



S.T.U.D.Y.

NEWSLETTER #4

(May 2003)

“And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

Give your answer at: www.Response-Able.net

Address: **S.T.U.D.Y.** / P.O. Box 4129 / Wenatchee, WA 98807-4129

Phone: (888) [www.S-T-U-D-Y](http://www.S-T-U-D-Y.org) (888-999-7883)

Website: www.S-T-U-D-Y.org (be sure to use four hyphens between the five letters)

E-mail: Mail@[S-T-U-D-Y.org](mailto:Mail@S-T-U-D-Y.org) (be sure to use four hyphens between the five letters)

THE UNDERSTANDING TEST

A. Introduction

Due to the complexity of the programming for the Response-Able system website, it is still not ready to put into operation. There should be a home page up soon: with the Response-Able logo, and an “under construction” message; but the system itself will not be ready to operate for a while. We are working hard to get it ready by the time the next S.T.U.D.Y. newsletter comes out (in August).

At the end of the last newsletter, I said: “The subject of the next newsletter will be one of the most amazing and important secrets in the entire Bible—and yet, at the time of this writing, it is known to only a handful of people in the entire world!” However, I don’t want to publish this subject, until the Response-Able system website is in operation; therefore, I am doing this newsletter on something else.

The last newsletter was the maximum length possible, without exceeding one ounce in mailing (which would cost more). I had room for only three paragraphs about the understanding test (“ready always to give an answer”); and yet this “give an answer” principle is very important—and in fact all of the principles can be tested, with the understanding test, to see whether or not you are really applying “the first principles of the oracles of God”. Furthermore, the understanding test is what the Response-Able system is all about: a system of questions and answers, to test the understanding. So I wanted to give more details on this in the last newsletter, but I ran out of room. Therefore, this newsletter will be further details regarding the understanding test.

B. Objections to the Response-Able System

As stated in the last newsletter: “Because of the fact that answering questions requires facing the evidence ... no doubt many will plead excuses, to try and avoid the understanding test. These objections will be addressed, within the interactive portion of the Response-Able system.” However, although there will be other objections that I do not address here: I am going to start addressing some potential objections now, even before the system is put into operation. This should help to reduce objections in the future.

I Don’t Have Internet Access

While this may be an honest concern, and not an excuse to avoid facing the evidence: yet this concern may not be quite as big of a problem, as some might think. First of all, you don’t need to have Internet access to be involved with the Response-Able system; in fact, you don’t even need to own a computer! Most libraries today have computers—with Internet access available—for research purposes, etc. And even if there is no library in your area, with Internet access, you probably have a friend who has Internet access. Any or all of the information, in the Response-Able system, can be printed out and shared with those who don’t have a computer.

But those who don't have Internet access can do more than merely receive information from the system; they can also input things into the system. Questions can be posted through e-mail: accessed at a library, or through a friend, etc. Furthermore: if a website is operated by your friend, or church, or religious affiliation, etc—then you can publish an unlimited amount of information on that website (of course they would have to agree to publish it for you); and then that information can be linked into the Response-Able system.

In spite of the above possibilities: it is of course easier if you have your own computer and Internet access (and maybe even your own website). But in this day and age, having your own computer is not very expensive; and I think that GOD has brought about this condition intentionally—so that it will be much easier to spread the whole truth, around the whole world, in a relatively short amount of time. You can get a good quality used computer system, for a couple hundred dollars or less (for example: 800-439-1572, www.1-usedcomputers.com). If you are going to buy a computer for Internet usage, make sure that it has a modem.

Actually, you can even operate a website yourself for essentially no cost (except the cost of the computer; although you could have your own website, and not have your own computer, but rather use a computer at a library, etc). Some places offer free webspace (although there are usually adds included, with what you publish on your free website): go to www.google.com (or any search engine), and type in “free webspace” (with the quote marks); you should find plenty of options. And if you want to own your own domain name (the name which comes after the “www”), the cheapest I have found is less than \$10 a year (available at: www.godaddy.com).

Except for those who are extremely poor: anyone can own and operate a computer (and even a website), if it is high enough of a priority! For those who have a computer, but not Internet access: www.juno.com has a free service (including free e-mail), with limitations—or a paid service, for less than \$10 a month; they also have local phone numbers for all large cities, and many smaller cities. There are also other ISP's, both free and paid.

