

1 A New Test

- With LeSS Questions

2 Introduction

- Venice has its gondolas, Calcutta its pedicabs, London its distinctive black taxis, but, in the canyons of Manhattan, the yellow cab is king.
- Anyone who drives the streets of the Big Apple quickly learns that taxi drivers rule the road.
- In fact, their motto is "I brake for nobody."

3 Introduction

- New York cabbies pride themselves on delivering their passengers curbside in the least amount of time, even if it involves a nail-biting, careening ride through traffic-choked streets to make good on that pledge.
- One of the reasons New York cabbies are so good at their work is their encyclopedic knowledge of the city's streets.
- Until recently, new cabbies were required to pass a grueling 80-question geography exam covering all five boroughs.

4 Introduction

- But no longer. Once the dread of new immigrants, the cabbies' geography test has now been reduced to a paltry 10 questions!
- The reason? Technology.
- Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are revolutionizing the taxi trade.

5 Introduction

- Allan Fromberg of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission told The New York Times that the emphasis is now as much on safety as on geography.
- The new exam is a "practical modernization," a "catching up to the times."

6 UBER

- Another factor is competition from Internet-based freelance services like Uber.
- A city-issued hack license no longer seems so valuable when GPS-equipped amateurs can deliver the same service at a lower cost, using their own vehicles.
- Longtime yellow cab patrons are skeptical. "If I got into a cab and the driver didn't know where Penn Station was, that'd be ridiculous," Carolyn Baker told the Times.
- "I mean, would you hire a chef who never fried an egg?"

7 Top 12 Toughest Exams in the World

- 12. IES (Indian Engineering Services): it is a test for all civil servants to take that covers the technical and managerial services of the Indian Government.
- 11. LNAT (National Admission Test for Law): This test in the United Kingdom is an aptitude test for entering law universities.
- 10. CCIE (Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert): This certification is considered the most prestigious certificate in the entire networking industry.
- 9. GATE (Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering): This all-India examination tests engineering students on their knowledge of engineering and various fields of science.

8 **Top 12 Toughest Exams in the World**

- 8. Gaokao: This exam in China is also known as the National Higher Education Entrance Examination. Every student in the country has to appear for this exam, as it is the main requirement to get into higher studies.
- 7. IIT JEE (Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Examination): IIT is the best engineering institute in India.
- 6. UPSC (Union Public Service Commission): This is India's central agency that holds all the important examinations to recruit topnotch government officials in the country.
- 5. Mensa: It is the oldest and largest highest IQ society in the world, a nonprofit organization where people who score in the 98th percentile in the standardized IQ tests are considered to be low rankers.

9 **Top 12 Toughest Exams in the World**

- 4. GRE (Graduate Record Examinations): GRE, as we all know, is an entrance test requirement for many grad schools in the United States.
- 3 CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) Exam: The CFA is not an academic degree, it is a professional stature. The Wall Street Journal termed the CFA test as the toughest test in the world. Less than one-fifth of the applicants pass each year and most of them attempt the CFA repeatedly.
- 2. All Souls Prize Fellowship Exam: This fellowship exam held at Oxford University's All Souls College is one of the toughest exams in the world.
- 1. Ekklesia Sermon Review Questionnaire - Only the most godly people in the world are able to pass this grueling exam.

10 **The Greatest Commandment**

- When a scribe comes up to Jesus asking which is the foremost commandment of the law, Jesus answers him by say.
- Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- In a sense of the word, Jesus reduces 613 commandments into two!

11 **The Greatest Commandment**

- Mark places this encounter amid a series of theological clashes between Jesus and various temple officials.
- Remarkably, this particular scribe isn't hostile like the others. He's not trying to pick a fight.
- Quite the contrary: This is the only example in the gospels of a scribe actually agreeing with Jesus.

