A Summary of *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God:*

*Seven Questions about Life and Faith*

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BIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

 This is a summary of the author’s forthcoming book: *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2025). Gen Z’s disconnect with the church is concerning. This article highlights seven questions Gen Z is asking about life and faith and explores the context around each question. Engaging these questions in evangelism and discipleship can provide a contextualized presentation of the gospel and discipleship.

1. **Introduction: Gen Z Flight from Christianity**

Figures and stats regarding the downward trend of church attendance in the United States over the last few decades, especially among younger generations,[[1]](#endnote-1) [1] are commonly shared. The most recent study conducted by Pew Research Center on the religious landscape of the United States showed a leveling off of the decline of Christianity, except for Generation Z (Gen Z); Christianity continues to decline with Gen Z.[[2]](#endnote-2) [2] Lifeway Research reported that two-thirds of those who attended church as a teenager drop out as an adult.[[3]](#endnote-3) [3] Springtide Research Center shared forty percent of Gen Zers never attend religious services.[[4]](#endnote-4) [4]

Perhaps Gen Z’s disengagement with the church is related to their overall negative views of Christianity. Barna identifies Generation Z as a “spiritual blank slate,” atheist, and post-Christian.[[5]](#endnote-5) [5] However, Gen Z views Christians as ignorant,[[6]](#endnote-6) [6] hypocritical,[[7]](#endnote-7) [7] out of touch,[[8]](#endnote-8) [8] and judgmental.[[9]](#endnote-9) [9] These views do not sound like a blank slate, but more of an antagonistic stance against Christianity. It is reasonable at this point to ask: Where is the church missing the mark in reaching Gen Z? The church is missing the mark in engaging Gen Z in the midst of their pain, their mental health issues, their pressures, their loneliness, and their overall experience.

Gen Z is coming of age in a post-Christian, digital world,[[10]](#endnote-10) [10] and it is important to connect the Bible and matters of faith in a tangible and relevant way for the cultural context of Gen Z. This includes understanding and unpacking the challenges they face and the questions they are asking.[[11]](#endnote-11) [11] When Christian adults can answer Gen Z’s questions with Scripture, it makes a connection that the Bible is relevant to Gen Z’s experiences. If the Bible is continued to be used to answer irrelevant topics or in an irrelevant way (meaning, it misses the context or core of the question), it will progressively be seen as irrelevant by the next generation.
 This article provides a summary of the author’s forthcoming book: *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2025). This is also an extension of the author’s doctoral thesis on file at Phoenix Seminary (Scottsdale, AZ): *Gen Z as the Areopagus: Gospel Contextualization for a Generation.* This discussion will: 1) explain the disconnect between churches/ministries and Gen Z, 2) identify seven key questions Gen Z is asking about life and faith based on their worldview and values, and 3) discuss the generational and cultural context of each question.[[12]](#footnote-1) This will provide the starting point for faith conversations with Gen Z in evangelism and discipleship. Finally, this paper will provide an example in how to apply these questions as a lens for reading Scripture with eyes for Gen Z so biblical responses can be tailored to their cultural context.

## **The Disconnect**

One of the reasons Gen Z finds matters of faith, the Bible, and Christianity irrelevant[[13]](#endnote-12) [12] is because Christian adults are spending their time and platforms answering questions Gen Z is not asking while ignoring the ones they are asking.[[14]](#endnote-13) [13] Connections are not being made between spiritual and faith matters and the matters and experiences of the everyday life of Gen Zers.[[15]](#endnote-14) [14] This pattern has resulted in a perpetuation of forms of evangelism and discipleship steadily missing the mark with its intended Gen Z audience, propagating the idea: God and the church are irrelevant. Gen Z does not see a direct connection between what churches teach, discuss, or practice with their values, questions, or lives. This disconnect can be repaired, but ignoring it and hoping the next generation will change to be more like previous generations of Christians will result in disappointment and empty churches.

