

# GREAT QUESTIONS

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FOR LEADING WELL

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DR. STEVE A. BROWN

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## GREAT QUESTIONS FOR LEADING WELL

Great questions are an essential tool for leaders. As Peter Drucker has said, *“The leader of the past was a person who told, the leader of the future will be a person who asks.”*

Great questions are so critical because they:

- are powerful teachers
- inspire deeper reflection
- provide important space for listening to God and others
- aid discernment and clarify what is really important
- encourage creative solutions
- bring renewed focus
- expose bottlenecks
- illuminate new pathways forward

This booklet is a collection of strategic questions about common life and leadership issues facing Christian leaders.

I trust these questions will be just what you need when you need it!



Dr. Steve A. Brown

President, Arrow Leadership

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

In many ways this booklet is like a toolbox.

You don't use a toolbox everyday but you keep it handy for when you need it. **Keep this booklet in your computer bag or on your desk. You won't need it everyday, but you will want to find these tools when needs arise.**

When you need a tool, you try to find the one that fits the job. **Rather than reading from start to finish, this booklet is divided into distinct sections. Go directly to the section that fits your need at the moment.**

A wrench set can have 21 slightly different sized wrenches but only one is the one you need. **Prayerfully skim the relevant section looking for the right question or two you need. The other questions may be useful another day.**

Use these questions like you would use a precision chisel – slowly. These questions can be read or asked quickly but they need to be answered slowly and thoughtfully. **Here are some ideas: get away to a coffee shop for an hour of reflection, use these questions when you journal or as a Sabbath tool, tackle one section on a retreat, use when mentoring and coaching or talk through with your small group or team.**

Just like tools in a toolbox, these questions are designed for use. **Sometimes these questions will be for you, and sometimes as you mentor, equip and encourage others!**

# QUESTIONS FOR LEADING YOU

Our most important (and often most difficult) leadership challenge is leading ourselves. This section focuses on questions to help you lead you.



## 40,000 Foot Perspective

- How do you want to be remembered? Make a list of words/phrases you would like used at your retirement party or funeral to describe your spiritual life, character, relationships and service. (5-10 words/area)
- If you had a dashboard gauge for your spiritual life, character, relationships and service - what would each gauge read? Green for health, yellow for concern or red for trouble?
- Is God getting the glory or are you?
- If it were five, ten or twenty-five years from now, what advice would you give yourself today?
- Who are you in Christ? Where are you living this core identity out? Where is it a struggle?
- Are you working from God's acceptance OR for God's acceptance?

- Would many not-yet Christians go to your funeral?
- How do you measure success?
- What's the biggest obstacle keeping you from moving forward?
- Does your budget/time demonstrate your values?

## Knowing Yourself

- List 9 words/phrases describing you at your best at work/service. They should summarize your top strengths/passions/gifts/working environment. Use these words to focus your time and energy.
- What's the highest and best use of your time?
- What makes you most dangerous for God's Kingdom?
- How might the evil one try to take you out?
- What renews your energy?
- What drains your energy?
- What's the most important focus for you – this day/week/month/year?
- What's holding you back?
- What's your greatest opportunity right now?
- What do you need to stop doing?

## Personal Health and Character

- What one area in your character could you address to become more like Christ?
- On a scale of 1-10, what's your energy level? What simple steps would increase it?

- When was the last time you had fun?
- What rhythms (daily/weekly/yearly) do you have for rest and renewal?
- How can you better steward your physical health?
- What role is fear playing in your thinking and actions right now?
- Is there an area of temptation or sin you need to address? What's the cost of not?
- What shouldn't others imitate in you right now?
- Are you striving on your own strength or walking in God's power?
- What do you need to focus on below/above the waterline?



## QUESTIONS FOR KEY RELATIONSHIPS

**Leaders need to intentionally cultivate a constellation of healthy relationships. These questions are designed to help you steward and grow this key aspect of your life.**

- Are your key relationships getting time with you at your best?
- When was the last time you connected with a friend?
- Who should you be spending more time with?
- Who do you need to phone?
- Who would you bring with you to a “Gethsemane” moment of great trial?
- Have you invited someone into your current challenge?
- Are you leaning into community or isolating yourself?
- Which relationships drain you? How can you bring change?
- How can you cultivate greater trust in each of your key relationships?
- Who can you encourage? How?
- Who are you investing in? How?
- How can you be more intentional as an ambassador for Christ?
- What one thing could you change in your routine to have the greatest positive impact on your family relationships?



