

F. LaGard Smith answers the question: What are the non-negotiables of the faith?

Discussion and study guides / questions / topics for your consideration.

For the Editor and/or teacher: before showing this video, consider asking members in your class something like: given the title of this lesson, what do you think we will discuss? (Note: it is possible that some responses will tend toward the opposite direction the narrator takes us.)

1. This discussion opens with the statement that this is both a trick question and a compound question. What do you think that means?
2. How would you describe or explain the term: “assuming facts not in evidence”?
 - a. Does it assume “the fact” that there are negotiable “things” the creation can negotiate with the Creator? (Is 29.13-16; 45.8-12)
 - b. What can the creation negotiate with the Creator if anything?
 - i. Do the events in Gen 18.16-32 or Ex 32.7-14 inform us that we can negotiate with the Creator?
 - ii. (Sidebar: contrast Ex 32.7-14 with Ex 32.30-35).
 - c. Does the question and/or the term within the question assume that we (the creation) can approach the Creator as well as each other and state that it is acceptable for us to differ or disagree on this or that issue (or any article of faith) and it will all be okay – both now and in the end (at judgement)?
 - d. If this is true, how can we all be one? (John 17).
3. There are two examples of topics given that people can differ on. What is the character of those topics and why, do you think, they are offered?
 - a. Can you think of any other topics?
4. Discuss whether defining or characterizing topics as to what is or what is not negotiable in the faith is really a substitute for simply asking “...is this a salvation issue?”
 - a. Is this an old or new ‘question’? Why?
 - b. How long has this type of questioning been occurring?
 - c. How long, do you think, will it continue?

5. Is there a typical pattern or end goal to this type of questioning?
 - a. Or is it usually more random?
 - b. What have your experiences been, if any?
6. There is a “package” of four questions which seem to be almost always linked. All four are usually asked about in terms of “...are these salvation issues?” And in many instances the questions are asked in the same order, over time, and, by the same people.
 - a. Is instrumental music acceptable or not?
 - b. What is the nature of gender roles (ie, women serving in leadership and/or public positions)?
 - c. Is homosexuality acceptable or not?
 - d. Is baptism really required for salvation? Is it crucial?
 - e. In your experience or observation, do you think this a valid observation or concern?
7. How would you respond to the observation that, by definition, how someone is saved is a salvation issue?
8. If we look at these questions whether individually or as a package, is there a pattern or an attitude of the heart being displayed by the creation? (Heb 4.12,13)
9. What is stated as the actual salvation issue by these and other similar questions?
 - a. Whether we are obedient to God’s teaching and leading. (Is 64.8)
 - b. Is that the real salvation issue?
 - c. Do we – or others – see this type of questioning as challenging the revealed word on whatever topic it may be?
 - d. Or something else?

10. Are you – YOU – willing to submit to God's leading and teaching on all things?
- a. Do you think it is simply a difference in understanding the scriptures?
 - b. If you are not willing to submit to God – that itself is a salvation issue. T/F?
 - c. What do you believe?
 - d. Do these scriptures offer assistance? (Jam 3.13-18; Jam 4.1-8)
 - e. After discussing this topic, does it seem like it is really the creation wanting to bargain with The Creator over what the creation wants to do and still be found right in the Creator's sight?
 - f. Or is it about what is right in the creations' sight? (De 12.8,9; Ju 21.25; Pr 14.12, 21.2f, 30.12,13; Ja 1.13-16)
 - g. Is this about unbelief? (Heb 3.1-19)
 - h. Is this about rebellion? (Is 30.1-5, 65.2-5; Eze 2.1-8, 12.2; Ro 9.19-21)
 - i. Is this about false teachers? (2 Pet 2).
 - j. Is this about something else?