The first step toward sharing a faith that is significant for Gen Z is for older generations (Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials) to admit they do not understand the adolescent and early adulthood experience of this next generation. This is not unlike entering into any other cross-cultural interaction, in which the visitor becomes a humble learner. Because older generations may assume the general experience of adolescence is similar for all generations, they may not understand the context of the questions about life and faith Gen Z is asking. It would be a mistake to assume a cross-generational experience is not a cross-cultural experience. Each generation has it’s own cultural values, taboos, vocabulary, mores, etc. like socio-ethnic groups do.[[16]](#endnote-15) [15] The experiences of Gen Z are vastly different than those of previous generations, resulting in different generational culture, worldview, and expressed values than previous generations. For example, a majority of previous generations did not experience social media, active-shooter drills at schools, and a global pandemic while growing up, all of which Gen Z experienced during their development and before exiting adolescence. Gen Z feels misunderstood, and thus disconnected, from older generations,[[17]](#endnote-16) [16] and rightly so. Older generations must admit there is much to learn about Gen Z’s experience in order to close the gap of misunderstanding and resulting disconnection.

1. **Who is Generation Z?**

A widely accepted range of birth years for Gen Z is 1997 to 2012[[18]](#endnote-17) [17], though there is still some debate about when Gen Z ends and the next generation (Generation Alpha) begins. Gen Z is a globally-connected and globally-identified generation, making up about a third of the global population.[[19]](#endnote-18) [18] Members of Gen Z are often described as “digital natives” due to their early access to smart, interactive technology like tablets, smartphones, and so on. In 2018, Pew Research reported that 95% of teenagers had a smartphone or access to a smartphone.[[20]](#endnote-19) [19] Psychologist Jean Twenge studied the impact of smartphones and social media stating they have “changed every aspect of teenagers’ lives, from the nature of their social interactions to their mental health.”[[21]](#endnote-20) [20]

A conversation on Gen Z must include a discussion of mental health. Many studies show a steep increase in depression, loneliness, self-harm, and suicide beginning in 2012, when Gen Z were young adolescents.[[22]](#endnote-21) [21] Anxiety and depression are connected with the use of addictive technology,[[23]](#endnote-22) [22] the very technology Gen Z has grown up having in their hands. Cigna Healthcare first identified Gen Z as the lonelinest generation in the United States in 2018,[[24]](#endnote-23) [23] and followed up five years later and found that loneliness had not subsided with age, but continued into early adulthood.[[25]](#endnote-24) [24] Gen Z has experienced high levels of pressure (perpetuated by digital and social media) to perform to a point where collecting accomplishments are a part of identify formation and gaining personal value.[[26]](#endnote-25) [25] In 2018, Forty-five percent of Gen Z felt judged when they used social media, and thirty-eight percent felt bad about themselves after using social media.[[27]](#endnote-26) [26] In 2024, forty-four percent of teenagers reported feeling anxious when they did not have their phones.[[28]](#endnote-27) [27]

Gen Z was raised in a post-Christian culture[[29]](#endnote-28) [28] and are generally considered “biblically illiterate,”[[30]](#endnote-29) [20] not simply leaving the church but carrying into adulthood the impact of their cultural surrounding.

While not a comprehensive overview of Gen Z, this brief description provides enough context to enter into seven questions Gen Z is asking about life and faith. There will be further generational context provided in each question.

## **Questions Gen Z is Asking**

It is important to understand the challenges Gen Z faces and the questions they are asking.[[31]](#endnote-30) [30] When Christian adults can answer Gen Z’s questions with Scripture, it makes a connection that the Bible is relevant to Gen Z’s experience. If the Bible is continued to be used to answer irrelevant topics or in an irrelevant way (meaning, it misses the context or core of the question), it will progressively be seen as irrelevant by the next generation.

This article identifies seven questions being asked by Gen Z. The questions themselves are timeless on the surface. However, the context around these questions is different for Gen Z than previous generations, and thus require an appropriately contextualized response. Each question reflects a cultural value and provided a cultural doorway to a biblical idea or to gospel proclamation. In other words, there is opportunity for biblical, gospel-centered engagement to pursue a response to each Gen Z question. This allows the church to begin to speak the same language as Gen Z for the purposes of translating the Christian faith to a new generation and a new generational culture.