## QUESTIONS FOR FINDING PERSPECTIVE

**In the whirl, blur and complexity of life and leadership, these questions will help you with a key need - finding perspective.**

- Reflect on today/this week/month, what five things are you thankful for?
- What's the most important task for you this day/week/month/year?
- What's going well?
- Where is God working?
- Where are the bottlenecks?
- Is anything distracting you?
- Is there a decision you are hesitating to make? Why?
- What does "Seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) look like in this situation?
- Have you taken a step back and taken a big picture view from the "balcony"?
- Will this matter five or ten years from now?
- Are you carrying a burden you need to trust God with?
- Is there an opportunity in this challenge?
- Where are you trying to force your way rather than trusting God's way?
- When you look back at this situation someday, what three or four words do you want to use to summarize your actions? The outcome?

# QUESTIONS FOR LEADING OTHERS

Leading others effectively is a key role for leaders. These questions will help you reflect on how you can better steward this responsibility.

## Team Leader

- How are you being an example to your team? Where are you not?
- Are you leading people like a shepherd or driving them like a cattle rancher?
- When are you praying for your team?
- When was the last time the team and/or each team member received clear feedback on their performance?
- Who could you/should you encourage?
- What milestone or accomplishment needs to be celebrated?
- If you had two more hours a week to invest in others, how would you use this time?
- How could you get feedback on your team leadership?

## Team Health Check

- On a scale of 1-10 (10 highest), what is the level of trust on your team?
- Is your team engaging conflict well?
- Is the mission clear to everyone on the team?
- Is there an “elephant in the room”? An issue that hasn’t been addressed?
- When was the last time the team had fun together?

- Does every team member know what is expected of them? Of the team?
- Does every team member have the resources they need to do their best?

## Evaluation

- What are the key performance indicators for your team?
- Who is in the right place with the right heart, character and skillset? Who isn't?
- Who has untapped potential?
- Who has a flaw undermining their performance, fit or success? Are they aware of this flaw? How could you help them identify and address it?

## Outside the Box

- If you could hire one more team member, what would they contribute?
- What's missing from the team? What skills/gifts/talents/experience is needed?



# QUESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

Delegation is a key skill for leaders. These questions will help you to leverage your time and effectively empower others.

## Rationale For Delegating

- How would more delegation benefit you and others?
- What are the costs of not delegating more?
- What holds you back from delegating more?

## Identifying What To Delegate

- What could others do as well as or better than you?
- What are your repetitive tasks?
- What tasks can you document so others can follow the same path?
- What things don't you like doing AND don't do well?
- What delegation assignments could be important growth opportunities for others?
- Are you delegating a task, a project or a function?



## Finding An Assignee

- What background, character, competency, and capacity are required?
- Who is ready for a new challenge?

## Keys to Effective Delegation

- Are there any non-negotiables about the pathway to achieve the outcomes?
- What authority is being delegated?
- What decisions can the assignee make? What input or dialogue is required before taking action?
- What training and/or support is available to the assignee?
- What outcomes and deliverables are needed for success?
- How and when will you provide feedback, correction and/or encouragement?

“WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS NOT GOOD. YOU AND THESE PEOPLE WHO COME TO YOU WILL ONLY WEAR YOURSELVES OUT. THE WORK IS TOO HEAVY FOR YOU; YOU CANNOT HANDLE IT ALONE...BUT SELECT CAPABLE MEN FROM ALL THE PEOPLE - MEN WHO FEAR GOD, TRUSTWORTHY MEN WHO HATE DISHONEST GAIN - AND APPOINT THEM OFFICIALS OVER THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS...THAT WILL MAKE YOUR LOAD LIGHTER, BECAUSE THEY WILL SHARE IT WITH YOU.”

EXODUS 18:13-22

## QUESTIONS FOR MENTORING

Intentionally walking alongside another person in a mentoring relationship can be a transformative experience. These proven questions will help you at various stages of your mentoring relationships.



### Relationship Building

- I'd love to hear your story...
- Share 5 key turning points in your life so far...
- Who have been key mentors or influencers in your life?
- Describe your journey with God...
- What do you sense are your biggest strengths?
- What are the top three challenges you are facing at the moment?
- What makes you laugh? What keeps you up at night?
- What are your "big rocks" or priorities for this next season?
- If the evil one were to target an area of your life to seek your downfall, what area do you think he would target?

