Good Questions
Have Groups Talking

Josh Hunt
Good Questions
Have Small Groups Talking

Josh Hunt

How to use questions to stimulate life-changing discussions.
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Introduction

Question and answer is widely regarded as an effective way—if not the most effective way—to lead groups.

But, ever been in a bad discussion? Ever been in a really bad discussion? A discussion that was awkward and uncomfortable or predictable and boring or so tense you wanted to leave the room? There is a reason many teachers will retreat to the safety of lecture. Question and answer is unpredictable. We feel out of control.

Why do some questions spark lively and life-changing conversations, while others fall flat? That is what we seek to uncover in this book.

How do we ask questions that lead not only to an interesting discussion, but one that changes lives? How do we create conversations that create disciples?

Many teachers don’t know how to ask good questions. They ask questions that are too easy: “According to John 3.16, who died on the cross for your sins?” and they wonder why no one responds.

Or, they ask questions that are too difficult: Does anyone know what Calvin taught about this passage?
They ask questions that are too personal: What sins have you committed that you are ashamed of?

Or, questions that are not personal enough. They are bland, lifeless, and unconnected to reality.

People like to answer questions that are on the edge. They like to answer questions that are on the edge of their knowledge. They like to answer questions that they think they are the only one who has the answer to.

People like to answer (and hear answers about) questions that are on the edge of personal self-disclosure. Not too much or we get uncomfortable. But personal enough that it is real. Good questions get us to that edge.

People like to answer questions that connect to real life. Not theoretical stuff; real life. They like to talk about stuff that matters—stuff that matters to them in their world.

Asking good questions is more of an art than a science. I could (and do) write twenty or twenty-five questions that you could use in class to lead a lively discussion. But, to make the questions really sing, you need to understand about the art of asking good questions.
This book will walk you through a dozen types of questions that can be used to stimulate life-changing conversations. It is not an exhaustive list and every good question does not fall neatly into one of these categories. But, understanding how to use these twelve questions will give you the basic tools you need to lead a life-changing conversation.

The jump-ball question is particularly tricky to execute. It is, in a way, the heart of the lesson and what makes the lesson really come alive. If executed well, it will produce a lively discussion on the edge of argument. But it is almost impossible to know what question is going to work for what group. It is nearly impossible to write a universal jump-ball question that will work with all groups. Jump-ball questions nearly always have to be nudged slightly in one direction of the other in order to get the group to bite. But, I think we are getting ahead of ourselves now.

The goal of this book is to equip the teacher to effectively ask good questions that will result in lively, interesting, and on-task conversations that produce changed lives.
Why are good questions the best way to teach adults?

There are basically three ways to teach adults:

- Lecture
- Fun and games
- Question and answer

Lecture is a good method, especially in certain special circumstances.

- If you need to communicate a good deal of information quickly. Lecture can be a very efficient way of communicating.
- If there is only one person in the room that knows the truth. Group life should not be about the pooling of ignorance. I have seen groups fish for the right answer for days when there is just one person who knows. Say it.
- In short bursts. Every lesson ought to have some lecture. In my online lessons I will often put footnotes to the teachers and say, “Preach a little on that.” Every lesson ought to have a bit of the prophetic voice of someone saying, “Thus saith the Lord!”
- If the material is somewhat complex one voice will often make it clearer than a group of voices discussing.
- If you only have an expert in the room for a limited amount of time. I remember hearing Dr. Curtis Vaughan
speak one time in El Paso, TX. Dr. Vaughan taught me Greek in seminary and I have enormous respect for his knowledge. I remember people asking a question about a word that was completely out of context and off the top of his head he would say, “On page 1232 of Kittel, volume 4, it says. . .” Anyway, at this meeting in El Paso, he gave his presentation, then opened it up for discussion. Discussion? Dr. Curtis Vaughan is in the room. I don’t want to hear us dummies speak. I want to hear Dr. Vaughan. Let him lecture till the cows come home!