## **Is God good?**

##  The goodness of God has been questioned for a long time. Even the serpent in the Garden of Eden deceives Eve into questioning whether God was being honest with her (Gen. 3:1-4); God’s honesty is related to his goodness. Young people do not typically use the exact phrase, “Is God good?” Rather, this is verbalized in a lot “why” questions. More specifically, they are questions like: (1) Why does God let terrible things happen? or (2) Why does God make bad things happen? At the heart of these questions is a desire to reconcile the goodness of God with the hardship and suffering experienced in the world. A good God must have a good reason for what He does. Remember, Gen Z is globally connected and social media provides real-time exposure to violent and unjust acts, which may have always been around, but are now on our screens, “forcing *everyone* to feel and confront them.”[[32]](#endnote-31) [31] Through digital and social media, Gen Z has the opportunity to stay informed and educated on current events, but the pressure to do so is also perpetuated by digital and social media.[[33]](#endnote-32) [32] There is an unending onslaught of information regarding injustice and suffering around the world coming to Gen Z.

Gen Z’s question of the goodness of God is also connected to their experiences around mental health. Over half of young people say they are moderately or extremely anxious, 47 percent say they are moderately or extremely depressed, and 42 percent say they are moderately or extremely lonely.[[34]](#endnote-33) [33] Quick math will reveal that many young people are dealing with more than one of these mental health issues. Suicide rates also increased among Gen Z, as suicide for those aged 15-19 doubled from 2010-2020.[[35]](#endnote-34) [34] More than half of Gen Z has “been exposed to trauma,” and just under half have experience loss or grief within the last year.[[36]](#endnote-35) [35]

Whether or not a member of Gen Z suffers from one of these mental health issues, they surely know someone who does, and thus are impacted by it. It is through the lenses of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicide Gen Z is asking: is God good?

When Christians of previous generation respond by simply stating that God is good, they may be thinking they are providing an answer but could unintentionally increase tension and distrust. Gen Z may be defining what is good on their own generational terms, then applying those terms to God to decipher if God is good. Offering no other explanation to Gen Z than stating “God is good” is unsatisfactory because it does not define good in certain terms, and Gen Z is left to use a definition of “good” that does not match their experiences with God. This calls for a different approach by Christians in responding to this question. It calls for defining what is “good” through a biblical lens in concrete terms for our Gen Z audience.

## **Am I Enough?**

Gen Z is asking a relational question that runs at the core of their identity: Am I enough? The struggle with feeling “not enough” has been repeated often with young people.[[37]](#endnote-36) [36] This is a question of self-worth. In fact, a parenthetical qualifier can be added: Am I enough (to be loved and valued)? This not a question related to righteousness, holiness, or sin. It is not asking: Am I enough to be saved without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Instead, this question asks: Am I valuable to God? Or Am I enough for God to love me? Fuller Youth Institute phrases the question: “Am I enough to be loved by a perfect God in my own imperfection?”[[38]](#endnote-37) [37] The RELATE Project uncovered that 46 percent of Gen Z in the U.S. are not confident they are worthy of being loved.[[39]](#endnote-38) [38] This could be rephrased to say 46 percent of Gen Z in the U.S. are not confident they are enough.

Gen Z is constantly being surrounded by the message, “You are not enough,”[[40]](#endnote-39) [39] perpetuated by an online or digital culture that has seeped into real life. The Gen Z question of enoughness has been influenced by social and digital media and their relationships with failure and success. Accomplishments and success inform personal identity formation and value for Gen Z,[[41]](#endnote-40) [40] and social media provides “a device that can quantify their worth through likes and comments.”[[42]](#endnote-41) [41] “Mistakes are inevitable,” failure is inescapable, but the digital world expects perfection, records imperfections, and most often denies mercy or forgiveness.[[43]](#endnote-42) [42] Because social media emphasizes “status, competition, and pride,” identity formation and value to the online community, and thus community in general, can be measured in terms of social media metrics.[[44]](#endnote-43) [43] Gen Z is acutely aware social media is full of altered, inauthentic, false images and message, but they still find themselves comparing themselves to the images on social media and feeling bad about themselves as a result.[[45]](#endnote-44) [44]