Another area, which may be a concern to some people: is the ability to use the computer, or get and send e-mail, or browse the Internet, etc. For some, this may be a more realistic concern than the cost involved; it is true that computers can be quite complicated, depending on what you are doing. The positive side of this concern, is that e-mail and Internet browsing are some of the more simple and easy things that can be done with computers. Actually, you really don't even need to have typing skills, in order to browse the Internet or receive an e-mail, etc (though it certainly does help to know typing, especially if you are going to be writing e-mails).

For those who don't even know how to operate a computer, and/or use the Internet: there are many books available (for sale, or at the library), and some places offer short classes (such as one night a week, for a month). However, the best way to learn (easiest, cheapest, etc), for most people—is simply having a friend, who can come to your house and show you how; this will also avoid wasting time on learning what you don't need to know.

Money Is the Wrong Motive

The rest of this paragraph is a repeat (from newsletter #2): There will also be a master RRR (Response-Able Religious Register), which will be a list of only those who are on every RRR in the entire Response-Able system. This master list will serve to quickly reveal what religious entities are staying in harmony with all Response-Able teachings (by changing their teachings, if necessary); and everyone will be strongly encouraged to make no donations to any religious entity that is not fully Response-Able (not on the master RRR).

It is true that “... the love of **money** is the root of all evil ...” (1 Timothy 6:10); and some may object that money should not be a motivating factor, in the Response-Able system. The sad fact is that money is already a major motivation factor, in many false teachings (because people usually support what they want to hear, and what is popular, etc); the Response-Able system is designed to shift some of that motivation factor towards true teachings (those that can hold up to close public examination, and the “give an answer” understanding test).

Yes, it is sad when people let money influence what they teach; but for those who are operating on wrong motives: it is better for them to teach truth (for the wrong reason), than to teach error (for the wrong reason). Obviously, the best is teaching the truth for the right reason; but even if the truth is taught from a wrong motive, there is still some benefit. “Some indeed **preach Christ** even of **envy and strife** ... The one **preach Christ** of contention, **not sincerely** ... But the other of **love** ... What then? **notwithstanding**, every way, **whether in pretence**, or in truth, **Christ is preached**; and **I therein do rejoice**, yea, and will **rejoice**.” (Philippians 1:15-18).

Furthermore, we can't even read a person's heart (see 1 Kings 8:39; etc); so someone could teach the truth for the right motive, or the wrong motive, and we wouldn't be able to tell the difference. We are to support those who teach the truth, and let GOD judge the motives of others (see Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; Luke 6:37; etc).

JESUS “Opened Not His Mouth”

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he **opened not his mouth**: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is **dumb**, so he **openeth not his mouth**.” (Isaiah 53:7). This is a prophecy about JESUS (see Acts 8:28-35); and we also read of the fulfillment, in the gospel accounts (see Matthew 26:62,63; 27:12-14; Mark 14:60,61; 15:3-5; Luke 23:8-11; John 19:8-10). No doubt some will want to take this example, of JESUS being silent, and use it in support of not answering.

First of all, JESUS Himself is indeed an excellent example of this Response-Able, “give an answer”, understanding test principle—because He did give an answer (see Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 12:13-34; Luke 2:40-47; 17:20,21; John 8:3-7; etc); He gave answers from the time that He was 12 years old, clear through to the end of His life on this earth (other than the fulfillment of the prophecy, in Isaiah 53:7). In fact, He even answered some questions during His appearances before Caiaphas and Pilate, etc (see Matthew 26:63,64; 27:11; Mark 14:61,62; 15:2; Luke 22:66-71; 23:3; John 18:22,23,33-37; 19:8-11); and these are in the very same context as the times when He was silent (in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7).

The few times when JESUS didn’t answer: it was not from a lack of understanding, on His part; He was not being evasive, in order to avoid facing evidence that He was wrong. His silence was for other reasons. “... the **LORD seeth not as man seeth**; for **man looketh** on the **outward appearance**, but the **LORD looketh** on the **heart**.” (1 Samuel 16:7; see 1 Kings 8:39; Jeremiah 17:9,10; etc). JESUS could read the heart (see Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Mark 2:8; Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; 11:17; John 2:24,25; 6:61,64; 13:11; 16:16-30; etc); He was able to discern when there was a wrong motive for the question (even then, He usually answered)—and He was also able to discern when giving an answer would not help. “**Art thou the Christ?** tell us. And he [JESUS] said unto them, **If I tell you, ye will not believe**: And **if I also ask you, ye will not answer me**, nor let me go.” (Luke 22:67,68).

But you and I can’t read the hearts of men. We should not attempt to use CHRIST’S silence, as an excuse to avoid answering questions—especially since those who are asking the questions may well be sincere; and even if they are not sincere: there will no doubt be others, who are sincere, that want to read the questions and answers in the Response-Able system.