- How do you best receive feedback and critique?
- What are three hopes you have for the future?
- Where are you sensing progress? Where are you feeling stuck?

## Starting A Mentoring Meeting

- What's changed since we were last together?
- What's the most important issue we can focus on during this time together?
- What's one thing you are hoping we don't talk about?

## Questions to Ask Over Time

- How are things with you and God?
- How is your family? What is one way they would like to see you grow?
- What one thing could you change in your routine that would have the greatest positive impact on your family relationships?
- What do you think God may be doing in this situation? Where is God's hand at work in this?
- Who are your friends? When did you last connect with them?
- Who would you bring with you to a "Gethsemane" moment?
- What's the opportunity in this challenge?



- What temptations have been real to you recently?
- How are you doing in the area of sexual purity?
- What do you do to recharge and have fun?

## Wrapping-Up A Meeting

- What are you taking away from our time together?
- What do you see as your next steps?

## Evaluation

- What have I done or said that has been helpful? Not helpful?
- How could I (the mentor) improve my side of our partnership?
- What could we do next time to take our time to the next level?

“CHRISTIAN MENTORING IS A DYNAMIC, INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST IN WHICH ONE PERSON ENABLES ANOTHER TO MAXIMIZE THE GRACE OF GOD IN THEIR LIFE AND SERVICE.... ALL BIBLICAL MENTORING IS UNDER-MENTORING. JESUS CHRIST IS THE REAL AND DECISIVE AGENT IN CHRISTIAN MENTORING. HE CLAIMS OUR WHOLEHEARTED TRUST IN HIM AS PRESENT ENABLER.”

JOHN MALLISON, MENTORING TO DEVELOP LEADERS



# QUESTIONS FOR YEAR END REFLECTION

Reflection is a critical practice for leaders. It requires slowing down to listen to God, to others and to oneself. It fosters learning, stimulates growth, encourages celebration, calls for course corrections and renews focus and energy.

This 60 minute reflection exercise provides you with a template for personal, family or team reflection.

## 1. Look Back and Remember

Reflection is often difficult because we simply can't remember what's happened over a longer timeframe. To help recall some of the year's events, start at New Year's Eve last year and privately reflect on some questions to jog memories. What were you doing last New Year's Eve? Who were you with? What were you hoping for the year ahead? What challenges were before you? What was going on in the lives of the people close to you?

Then, slowly move forward month by month. Markers like birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, and holidays act as prompters of other things that were going on. Simple questions help bring greater recall. Questions like: What was going on? What was important?



## 2. Intentional Reflection

With memories jogged, the next step is intentional prayerful reflection. Give each person time and space to privately journal responses to the following questions about the past season:

- What's been hardest?
- What surprised you most?
- What are you thankful for?
- Where did you fail?
- What's been disappointing?
- Where have you been stretched? Where have you grown?
- How have others around you contributed and grown?
- Who has blessed you?
- What have you been encouraged by?
- What have you learned?
- Where do you see blessings from waiting?  
From struggle?
- Who or what have you invested in?
- How have you seen God at work? What have you learned about Him?
- What's on God's heart for you this next year?



### 3. Processing and Sharing

With lots of thoughts stirring, invite each person to share their responses to their choice of any two of the questions. This helps people externalize their internal processing. It also can be a very special community building time.

Then, take a few moments to ask whether there is any follow-up or next steps flowing from the reflection time. A note of thanks to be written? Forgiveness to be extended or sought? New priorities to be established?

### 4. Prayer

Give opportunity for an open time of prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for the journey ahead.

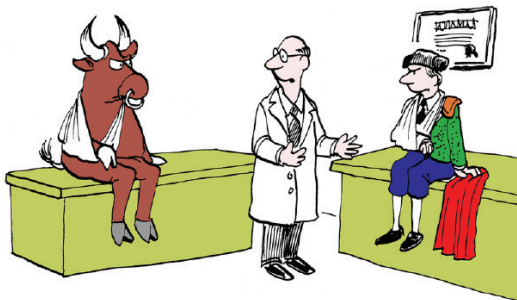
To conclude this time, end with a blessing. You can bless the entire group or bless each individual one at a time by name with the blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

“THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU; THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU; THE LORD TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.”

Whether done individually, as a family, or as a team, you will be richer for investing the time in the process.

# QUESTIONS FOR CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Though many leaders dread conflict, it is normal and can even be a sign of health. These questions will help you navigate conflict more redemptively as well as avoid some of the destructive aspects of conflict.