It would be a mistake to quickly respond with one theological lens by stating that of course Gen Z is not enough because of sin and quoting Isaiah 46:6: “All of us have become like one who is unclean,  and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.” This one answer to a question of enoughness, but not a response that fits the Gen Z context of this question. Instead, a biblical response that highlights God’s decision to assign value and love to humans becomes a helpful tool in this conversation: “For God so loved the world…” (John 3:16a).

## **Will you accept me?**

There are few values more important to Gen Z than acceptance. Gen Z also prioritizes acceptance of communities or people who have typically been marginalized.[[46]](#endnote-45) [45] Gen Z is more accepting than previous generations of people who identify as LBGTQ+, those living with a substance disorder, and those with non-normative sexual histories.[[47]](#endnote-46) [46]

Acceptance is directly related to having a sense of belonging.[[48]](#endnote-47) [47] For Gen Z, acceptance means being recognized and accepted with one’s unique identity in a positive way.[[49]](#endnote-48) [48] This means one can be authentic, without adjusting or changing speech, interactions, or personality, and being welcomed and embraced. Acceptance can also mean never asking someone to change from who that person “feels” they are. Gen Z highly esteems “being true to yourself” as high moral standard.[[50]](#endnote-49) [49] Gen Z values standing firm in who they *feel* they are when outside forces try to shift that identity.[[51]](#endnote-50) [50] This makes evangelism and discipleship a particular challenge when identity is internally driven rather than acted upon by God.

Acceptance is not always easy to come by. According to the 2024 State of the Bible Report, Generation Z has the lowest scores around self-acceptance and has the lowest rates of affirmation from their peers as compared to older generations.[[52]](#endnote-51) [51] Meaning, Gen Z is generally less comfortable with themselves than previous generations and receives less affirmation around who they are than previous generations. It would make sense Gen Z would prioritize acceptance because it is not a given in their experience. [[53]](#endnote-52) [52] They are left with the question: will you accept me?

In evangelism and discipleship with Gen Z, we must address the already/not yet nature of the life in Christ. This addresses that God both accepts anyone who puts their faith in him, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and by work of the Spirit, and also changes that person into something new. God both accepts us as are we are, and makes us into something different as 2 Corinthians 5:17 states: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

## **Do All People Matter to God?**

This question is based in the Gen Z values of tolerance,[[54]](#endnote-53) acceptance, and inclusivity.[[55]](#endnote-54) It is related to the value of acceptance, but extends to action or activism and setting things right. Ultimately, this is a question of social justice: does God care about the needs, dignity, equity and belonging if all types of people in all places? Gen Z only knows a world that has had female presidential and vice-presidential candidates, a black president, and legalized gay marriage and marijuana use in a number of states.[[56]](#endnote-55) [55] Because Gen Z generally views Christians as ignorant,[[57]](#endnote-56) [56] judgmental,[[58]](#endnote-57) [57] and anti-homosexual,[[59]](#endnote-58) [58] they project such opinions onto the Triune God and the Bible. Gen Z wants nothing to do with a God who does not care for those traditionally or currently oppressed, rejected, and cast out.