Furthermore: when CHRIST was silent, and did not answer, His mission as a teacher was essentially done; His disciples would teach the message from that time forward, and they would be the ones to “give an answer”. Also, JESUS was willing to accept the consequences of not answering. So for any teachers who really want to parallel their own silence with CHRIST’S: that is just fine, as long as they are willing to accept the consequences and the full parallel—that their mission as a teacher has come to an end!

People Can Give a Wrong Answer

A wrong answer can be defined as anything, other than silence, that is not a correct answer. A very common type of wrong answer is one that does not address the question (sidetracking); another type does address the question, but is an incomplete and/or inaccurate answer. Because of the potential for wrong answers: some may think that the Response-Able system will not be very effective, in distinguishing truth from error.

It is true that sidetracking is very frequently used, when someone can’t give a clear answer. There are examples of this in the Bible: “Pilate then went out unto them, and said, **What accusation bring ye against this man?** They **answered** and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.” (John 18:29,30; see Mark 15:13,14; Luke 23:22,23; etc). They gave a reply, but it was not an answer to the question that Pilate asked—they did not state any specific “accusation”; they were sidetracking!

“They all say unto him, **Let him be crucified**. And the governor said, **Why, what evil hath he done?** But [instead of answering] **they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified**. When Pilate saw that **he could prevail nothing**, but that **rather a tumult was made** ...” (Matthew 27:22-24). Here we see that instead of calm, intelligent reasoning: they were operating on raw emotions; and again, we see that their reply (“Let him be crucified”) was not an answer to the question (“what evil hath he done?”).

Another frequently used method of sidetracking is personal attacks, regarding the character of the one asking the question(s); it is an age-old tactic of the devil: if you can’t successfully attack the message, then attack the messenger! But even IF the accusations (stubborn, proud, unloving, etc) were true, and often they are not, this still would not be a valid reason to be excused from answering. The Scripture says: “... be ready **always** to **give an answer** to **every** man that **asketh you** ...” (1 Peter 3:15; see Colossians 4:6; etc); it does not say that you may be excused from answering—as long as the other guy is stubborn, or proud, or unloving, etc.

Then there is the type of answer that does address the question, and yet fails to be an accurate answer. This is certainly better than sidetracking; and it may often be the result of an honest misunderstanding, instead of an intentional evasion of the truth (such as sidetracking). Nevertheless, it is still a wrong answer.

So how does the Response-Able system solve the problem of wrong answers? It helps to prevent raw emotional outbursts (such as the example in Matthew 27:22-24): by providing an environment that promotes calm, intelligent reasoning—since the questions and answers will be in writing, and available for everyone to carefully examine. This environment will also help to prevent sidetracking; in fact, it should even help to prevent an answer that does address the question, and yet isn't carefully thought out (a quick or sloppy answer).

However, even with a carefully thought out answer: the possibility still exists for a mistake in the answer. And if that happens, and someone else has a better understanding of the point at hand: then the other person can provide additional information and questions, which will reveal the point of error—based on the same “give an answer” (or Response-Able) understanding test principle, etc.

I have a seven-year-old son, Teilen, who has at times done something wrong (believe it or not). When I confront him with a question, he often has no answer; and even at his young age: he knows that when he is guilty, he cannot give an honest and straight answer in defense of his actions. Sometimes when he can't answer, he confesses that he did wrong; other times he tries to make excuses, and/or starts sidetracking. But all I have to do is ask one or two more questions, and then he is silenced—and ready to admit that he has done wrong.

So if an answer really is an error: then the question can be restated a little differently, and/or other additional questions asked, which will pinpoint the error; before too long, there will either be no answer—or else an obviously wrong answer (sidetracking, or nonsense, etc; see Exodus 32:21-24). In either case (whether no answer, or an obviously wrong answer): the truth on that point should surface, and become quite obvious.

Of course the ideal solution for wrong answers, is for everyone to follow all the principles of truth—and not give any wrong answers. But if it becomes obvious that a wrong answer has been given, then it will be time to change the teaching on that point. “Every man shall kiss his lips that **giveth a right answer.**” (Proverbs 24:26).

Too Many Questions

Although deception may have a surface answer that appears right (and yet is a wrong answer), when you get to the bottom of things: there will be no answer, or at best an obviously wrong answer (sidetracking, or nonsense, etc). But it usually takes more than one or two questions, to get to the bottom of things on a particular subject or point of difference; and because of this, some may object that there are too many questions—especially since JESUS silenced His opponents with only one question.