“Workplace conflict?”

ID 33927343 © Andrewgenn | Dreamstime.com

## Checking Your Heart

- What are your real motives?
- What are you afraid of?
- Are you approaching this conflict with humility and openness to learn?
- Are you avoiding or facing into the conflict?
- What responsibility do you need to take?
- Are you taking responsibility for someone else’s reaction or action?
- How is God calling you to change?
- Is there someone you need to choose to forgive?

- Is there someone you need to ask for forgiveness?
- Are you praying for the other person(s) and resolution of this issue?
- When you looking back at this in a year, what three words do you want to be able to use to describe your response?
- What will matter a year from now?

## **Determining The Process**

- Who needs to be involved to effectively address this issue? Is Matthew 18:15-17 applicable in this situation? Could a mediator help?
- What process and timeline would be best?

## **Engaging Dialogue**

- Do you need to get more information or clarify any facts?
- What assumptions are you making? Are they true?
- What is the other person's perspective? What is at the heart of their concern?
- Does the other person feel you have heard them?
- Have you written down and even practiced what you want to say?
- Are you moving toward those who disagree with you or away from them?
- What's your default style toward conflict? Is another style needed in this situation?

- Who is praying for unity and protection?
- Are there systemic issues that need to be addressed to resolve this conflict? Or to prevent it from reoccurring?
- Are there steps of forgiveness and restitution needed?

## Helpful Closure

- What have you heard me say?
- What are you taking away from this conversation?
- Is there anything unresolved or of concern that needs to be addressed?
- What are our next steps?

## Two Powerful Prayers to Pray

1. Lord, what do you want me to learn from this situation?
2. Lord, how do you want me to respond in order to honor you?

“BE COMPLETELY HUMBLE AND GENTLE; BE PATIENT WITH ONE ANOTHER, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE. MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT...”

EPHESIANS 4:2-4

# QUESTIONS BEFORE MAKING A MAJOR CHANGE

Major changes can often be overwhelming. It's easy to get stuck in the details or paralyzed by the possibilities. These questions will help bring greater clarity.



## The Basics

- What additional information do you need to make an informed decision?
- When do you really need to decide?
- What are the benefits and costs?

## Spiritual Perspective

- Is your true desire to seek "...His kingdom and His righteousness"? (Matthew 6:33)
- What does God's Word say (explicitly or implicitly) about this possible change?
- Have you "inquired of the Lord" and asked God for wisdom and guidance?
- What are 2-3 godly advisors saying to you about this possibility?

## Knowing Yourself

- Could some sleep and rest help you make a better decision?
- How does this potential change line-up with your life vision/values?
- List out 9 words/phrases describing you at your best at work/service. They should summarize your top strengths/passions/gifts/working environment. How does this new opportunity meet each of these 9 factors?
- What role is fear playing in your thinking?
- Are you telling yourself or holding onto any lies?
- How would things need to change in your current situation to keep you where you are?

## A Future Perspective

- Imagine looking back at this decision in 5, 10 or 25 years. How does a future perspective impact this decision today?
- What are the costs of not pursuing this opportunity?
- What would success look like?





# QUESTIONS WHEN YOU ARE FEELING FLAT

Fatigue, frustration and the daily grind of leadership can leave leaders feeling flat. These questions will help guide you through these times.

## 1. How's your energy gauge?

Football legend Vince Lombardi once said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." If you are feeling flat, you may simply be tired and physically depleted. Do what you have to do to get caught up on sleep for a few nights. Get some exercise.

## 2. What's going well?

Too often leaders keep their eyes exclusively on shortcomings. Counter this by making a list of what is going well – extend the timeframe to the last few weeks or months if needed. Reflect on big and little positives. Don't stop until you reach at least 10 things.

## 3. What could bring life?

The whisper of entitlement is often heard when leaders are feeling flat – "Things aren't going well, I'm working so hard, I'm entitled to xyz." Usually, these entitlements at best only numb the flat feeling. Instead ask – what could bring me life? A leisurely coffee with your spouse? A workout? An afternoon outdoors? Tinkering in the garden? Some time with God? Then, do it.

## 4. Who could you connect with?

Keeping your feelings isolated internally rarely breeds life. Instead, isolation can add to the

burden, lead to escapism or temptation. Identify a safe friend who can listen, encourage and even challenge you. Share how you are feeling, your current challenges and pray together.

