

## The Leader's Dilemma: Are You an Answer Guy or a Discovery Guide?

Recently I was asked a question in an email about an apparent discrepancy in the Bible.

I answered it.

And then I got to thinking: Instead of answering it, what might have happened if I would have led my friend to some resources and supported him as he searched for the answer himself?

Now, I'm not suggesting that every time someone asks me a question, I should avoid answering it, and put the onus back on them. However, often as ministry leaders, we play the role of "answer guy" or "answer girl" and in the process keep people from owning their own journey to discovery.

If our goal is to encourage, empower, and equip missionaries, we need to grow in our ability to discern when to simply answer people, and when to lead them to **discover for themselves**.

Here are four thoughts to consider as you decide whether you will answer or not:

### 1) Adults learn when they have to.

Let our **first inclination** be that of providing support for people where they show a passion to learn. Let's not take the growth that comes in the journey away from them.

*Ask: Is this question I'm being asked a Divine moment full of growth potential, or is it a simple question with little real upside for growth?*

### 2) People grow as teachers when they put effort into their own learning.

Retention is more probable if I go through the journey myself.

*Ask: Is the person asking me the question likely to share the answer I am about to give with someone else?*

### 3) To give a simple answer is often easier.

I'm busy. Sometimes it's just simpler to give the answer and move on.

*Ask: Am I tempted to give the answer because I need to move on with my day?*

### 4) If I work harder to find the answer for someone than the one asking the question does, something is wrong.

The way we handle these situations can either reproduce consumeristic dependency or

personal ownership. I realize many leaders in the church today like to be needed. But, God calls us to make disciples. This is our missional calling.

*Ask: Is there value for the person who is asking the question to engage in their own learning and discovery?*

Read more from Jeff [here](#).