But we probably don't understand the truth as clearly as CHRIST did, and therefore we probably won't be able to make the truth stand out—in contrast with the error—as quickly as He did. Furthermore, JESUS could read the mind (and we can't); before He asked a single question, He knew exactly what His opponents believed—and therefore He could go straight to the heart of the error. But we may not know very much about what someone else believes, and therefore it may take several questions to bring things to the surface.

Additionally, there are more Inspired writings now, than when CHRIST was on earth; and “... the path of the just is as the shining light, that **shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**” (Proverbs 4:18). Therefore, there is more truth now than there was in CHRIST's day, which means that defending the truth is more detailed (and may require more questions). There is also more error now than in CHRIST's time; there has been more time for the devil to twist the truth, invent new error, and deceive people, etc—which means that now it is more complicated to undeceive people (and again, may require more questions).

However, this increase (of both truth and error) is offset by the fact that, especially in this day and age, there are more tools to help in the process: including not only concordances and other reference books, but also computerized search engines, the Internet, and yes—even the Response-Able system itself! And although the quantity of questions may not be the same today, as it was in the days of JESUS: the principle of questions and answers (or no answer) is still the same today! This principle is found in many Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament, including the example of JESUS Himself (the Bible references have already been given).

Usually, when there is a doctrinal difference, the ones on the wrong side don't want to study the issue—at least not in much detail (they say: “too many questions”, “too busy”, etc). But those on the right side are willing to study it in great detail. The reason for this is that error can only survive superficial examination; those who are incorrect have valid reason to be concerned, that further investigation (more questions, etc) will expose their error.

I'm Too Busy, I Don't Have Enough Time

This objection is quite similar to the above one (too many questions); those who are wrong usually don't want to take the time to get to the bottom of things. The response to this was already discussed, in newsletter #2 (the following paragraph is a repeat, from that newsletter); nevertheless, it deserves a little more attention here.

Response-Able.net provides the solution to this problem (not enough time), by allowing everyone to be involved in answering the questions. If you can't answer all of the questions, because of a lack of time (or any other reason): that's okay, just give whatever answer(s) you can—and let others answer the remaining questions. But once again: if nobody can be found, who is able to “give an answer” to the questions, then it is time to realize that something is wrong with a belief which can't be supported by clear answers to questions regarding that belief.

Furthermore: everybody has the same 24 hours in a day, the same 7 days in a week, and the same 52 weeks in a year, etc; a lack of time is usually not nearly as big of a problem, as a lack of proper priorities. “But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things [other important needs] shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33; see Exodus 20:3; etc).

Especially from those who are teachers, the “not enough time” plea should never be heard! Are they too busy teaching the “truth” (so-called), to find out if the teaching really is truth?!? As long as a teacher doesn't have enough time to answer the questions on a certain subject, he also doesn't have enough time to teach that subject! This principle holds true even in secular teachings—how much more so, in religious teachings! And in fact this is true now, even more than ever, with Response-Able system: because teachers won't have to answer the same question more than once (elimination of redundancy). If someone really wants to teach and defend a certain doctrine, then let him teach it and defend it by answering the questions!

GOD did not command us to give an answer, if we can find the time—no, He said to: “... be **ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you ...**” (1 Peter 3:15). “**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.**” (2 Timothy 4:2).

C. Conclusion

The understanding test (“ready **always** to give an answer”) is really the bottom line test, as to whether or not you understand the truth on a subject—because if you can't answer the questions on a specific subject, then that is the strongest possible evidence that you don't understand it clearly.

Certainly there will be other objections, to the “give an answer” Response-Able system, which have not been addressed in this newsletter. And further objections will be addressed, as needed, in the Response-Able system itself. But beware of (and do not support) those who make excuses to avoid the understanding test; it may appear that they are doing a good work, and indeed they may actually be doing some good—but they are not doing as much good as others, who are willing to have their teachings put to the test.

And again, as stated last time: the S.T.U.D.Y. ministry is absolutely dedicated to passing either the understanding test, or else the humility test; there will be no excuses pleaded (by S.T.U.D.Y.) for not answering the questions—there will either be answers, or else a change of teaching and practice. What about you?

The topic planned for next time, once again, is one of the most amazing and important secrets in the entire Bible—and yet, at the time of this writing, it is known to only a handful of people in the entire world! Until then:

S.T.U.D.Y. To Understand Doctrines Yourself

Tim, Sonya, and Teilen Simkin