### **5. Is there a pattern?**

Is there a time of the week, month or year when you regularly feel flat? If you journal, read over your journals at this time last year to see if there was a similar feeling. Reflect on why. What could you do differently to prepare or counteract this pattern?

### **6. What are you going to choose?**

As Deuteronomy 30:19-20 challenges, we need to reject death and curses and “choose life, so that you and your children may live...” For Christian leaders, acting on this point can mean praying to reject negative thoughts, memorizing and repeating this verse, focusing on God’s character, and engaging worship.

### **7. Is there something more going on?**

If the steps above don’t resolve the flat feeling over an extended time, it may be wise to visit your family doctor to explore any medical roots to your feelings.



## QUESTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

**The Bible includes many powerful and helpful questions for prayerful reflection, journal time, small group discussion or personal retreats.**

How would you respond if God asked you one of these questions?

- Where are you? (Genesis 3:9)
- What is that in your hand? (Exodus 4:2)
- What is it you want? (John 1:38)
- Who do you say that I am? (Mark 8:27)
- Do you want to get well? (John 5:6)
- What must I do to inherit eternal life? (Matthew 19:16)
- If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:35)
- Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? (Psalm 139:7)
- With whom then, will you compare God? (Isaiah 40:18)
- Why do you say, "My way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is disregarded by my God?" (Isaiah 40:27)
- And what does the Lord require of you? (Micah 6:8)

# ARROW LEADERSHIP

Arrow Leadership is about Jesus-centered transformation — empowering you to be led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus and lead more to Jesus for a lasting and significant impact in the lives of those you lead.

Arrow Leadership offers transformational programs, exceptional resources and effective tools to develop your leaders and teams to increase your impact. Our offerings include:

## **Transformative Programs**

- Arrow Leadership Program™ for Emerging Leaders or Executive Leaders to be developed as Jesus-centered leaders.
- Sharpening Leaders Initiative™ designed for leaders and teams in your organization.
- Arrow Entrepreneur equipping Christian business owners for greater Kingdom impact professionally and personally.

## **Exceptional Resources & Effective Tools:**

- Leadership Tune-Up
- Personalized Coaching
- Specialized Training
- Executive Performance Reviews
- Organizational Consulting
- *Sharpening Leaders* Blog
- Online Bookstore

To learn more visit: [www.arrowleadership.org](http://www.arrowleadership.org)

# ABOUT ARROW LEADERSHIP

## A Leader's Journey



### **Juan Chirinos**

*The Salvation Army*

“Arrow helped me to become a more Jesus-centered leader. I praise God because my leadership will never be the same! I now serve with more passion to make Jesus famous among the people around me.”



### **Sarah Bourns**

*Pastor, New York City*

“Before I started Arrow Leadership, I had been lying dormant, buried like a seed in the ground. As I completed the program, I could sense new life coming and had a posture of hope. I believed I would awaken and have something to offer again.”

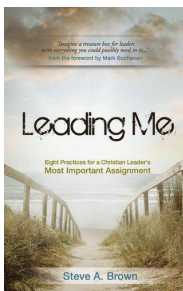
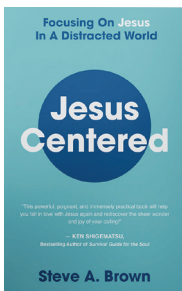
# ABOUT DR. STEVE A. BROWN



Dr. Steve A. Brown develops Jesus-centered leaders as president of Arrow Leadership, a ministry focused on developing leaders who are led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus and lead more to Jesus.

Over the last two decades he has spent thousands of hours alongside hundreds of Christian leaders. His passion is to equip leaders for maximum impact. Steve is the author of:

- Jesus Centered - Focusing on Jesus in a Distracted World
- Leading Me – Eight Key Practices for a Christian Leader’s Most Important Assignment
- *Sharpening Leaders* Blog and free e-resources at [www.sharpeningleaders.com](http://www.sharpeningleaders.com)



Learn more and order these resources visit:  
[www.arrowleadership.org/store](http://www.arrowleadership.org/store)



# GREAT QUESTIONS FOR LEADING WELL

This resource is packed full of powerful and proven questions for Christian leaders. These questions are strategic tools to help you:

Lead Yourself • Cultivate Relationships  
Find Perspective • Lead Others  
Effectively Delegate • Intentionally Mentor  
Pause for Reflection • Consider Major Decisions  
Navigate Conflict • Overcome Discouragement  
Connect More Deeply With God



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