There is a place for lecture, but lecture has its limitations, especially in a group setting. I can think of two primary limitations of the lecture method.

**Lecture is an extremely difficult method.**

If you take up piano, you will learn that some songs are more difficult to play than others. If you ever play cards you know that some hands are more difficult to play than others. If you take up golf you soon realize that some courses and some holes are much more difficult than others. The lecture is an extremely difficult method to perfect. If you disagree with the thesis of this book, that Good Questions are the best way to teach adults, allow me to gently warn you. If you choose to lecture, you are dealing yourself a very difficult hand to play. It is extremely difficult to present a forty-five minute, interesting and life-
changing lecture each week. Extremely difficult. Let me invite you to humbly consider the fact that you might be boring people. Do you have anyone in your life who would tell you? Most people will be polite. There is a chance—a good chance—that if you adopt the lecture method each week that your group is bored and won’t tell you.

I know what you are thinking. “Not me. Other people might be boring, but not me.” We all fall victim to a tendency to evaluate ourselves more highly than is warranted. Even pastors who preach on humility fall victim to this tendency. Ninety-percent of preachers describe themselves as above average. One hundred percent of teenagers think they are above average. There is a good chance you see yourself as above average. Be careful. Romans 12 warns us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. It is very difficult to teach an interesting, life-changing lesson every week if you use primarily lecture. You might be boring.

**Lecture doesn’t do a lot to create community.**

Even if you do get it right and your lectures are interesting, stimulating, funny and life-changing, there is still a problem.

Lecture does not stimulate relationship-building.
It does not create community. It does not allow us to get to know one another.

Church is not just about getting to know God and learning to live the Christian life individually and privately. It is not just about a vertical relationship with God. It is also about a horizontal relationship with one another. Lectures don’t help us do that much. Conversations do.

The truth is, we need both lecture and conversations. But we get lecture in the worship service. We get lecture in the sermon. Group time is about relationship building. It is about community. Discussion based teaching helps us do that.

David Francis, head of Sunday School for Lifeway Christian Resources, told me that according to their research, in most churches Sunday School is not a small group time at all. It is a mid-sized group time. It is a stand-and-deliver-a-lecture time. It is sit-in-straight-rows-and-listen-to-a-talk. It is mini-sermon time.

If this is true, it follows that many believers have never really experienced group life. They have experienced sit-in-straight-rows-and-listen-to-a-lecture, but they have not experienced group life. They have not experienced one another life. The skillful use of good questions helps us create group life.
**Relationships are about conversations.** Good questions create conversations. Good questions make class interesting. Good questions stimulate life-change. Good questions create community.

Fun and games have limited usefulness with adults
By fun and games I mean everything from watching a video to acting out a drama to cutting pictures out of magazines to listening to songs to taking a field trip. It is everything we do that is creative and unusual.

Some of this is great. Variety is the spice of life. It makes group life fun. . . to a point. But, I think you can do too much of this with adults. Too much and adults get to feeling like, “Where is the beef?” I am not sure that kids would ever feel this way, but adults will.

Admittedly, this is rarely a problem. It is rarely a problem that groups are too creative, too lively, or too much fun. But, my point is that these creative elements make a good garnish for the lesson, but a poor entrée.

I remember attending a retreat once where the leaders had us listening to secular songs and comparing the theology of these songs to what we understood to be biblical theology. They had even printed out the words to make it easier for us. It was fun for a while. It was interesting and helpful for the first song or two, but
we did this for an hour or more. After while, I got to feeling, like, “Does anyone around here have a Bible? Any chance we could open the Bible and read a bit and talk about what it means to us and how we could apply it to our lives?”

I think most adults are this way. We are O.K. with doing some creative activities. Some. Some creative activities. We will go along for a time. But, after a time, we want someone to open the Bible and get into it.

**Good questions strike a happy balance between lecture and fun and games**

Good questions have groups talking. Good questions are interesting. Good questions challenge the way we think. Good questions challenge the way we live. Good questions guide us off the broad way into the narrow way. Good questions challenge our assumptions. Good questions help us get to know one another. They test our knowledge. They create community. Good questions are the best bread-and-butter way to teach adults.