12 **Jesus' response**

- Jesus' answer also defies easy categorization.
- Far from delivering a heavily-footnoted exegetical response, the Lord offers a schoolboy's answer.
- He recites the famous shema ("Hear, O Israel ...") followed by the command to love one's neighbor as oneself (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).
- Jesus is implying it's not so important what believers think or know about the law, as it is how faithfully they live the law.
- Jesus demands so little of his disciples, and yet so much. Love God and neighbor perfectly, he says. That's all. Know this -- do this -- and you are not far from God's kingdom.

13 **Do as I do, not as I say**

- Some of us would be perfectly fine with EPS-driven Christianity (that's "Ethical Positioning System").
- We've studied the Scriptures. We've memorized verses.
- If we've got a passing knowledge of the church's landmark confessions and catechisms, then so much the better.
- We take pride in knowing what we're supposed to do (or, if we don't, we know where we can look it up right quick).
- But ought we also apply what we know is good and pleasing to the Lord?

14 **The Good Samaritan**

- In the parable of the "Good Samaritan" is it not the ones with knowledge that stopped and helped the victim along the road.
- It wasn't the theologian or seminary professor that stopped along the edge of the road, but someone—who already had a witness of right and wrong in their heart.
- The Samaritans were doctrinal heretics, yet it was one of them who not only knew the essence and heart of the law, but put it into practice.
- In other words, this Samaritan passed the test, while others who knew better didn't.

15 **The Examination**

- Sometimes, anticipating an upcoming exam, students will try to wheedle out of their teacher some hint of what's going to be on the test.

- In this case, such a move is unnecessary.
- There's nothing secret about this examination question.
- It's been posted since the beginning of time all most.
- In fact, the exam itself is an open book test.

16 **The Examination**

- There's no point in trying to cram for this "Love God -- Love Your Neighbor" test.
- While knowledge of the Scriptures is certainly a help, a sheet full of Scripture citations is not, in itself, sufficient for a passing grade.
- Passing this examination is not a matter of composing a cogent essay, nor answering the requisite number of multiple-choice questions. It has nothing to do with lab reports.
- This exam cannot be written on paper, nor tapped out on a computer keyboard.
- Its two questions are answered not in the conventional way, but rather in the stuff of life itself.

17 **Christian Ethics EXAM**

- There's an old story about a college professor of Christian ethics who handed out an exam that had 20 difficult questions.
- The instructions said to read the entire exam before beginning to write.
- Most students, seeing the number of questions, despaired of answering them all in the time allotted.
- They ignored the instructions—doing what was right in their own eyes, and started right in on the first question.

18 **Christian Ethics EXAM**

- A few students wrote nothing at all.
- They just looked at the paper for a while, then stared into space, as though they were trying to remember something.
- One student completed the exam in a matter of minutes, submitted the paper, and walked out of the room, smiling.
- The others looked up for a moment, incredulous, then returned to their scribbling.

19 **Christian Ethics EXAM**

- That student was the only one who passed.
- That student was the only one who followed the instructions fully, reading through all 20 questions before reaching the final one.
- The final question went like this: "Congratulations! You have followed the instructions perfectly."

- There is no need to answer any of the other 19 questions. Just answer this one.

20 **Christian Ethics EXAM**

- “This question is very simple, and it is the only one that counts. Write the name of the janitor who cleans this classroom.”
- It was a strangely appropriate question for a Christian ethics exam.
- It sought to measure how hard the students tried to love their neighbor—the janitor, whom most habitually ignored.
- What about us?
- Would we pass Jesus’ new “two question” discipleship test?