It is unclear if Gen Z thinks God does not care about social justice or if the church is not concerned with social justice. Either way, Gen Z is not being show how the spiritual life reflects how God cares about all people. In her book, *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*, Almeda M. Wright discusses the disconnect between personal spirituality and social activism for African American youth.[[60]](#endnote-59) [59] She argues that youth are being taught their faith is limited to impacting their personal spiritual lives,[[61]](#endnote-60) [60] which leaves a vacuum for how their faith should impact the community or the world. While generally, Americans who more regularly attend religious services are more engaged with community life, than those who seldom or never attend,[[62]](#endnote-61) [61] many Gen Zers do not see the connection between Christianity and communal change. Even Gen Z Christians find themselves being pushed to choose between gospel proclamation and working for social justice or “emphasizing justice over evangelism.”[[63]](#endnote-62) [62]

The Image of God becomes a centerpiece to a conversation around the question: do all people matter to God? Murder is a big deal to God because all people bear his image: “For in the image of God has God made mankind” (Genesis 9:6). Because every person bears the image of God, every person is valued by God, and every person matters to God. Throughout Scripture, God’s interaction with all kinds of people can be drawn out for Gen Z. Jesus ministers to the powerful and powerless, men and women, the insider and outsider, the religious and the pagan, the rich and the poor, and so on.

## **Can I Trust You?**

 Gen Z is wondering where they can place their trust.[[64]](#endnote-63) [63] The question of trust overlaps with Gen Z values of authenticity and safety,[[65]](#endnote-64) [64] as well as this generation’s search for truth. Gen Z upholds authenticity as a highly regarded value, wanting, almost demanding, honesty, genuineness, and gritty reality from others.[[66]](#endnote-65) [65] Gen Z adolescents are also deciding whether or not they trust someone quickly due to the influx and speed of falsified digital information coming their way. Credibility is directly proportional to the amount of transparency and authenticity observed.[[67]](#endnote-66) [66] Gen Z rated TikTok as the most authentic form of media,[[68]](#endnote-67) [67] but still says TikTok is toxic and can be harmful.[[69]](#endnote-68) [68] What this is essentially expressing is TikTok is the least of all evils. For Gen Z, all media is so distorted and unreliable that even the most authentic media is still highly problematic and untrustworthy. This generation understands anyone can write and share information or even alter the way they look, so what is shared, what they see, may not be trustworthy or true.[[70]](#endnote-69) [69] Even the term “fake news” has made it into cultural mainstream colloquialism. Gen Z does not need a definition of what “fake news” means, but its existence as a term already suggests media is skewed and may not be reliable. Gen Z is wondering where they can place their trust.[[71]](#endnote-70) [70]

As “digital natives,”[[72]](#endnote-71) Gen Z has grown up in digital spaces with virtual lives in addition to in-person. Different aspects of one’s personality or interests are allowed to thrive in these distinct spaces, resulting in the development of avatar[[73]](#endnote-72) [72], hybrid[[74]](#endnote-73) [73], or dual[[75]](#endnote-74) [74] identities. Thus, Gen Z is aware that people may have different identities or personalities in different spaces. They have witnessed trusted adults be exposed for immoral and illegal acts those adults were trying to hide.

Only 28 percent of Gen Zers have a high level of trust in organized religion.[[76]](#endnote-75) [75] Kara Powell of the Fuller Youth Institute acknowledged faith communities have lost trust with our next generation.[[77]](#endnote-76) [76] Trust is not automatically awarded and earning trust is key for leading Gen Z.[[78]](#endnote-77) [77] Gen Z needs mentors and leaders from older generations who can engage with this generation relationally.[[79]](#endnote-78) [78] Relationship allows for trust, understanding, listening, and care; this is how leaders and mentors earn Gen Z’s respect.[[80]](#endnote-79) [79]

This question of trust extends to God: can I trust God? Again, it would be erroneous to quickly answer with the affirmative. Instead, it is important to unpack what Gen Z means by “trust.” This could be explored by asking a Gen Zer, “Can you to trust God to do what?”