There is a place for lecture. When an expert is in the room we do well to lecture. In short bursts lecture can be effective. But not too much.

There is a place for creative activities. There is a place for the unusual. But, enough is enough.
Good questions are the core, the centerpiece, the meat and potatoes of good teaching in a small group or Sunday School class.
The First Five Minutes

The beginning sets the tone for the whole. Like Scott Peck’s classic beginning line of *The Road Less Traveled*, “Life is Difficult.” We wanted to believe it was easy, or you could make it easy, or easier in three easy steps.

Or, Rick Warren’s beginning line of *The Purpose Driven Life*, “It is not about you.” That gets to the heart of the matter, doesn’t it?

Or how about this beginning line: The beginning sets the tone for the whole.

Well, I don’t suspect this book will become a classic on par with *The Road Less Traveled* or *The Purpose Driven Life*. I just want to make the point that the beginning sets the tone for the whole.

The first five minutes of your group time sets the tone for the whole. People tend to make up their mind about how they are going to feel about class in the first five minutes and then spend the rest of the hour trying to defend why that idea is right.

“The first five minutes” can be taken two ways and we will deal with each one separately:

- The first five minutes when people walk into group, and
- The first five minutes when the actual group time begins
Both of these times are extremely important. The first we will deal with in this chapter, the second will have a chapter of its own.

**The first five minutes when people walk into the group**

When was the last time you walked into a group as a stranger? Do you remember how it feels? Do you remember how it feels to not know where to sit, what to do, where to go, who is in charge, what is going on?

If it has been a long time, or maybe you cannot remember, I recommend you visit another church. If you want to be really brave, visit a church that is not part of your denomination, a church that is very different from yours. Walk in and get in touch with what it feels like to be a stranger.

You might think this issue is not important enough to warrant going to all this fuss about. Jesus counted the issue of strangers and how they are treated as very important. It is one of the things that separate the sheep from the goats. Circle the word “stranger” every time it occurs in this passage:

> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a
stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” Matthew 25:34-46 [NIV]
Imagine Jesus visited your group. How would you treat Him? Jesus taught us to treat every visitor that way, because how we treat them is how we are treating Him.

The writer of Hebrews taught us that by being careful of the way we treat strangers, we are, at times, entertaining angels: Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2 [NIV]

How we greet one another is elevated in the Bible to the position of a command. Four times in the New Testament we are commanded to greet one another properly:

- Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings. Romans 16:16 [NIV]
- All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 1 Cor. 16:20 [NIV]
- Greet one another with a holy kiss. 2 Cor. 13:12 [NIV]
- Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. 1 Peter 5:14 [NIV]

It is easy to miss the import of these commands because we get hung up on the cultural style of what is appropriate. Our mind gets distracted by the visual imagery of kissing each other at the door and the political correctness of that in a world like ours and what would happen if, and... we miss the whole point. The point is that God counted it so important that we greet each other
appropriately that he elevated it to the level of a command and repeated it four times.

I have had more than a few people irritated at me over the years. I remember talking to a friend once about someone else who was irritated at me. (Probably a better idea to talk with the person who was irritated.) Anyway, I asked my friend what their beef was. “Well,” my friend hesitated. “They said you didn’t say ‘Hi!’ to them when you walked down the hall. You didn’t greet them. You just ignored them. They knew you would never do this to one of your friends, but to them, you didn’t say a word. It made them feel small. It made them feel like they were not important to you.”

“I am spacey,” I protested. But, as much as I have tried to defend my spacey-ness and this is a trivial matter and as much as I have tried to convince myself that they are just too sensitive, I have to admit that the Bible is on their side. The Bible commands that we take seriously how we greet one another. Back in the day, that meant a warm kiss. Maybe it means something else in our day. Whatever else it means, it means that the greeting in the first minute when people show up is very important.