21 **New Commandment**

- When the Apostle John is old, he writes an epistle that we know as 1 John.
- In it, he almost taunts his readers by offering them a “new command” from the Lord.
- However this “new command” is not new at all, but is the same command that Jesus gave to His disciples at the Last Super (John 13:34).
- Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. (1 John 2:7–8 NIV)

22 **God Changes Not**

- Years ago I sat down at a Men’s Breakfast where the speaker was a local Pastor here in Lexington.
- The message that this Pastor gave was that God does nothing new, but only that which is consistent with His nature and word.
- His point was that God changes not and if anyone has moved it’s us, not God.
- As the Scripture says, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb 13:8 NIV)
- And then in the very next verse says, Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. (Heb 13:9 NIV)

23 **God Watches over His word**

- The Lord said to Jeremiah the prophet, “I am watching over my word to perform it.” (Jer. 1:12 ESV)
- This has huge implications for us because God only fulfills His promises and does so when we by faith meet the condition of those promises.
- We can pray long prayers and do so with fasting and all kinds of other things, but if we fail to meet the requirement of those promises, our prayers will be ineffective.
- In other words, you can claim all the promises you want, but if those promises have conditions, we should not ignore them.

- As Jesus Himself has said, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” (John 15:7 NIV)

24 **Going on to Maturity**

- In the book of Hebrews, the writer exhorts his readers by saying, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, . . . (Heb 6:1–2 NIV)
- He says this not because they have mastered applying these truth and now need to move on to deeper things, but because they are staying immature because while they know the these elementary truths they’re not applying them.
- In doing so, they are staying immature in their knowledge of God and find it difficult to discern more spiritual truth.

25 **Knowing God By Experiencing His Faithfulness**

- Earlier this week, I discussed with someone in our church the differences between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.
- As some of you know . . .
 - Knowledge is the gathering of facts.
 - Understanding is the ability to comprehend the meaning and relationship of those facts.
 - Wisdom is the application of both knowledge and understanding.
 - And the byproduct of Wisdom is experiential knowledge.

26 **Wisdom is Supreme**

- So then,
 - If we know what God desires of us . . . and
 - Then understand that God has promised to reveal himself to us—in a rich and intimate way . . . and also answer our prayers.
 - It then would be wise for us to apply this truth (knowledge and understanding).
 - After which we will grow in our knowledge of God and become mature and be able to discern all things because God’s Holy Spirit is active in our lives.

27 **High Places**

- A few months ago, I did a series on “High Places” and how the kings of both Judah and Israel were judged whether or not they allowed the people to make sacrifices at these High Places—even though their sacrifices were made unto the Lord.

- According to the Bible, once God designated the permanent location of his presence, then all sacrifices were to be brought to that location and that location only.
- The principle here is that worship and service to God should always be consistent and in obedience to His word, if we want to see and experience His faithfulness.

28 **The Essence of God's Will**

- This is why “False Teachers” are so dangerous.
- They mislead us into believing things from God, without meeting the conditions that God has promised to honor.
- So then, we ought to pay attention to God's word and understand that if we abide in God's word, He has promised to abide in us and answer our prayers.
- And what is the essence of God's will? It is simply two commands, which are also principles.
 - Love God with all our heart, and
 - Love our neighbor as ourselves.

29 **The Church at Corinth**

- The church at Corinth was a church that forgot the elementary truths of God's word.
- When they came together for their Celebration Service banquets, they wouldn't share their food with each other.
- This so grieved the Apostle Paul that he said their meetings did more harm than good.
- Moreover, he implied that this neglect was the main reason why God wasn't answering their prayers and why there was so many sick and weak people in their church.
- It wasn't because of a lack of prayer, praise and worship, or fasting.
- It was because they were failing the two question test of what it means to please the Lord.

30 **Vision & Purpose**

- Just imagine for a minute, what a church could be that focuses on the essence of the faith and what it means to serve God.
- Would we not see the glory of God—the faithfulness He gives to those who live out His word. In essence, this is the vision and purpose of Ekklesia.
- Which is, to be a light of revelation—a witness of what God can do through those who serve Him.
- Therefore, as we have communion tonight, let us pledge our hearts to worship the Lord with all our mind and strength and to support and encourage the family of God with charity and love.
- If we do, God has promised to be our God and we His people. AMEN