## **What is True?**

Gen Z has complicated relationship with truth. The discussion around trust illustrates Gen Z is aware they are surrounded by altered, skewed, or even false information. This includes carefully curated photos on social media,[[81]](#endnote-80) [80] a medium Gen Z is well-aware is full of fake and “not real life.”[[82]](#endnote-81) [81] For every piece of information shared with Gen Z, they can access contrary information on the internet. Consequently, in a world of falsehoods, Gen Z is searching for truth,[[83]](#endnote-82) [82] while believing in moral relativism.[[84]](#endnote-83) [83] They often hear truth articulated in personal terms: “my truth,” “your truth,” or “their truth.” [[85]](#endnote-84) [84]

In Gen Z’s lifetime, truth has been weaponized. In their world view, subscribing to truth results in the oppression of those who do not ascribe to that truth.[[86]](#endnote-85) [85] Truth, for Gen Z, is contrary or confrontational to their generational values of acceptance, safety, and personal freedom. It can be difficult for Gen Z to share any “truth” that could “imply others’ beliefs are wrong.”[[87]](#endnote-86) [86] This is contrary to Gen Z’s cultural values. As a result, Gen Z’s cultural context of personal truth then does not recognize universal and absolute truth.[[88]](#endnote-87) [87] Gen Z would rather uphold acceptance than believe in a truth that does not align with other people, values, or belief systems. Truth, in the form of morality, can also be dynamic, situationally-based, rather than fixed.[[89]](#endnote-88) [88] Gen Z was and is left to uncover or discover what is true in any given moment. This makes truth more like shifting sand than a firm foundation.

One complexity for Gen Z is the value for truth in the context personal freedom is that it comes in direct conflict with the generational value for social justice. Social justice cannot exist without truth to dictate what is just or unjust, what is right or wrong. Individualistic, dynamic truth provides no grounds for which to fight for social justice, because there is no “wrong” to fight against. The result is a generation who wants to fight for what is right without any truth dictating what the right thing is. It is reasonable to conjecture one reason Gen Z is seeking to identify truth is to satisfy their longing to for justice.

It cannot simply be stated that the Bible is true. Because of the emotional complexity and cultural bias around Gen Z’s relationship with truth, such a statement could cause tension rather than satisfaction. If personal truth is a high value, personal testimony can be a way to open an evangelistic conversation with Gen Z. Being a witness is simply sharing “your truth,” a delivery method with which Gen Z is culturally comfortable.

## **Am I Safe?**

 Dr. Jean Twenge identified Gen Z’s value of safety by explaining this generation is always is asking: “Is it safe?”[[90]](#endnote-89) [89] A natural extension of this question is to apply it to personal experience by continuously asking: am I safe? To move it to the spiritual would be to say: am I safe with God? Safety extends beyond the physical, as Gen Z searches for emotional, psychological, or perceived safety as well as safety from shame, embarrassment, risk or failure.[[91]](#endnote-90) [90] In *The Anxious Generation,* Jonathan Haidt, says Gen Z was taught to avoid risks, dangers, thrills, and conflicts by adults and institutions like schools and churches.[[92]](#endnote-91) [91] This cultural environment reinforced the value of safety for Gen Z.

The relationship between social media and cancel culture, or “call-out culture,” surrounds Gen Z with an audience and cultural atmosphere “eager to watch people being shamed.”[[93]](#endnote-92) [92] Watching high profile cancelations cause Gen Z to see their sense of safety, identity, and belonging constantly at risk.[[94]](#endnote-93) [93]With smartphones and social media, one’s mistakes can be recorded, published, and shared without consent or knowledge, which contributes to continuing to ask: am I safe or will I be shamed, canceled, and embarrassed?[[95]](#endnote-94) [94]

Because Christians are viewed as judgmental and intolerant, it is reasonable Gen Z is questioning whether or not they are safe with Christians, the gospel, and even God. Gen Zers want and need a safe place to ask questions about the Bible, Triune God, and faith without feeling shame.[[96]](#endnote-95) [95] It is important to offer those kinds of spaces to them. It is also important to, in Scripture, explore how God might define what is safe. Recall the words of Mr. Beaver describing the God-figure, Aslan, in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*: “Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”[[97]](#endnote-96) [96] This may not be the answer to the question Gen Z is asking because there is no clear definition of “safe.” If Gen Z equates goodness with safety, then in that logic, God cannot be good if God is not safe.