The way we treat strangers is important to God and it is important to people. How we treat strangers—visitors to our group—may have more to do with whether or not they come back and the growth of the group than anything else. It may be more
important than the quality of the teaching or how hard you work at your outreach program.

Here are three things you can do to insure that your visitors are treated as you would treat Jesus if he visited your class.

**Make someone in charge**
Everyone’s responsibility is no one’s responsibility. In order to insure that every visitor is treated well, make it someone’s job. Have someone stationed by the door prepared to greet everyone who walks in and especially to welcome strangers. Wal-Mart does it. You should too. It could be the teacher, but it is probably preferable that it be someone else. Get the friendliest, happiest, most welcoming person in the room to be in charge of greeting people.

**Refreshments**
People don’t know what to do when they first come in, and they are uncomfortable doing nothing. Give them something to do—eat. Give them something to eat. Eating relaxes people and puts them at ease. It gives them something to do and relieves the awkwardness.

Providing refreshments each week is easy enough to do. First, someone needs to be in charge. Not in charge of making refreshments every week, but in charge of seeing that it is taken
care of. About every two months, they can pass around a sign up list with dates for people to volunteer. If it is a large class, you may need several to volunteer each week. A friendly e-mail reminder to the people who have signed up each week would go along way toward insuring that it is done.

**Introductions and chit-chat**

After a visitor is greeted at the door and shown the refreshments, the next step is introductions. It is not necessary to introduce them to everyone in the group; just a few people. Sit them next to someone and say, “Bob and Cheryl, this is Tom and Betty. Make them feel welcome, will you?” It is important at this point that Bob and Cheryl make them feel welcome.

How do they do that? Ask lots of questions—questions about Tom and Betty. Questions that are of interest, but not too personal. Good questions are the key to good group life. Questions like:

- Is this your first time be with us?
- How did you hear about our church (or group)?
- What kind of work are you in?
- How long have you lived here?
- Do you have family in the area?
- Do you have kids?

If the Bob and Cheryl in your group are not naturally good at this, you might coach them to have a list of questions in their mind. It
will serve them well, not only in this situation, but in a million situations where they met new people. Better yet, if the Bob and Cheryl of your group are not naturally good at this, you might sit Tom and Betty next to someone else. Let’s put our best foot forward. First impressions matter.

This chit-chat ought to continue right up until when the group itself starts, or, when Bob and Cheryl sense that Tom or Betty have had enough chit-chat. There is a fine line between friendliness and nosiness.

From time to time—maybe about once a quarter, you might do a group evaluation of this process. Make sure you have a greeter and refreshments, and then ask. Openly, publically ask members how they felt the first week they were greeted. Hopefully, they will report that they felt great and the group was welcoming and inviting. A report like that will go a long way toward encouraging the group to keep up the good work.

You might think that all this is automatic and trivial and happens all the time and does not warrant writing about. If you had visited as many classes as I have, you wouldn’t feel that way. Visitors are often routinely ignored.

Treat your visitors well. The first five minutes set the tone for the rest of the class.
The First Five Minutes, Part Two

Start on time.

That may sound trivial, or persnickety, or overly formal for a group. Whatever. Start on time.

“But, if we were to do that, half our group isn’t there and they would miss it.” Start on time. One of the reasons people show up late to church events is the leadership is in the habit of starting late. We reward the people who are late by accommodating their lateness. We punish the people who are on time by not starting on time.

I would not have thought this was any big deal if it were not for my wife. She does training with me. She trains children and preschool workers, while I train adult workers. She has a talk called K.I.D.T.E.A.C.H. The “A” in this acrostic “Arrive early.” When she first told me that I thought it was a little trivial. But, based on the feedback she has gotten from church leaders across the country, I have come to see the importance of bringing this up. She has told me story after story after story of people who have come up to her after conferences and thanked her for bringing the time issue up. “It is a real problem around here. Teachers don’t show up on time.”
All of the things we talked about in the last chapter can only happen if we are there on time—early in fact. Often visitors are nervous about being able to find their way so they show up early. It is pretty bad if they show up before the people who are in charge. Show up early. Start on time.

