for proof.

He handled the father’s honest cry: “I believe... help my unbelief.”

**He can handle yours too.**

And maybe – like me after thirty years – you’ll finally ask yourself:

**“Why did I wait so long?”**

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**If you’re struggling:**

- Christian Faith-Based Resources: <https://mentalhealthhotline.org/christian-faith-resources/> or call 1-866-903-3787 (24/7)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call or text)

**You matter. Your life matters. And your questions are welcome here. Please stay.**

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**William James Meyer is the author of “Do You Live in a Castle? Breaking Free from the Walls That Hold You Hostage.” He writes from a Christian perspective as someone who’s still learning what it means to bring his questions – all of them – to a God who never stops listening.**

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