1. **Application to Scripture**

Since the context for Gen Z’s identified questions about life and faith has been explored, this knowledge can now be applied to the work of contextualization of Scripture for Gen Z. The Bible is full of good news for everyone, everywhere, throughout history, but context impacts understanding and application. For example, when teaching about cultural intelligence, David Livermore asks why the prodigal son ended up in the pig pen, and the responses vary depending on cultural influences.[[98]](#endnote-97) [97] The Bible shares three reasons why the son was in the pigpen: (1) there was a famine (Luke 15:14), (2) no one gave him anything to eat (Luke 15:16), and (3) he squandered his money (Luke 15:13-14). All are correct answers to the question but come from different cultural lenses. The task at hand is to use Gen Z’s cultural lens to read Scripture and draw out how God engages Gen Z’s experiences, values, and worldview and draws them to Himself.

When reading the Bible, it is helpful to keep this of questions nearby in order to look for how the Bible engages those questions in a particular passage. As an example, these questions will be applied in examining Mark 4:25-41, when Jesus calms the storm. This passage addresses the following:

* By questioning Jesus’ identity, this passage engages the question: What is true?
* Through the disciples’ experience in the storm, this passage engages the question: Am I safe?
* Because the disciples and Jesus are in a terrible storm, this passage engages the question: Is God good?
* When the disciples question Jesus’ care for them, this passage touches: Can I trust you?
* Because other boats were with them, this passage involves: Do all people matter to God?

Each of these examples provide a Gen Z-friendly lens for unpacking this gospel account. They reveal opportunities to invite Gen Z to discover how the Bible is relevant to their questions and their everyday lives using their language and values. Educated, experienced, faithful, and biblically literate Christian members of previous generations can sit next to members of Gen Z and help to provide biblical context so they can work together reveal the good news in Scripture.

The next step is to examine the past to uncover how the Bible responds to the Gen Z question or values. In any given setting, there may not be time to address all the questions a given Scripture, but starting small and addressing one question is a good place to start. For sake of space in this article, two of the questions will be examined in for this passage. This is a prayerful step, but it can look as follows for Mark 4:25-41:

* *Is God good?* Some might believe a good God would have prevented the storm to begin with, or at least would have had the boat avoid the storm. God’s goodness is not the prevention of the storm but his with-ness within the storm. God the Son is with the disciples in the storm. He is not distant from them, but experiences the storm alongside them. God’s with-ness is his goodness.
* *Do all people matter to God?* There were others boats in the water who also experienced the storm. God did not just care about the disciples, but the other boats with Jesus. Those boats may not have been able to see or hear Jesus from where they were. All they knew was that they were in a terrible squall, and it was suddenly calm. Do they know God the Son was with them? Maybe they felt alone in the storm. Perhaps a Gen Z audience can relate: they found themselves in a storm of life, unable to see or hear God from their vantage point and unaware God is with them. When the storm stops, they may not realize it was the work of God’s hand. The Gen Z audience can be invited to re-visit those memories and consider the possibility God was with them, even if they were not aware of it.

The answers to Gen Z’s questions was in Scripture the whole time. By looking at the questions Gen Z is asking within Mark 4:25-31, a response to those questions is provided through Scriptural engagement.

 The practice of looking for how the Bible engages the seven questions discussed here will continue to reveal good news for Gen Z. This process makes a direct connection between Gen Z’s questions about life and faith and the Bible, which ultimately points Gen Z to the Triune God. Churches can provide a contextualized conversation with Gen Z in evangelism and discipleship that may welcome the next generation into a life of faith in Jesus Christ.

1. **Conclusion**

In conclusion, identifying key questions Gen Z is asking about life and faith provides direction for evangelism and discipleship. The seven questions identified and the context around those questions were explored in this summary of *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith,* an extension of the author’s doctoral thesis*.* By responding to these questions in evangelism and discipleship, the church can connect with Gen Z in a contextualized way, relevant to their worldview, experiences, and values. This makes a direct connection between faith and everyday life for Gen Z, closing the disconnect between the next generation and the church.

1. Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2018), 24–25. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
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