**Life exposure question**

I always start a group the same way—with what I call a life exposure question. The life exposure question does not have to do with the Bible; it has to do with life. It opens the window of each person’s life and lets us peer in. Here are some examples from some recent lessons I have written for The Lesson Vault:

- Let’s each share our name and one favorite fruit. No one gets to repeat a fruit. (The question relates to that day’s study and this verse: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.” John 15:16 (NIV)

- Let’s each share our name and how many Christians you work with, or how the people you work with feel about Christians. (The lesson that day had to do with being persecuted. This verse sets the stage for that discussion.)

- Share your name and one time you have been robbed. (The lesson included John 10.10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NIV)
As you can see, I try to relate the life exposure question to the lesson of the day. This allows the life exposure to do double duty. The life exposure question can fulfill two purposes at the same time—it exposes a bit of the group’s life to each other, and it helps to teach the lesson itself. (Another example of double duty is using biblical illustrations to make a point. By using a biblical illustration from another place in the Bible, you illustrate your point, while at the same time reminding the group of a biblical story.)

Sometimes, I can’t think of a question that relates to the lesson, so we can’t come up with a question that can do double duty. In this case, I resort to a totally trivial question:

- Share your name and your favorite restaurant.
- Share your name and your favorite fast-food restaurant.
- Share your name and your favorite burger.

Notice, we always start with “share your name and.” If the group is doing any kind of outreach, there will be people there who do not know each other. Or, more likely, they kinda know each other, but they can’t remember that name. If you feel strongly that you don’t need to do this, I have a thought for you to consider: maybe you need to do more outreach. If everyone there knows the name of everyone there, it is time to go out and get some new people. The best way to do that is through parties. Have a party once a month and invite every member and every prospect. That is a great idea, but not the subject of this book.
Benefits of life-exposure questions

They get everyone talking.
I often encourage groups to engage in a question and answer style of teaching, rather than a lecture style. Sometimes, people object. Their objections go something like this. “But our group doesn’t talk. They don’t like talking. They like hearing me talk. They are a listening kind of group and I am a lecturing kind of teacher. We are a match made in heaven. I talk. They listen.”

Or, sometimes people will say, “I tried to get my group talking; they just didn’t want to open up. It was awkward.”

Here is what I have found. If you can get everyone’s mouth open in the first part of the hour, it goes a long way toward creating a discussion during the rest of the hour. Sometimes, you get their mouths open and you can’t get them shut, but that is a topic for another day. Life-exposure questions get groups talking.

They create connections
I have seen it happen a million times. We ask a question like, “Share your name and where you were born.” Someone says, “I am Bob and I was born in Baltimore.” Some shy person from across the room will say, “No way! I was born in Baltimore. Aren’t the crabs the best there?” “Absolutely, best crabs on the eastern
shore. What is your favorite crab place?” About this time you might have to encourage the group to continue this crab conversation after class.

Over time, these little connections turn a group of strangers into a group of friends. It doesn’t happen in a day. It doesn’t happen in a week, but, week after week, layer upon layer, this kind of experience creates a groupness. It creates a bond, a sense that we know each other and love each other and know one another’s stories. We feel connected.

They allow everyone to participate
When we get into the Bible study itself, some will be hesitant to participate. Perhaps they don’t know very much, or they are just especially sensitive about being wrong. For a hundred reasons, it is difficult to get 100% participation during the Bible study time itself, although we push in that direction. But, during this time, everyone can participate. Everyone may not know the meaning of the word perdition, but everyone knows where they were born.

Making Life-exposure questions work
Pace
You want these to go quickly. Spend five minutes–max–on this question. If your group is so big you can’t get to everyone in five
minutes, you might consider creating another group, but, again, that is a topic of another book. This question needs to go fast.

**Modeling**

We get fast by modeling fast. I’d start this way, “Let’s all go around the room, sharing our name and favorite restaurant. I am Josh and my favorite restaurant is any Mexican food restaurant. Next.” By modeling fast, you give everyone the hint that you don’t want the complete Zagat’s guide restaurants in your town. The life-exposure question is important, but it is important that it be done quickly.

**Safe**

I would prepare this question ahead of time, rather than dreaming it up on the fly. The reason is safety. Make sure this question is safe and won’t embarrass anyone. You want to make sure that this question can’t go wrong. Please learn from my mistakes on this.

I was teaching a single’s group once and came up with this question off the top of my head: “Let’s all share our name and how old you were when you first kissed someone of the opposite sex. Not your sister or your mother, but an honest to goodness romantic kiss.” My line of thought with that question was that singles don’t do a lot of kissing, so maybe they would enjoy talking about it. And, we did have some fun. One gal was four
and we kidded her playfully. One guy was nineteen and we ribbed him a bit. Then we got to one gal, and, (how do I say this gracefully?) not the prettiest gal in the room. In the south they would say it this way, “Bless her heart, she was not much of a looker.” In the South you can say anything about anyone, no matter how blunt or rude as long as you proceed it with, “Bless her heart.”

Anyway, this gal, bless her heart, not the prettiest in the room confessed, “I am twenty-nine and I have never been kissed.” Ouch.

I hurt her. I crushed her. If she is in a group twenty years from now and the question was, “Who can tell us about a moment when you were really embarrassed,” that moment in my group would come to mind. Learn from my mistakes. Think through these questions ahead of time.

Let me ask you to work on this a bit by filling out the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>What is wrong with it</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State your name and where you graduated from high school.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State your name and what is your favorite book.</th>
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How did you do? Here is my answer. The first question is bad because there may be someone in the room that didn’t graduate from High School, but they don’t particularly want to talk about it. You can get at roughly the same information by asking the group, “State your name and where did you live during your teenagers years.” They may not have graduated, but they did live somewhere.

The second question is a bad one because, sad to say, most people don’t read. Most people have not read a book in years, and many have never read a book. This is a point of embarrassment to many people because, although they don’t read, they feel like they should.

I remember getting my hair cut one time and had just stopped by a book store and picked up a new book. I was fired up about it
and was reading while I was getting my hair cut. I was reading until the lady cutting my hair began to confess her guilt. “I feel so badly. I should read more. I hardly ever read. I know I should.” I am not sure why people feel they should read but don’t read. All I know is that is fairly common for people to feel badly about the fact that they don’t read.

**Why not prayer?**

You might notice that I didn’t suggest we start the group time with prayer. This may seem odd to some. Here is what experience has taught me. If you start with prayer requests, it can take a long time, especially as the group gets to know one another well. If you are not careful you can spend half the hour talking about prayer requests. This kind of thing can ruin your group. (Notice, I did not say too much prayer can ruin your group; I said too much talking about prayer requests can ruin your group.) We want to spend some time discussing prayer requests, but not half the time. Thoughtful people will get restless and anxious for us to get to the lesson.

The solution to this dilemma is as simple as it is effective. Do prayer requests last. Leave five or ten minutes at the end for prayer requests and prayer. People are not nearly as apt to talk and talk and talk about prayer requests at the end of the hour as they are at the beginning of the hour. My practice, then, is to do prayer requests and prayer last.
The first five minutes set the tone for the rest of group time. The first five minutes after people walk in should be filled with greetings, introductions and small-talk. The first five minutes of the group time itself should be around a life exposure question—each person peeling back the layer of their lives just a bit. With this beginning, we are ready to get into the Bible study.
Let the group begin:
What does the text say?

“We have to know what the Bible says before we can understand what it means.”
-Walter Hunt (my dad)

Too often groups want to skip this step. We want to move on to the good stuff—discussion about the nuances of what the text means and how it relates to this theology and that and how it is supported by this cross reference and that and (occasionally) how it can be applied to our lives this way and that. All that is good and we will get to that. But first, we have to know what the Bible says before we can understand what it means.