

Seeking Wisdom

Proverbs 26:4-5 *Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. (5) Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.*

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The “Answer, Don’t Answer” Principle

Jesus’ response pattern followed the wisdom of **Proverbs 26:4–5**:

“Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you yourself will be just like him.
Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.”

This balance captures Jesus’ approach:

He didn’t answer when the question was malicious or insincere.

He did answer when truth needed to be declared, exposing hypocrisy or revealing God’s wisdom.

He always answered in a way that pointed back to God’s authority — never falling into human traps.

The Question of Paying Taxes

Matthew 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26

- The Pharisees asked, “*Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?*”
- If He said “yes,” He’d offend the Jews. If “no,” He’d offend Rome.
- Jesus asked for a coin: “*Whose image is this?*”
Then said, “*Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.*”
- **Answer, but not the way they expected.**
He exposed their hypocrisy without taking their bait.

The Unrepentant Sinner

Proverbs 26:11 – “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”

2 Peter 2:20–22 – Warns of those who know the truth but return to sin.

Example: Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his heart (Exodus 7–14).

- God gave him chances, but mercy was withdrawn when his rebellion persisted.

2Pe 2:20-22 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. (21) For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. (22) But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A DOG RETURNS TO HIS OWN VOMIT," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 8:3–11

- The scribes and Pharisees said, “*Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. What do You say?*”
- If He said, “stone her,” He’d violate Roman law. If “forgive her,” He’d deny Moses.
- Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then said, “*He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone first.*”
- **He answered without answering.**
He upheld the Law and mercy together; silencing accusers.

The Manipulative

Luke 4:1–13 – Satan tried to manipulate Jesus with Scripture and promises.

Proverbs 12:5 – “*The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.*”

Example: Delilah manipulated Samson for personal gain (**Judges 16**).

- Jesus resisted manipulation by standing firm on God’s Word.

Authority Questioned by the Chief Priests

Matthew 21:23–27; Mark 11:27–33; Luke 20:1–8

- They asked, “*By what authority are You doing these things?*”
- Jesus countered: “*The baptism of John; was it from heaven or from men?*”
- They refused to answer, fearing the crowd.
- Jesus then said, “*Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.*”
- **Don’t answer.**

He revealed their hypocrisy - they weren't seeking truth, only control.

The Divisive

Titus 3:10–11 – “*Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning.*”

Romans 16:17 – “*Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way.*”

Example: Korah led rebellion against Moses (Numbers 16).

- Division often disguises itself as “righteous disagreement.”

The Question of Divorce

Matthew 19:3–9; Mark 10:2–9

The Pharisees tested Him: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" Jesus redirected them to Scripture: "Have you not read... that God made them male and female?"

- **Answer by returning to God's original intent.**

He refused to argue their legal loopholes and instead exposed their hardness of heart.

The Drainer (those who sap energy or constantly take without giving)

Luke 5:16 – "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Proverbs 25:17 – "Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house; too much of you, and they will hate you."

Example: The crowds followed Jesus for miracles, not truth (**John 6:26**).

- Even Jesus set boundaries and rested.

Mat 19:3-12 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?" (4) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' (5) and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH' ? (6) So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (7) They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" (8) He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. (9) And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (10) His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry." (11) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*."

Mar 10:2-12 The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?" testing Him. (3) And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" (4) They said, "Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*." (5) And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. (6) But from the beginning of the creation, God 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.' (7) 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, (8) AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. (9) Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (10) In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter*. (11) So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. (12) And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Joh 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

The Question of Resurrection (Sadducees)

Matthew 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–40

- The Sadducees, who denied resurrection, presented a ridiculous story about seven husbands.
- Jesus said, “*You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.*”
- **Answer that corrects ignorance, not argument.**
He dismantled their logic by revealing their false premise.

The God Replacement (those who want your worship, attention, or loyalty over God)

Acts 14:11–15 – Paul and Barnabas were worshiped as gods but tore their clothes, saying, “*We are only men.*”

Exodus 20:3 – “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”

Example: Herod accepted praise as a god and was struck down (**Acts 12:21–23**).

- Never support those who exalt themselves above God.

Before Pilate and Herod

Matthew 27:11–14; Luke 23:8–9; John 18:33–38

- Pilate asked, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “You say so.”
- When falsely accused, *He gave no answer.*
- Before Herod, *He said nothing at all.*

• Don’t answer lies or mockery.

Silence itself became testimony; fulfilling **Isaiah 53:7** “*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth.*”

The Willfully Disobedient

2 Thessalonians 3:14–15 – “*Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction... do not associate with them.*”

Proverbs 29:1 – “*Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed.*”

Example: King Saul repeatedly disobeyed God’s commands (**1 Samuel 15**).

- Helping rebellion only multiplies its cost.

2Th 3:13-15 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. (14) And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. (15) Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The Question of His Authority as Messiah

John 10:24–25

- “If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”
 - Jesus replied, *“I told you, and you do not believe. The works I do in My Father’s name testify about Me.”*
 - **Answer with evidence, not argument.**
He pointed to actions, not words, as proof.
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The Assignment Blocker (those who oppose or distract from God’s call on your life)

Genesis 12:1–4 – God told Abram to leave his country and kindred.

Matthew 16:23 – Jesus said to Peter, “*Get behind me, Satan!*” when Peter tried to divert Him from the cross.

Example: Jonah fled his calling and endangered others on the ship (**Jonah 1**).

- Don’t let others anchor you where God has told you to move on.

When Tested by Satan

Matthew 4:1–11

- Satan twisted Scripture to tempt Jesus.
 - Jesus didn't debate. He quoted Scripture correctly: "*It is written...*"
 - **Answer only with truth, not speculation.**
He resisted by anchoring in God's Word, not human logic.
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The Jealous Spirit

Proverbs 27:4 – “*Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who can stand before jealousy?*”

James 3:16 – “*Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder.*”

Example: Saul's jealousy of David destroyed him (1 Samuel 18–19).

- Jealousy turns potential allies into enemies.

The Pattern of Jesus' Responses

Situation Type	Jesus' Response	Example
Malicious trap	Don't answer or redirect	Authority challenge (Matt 21)
Twisted Scripture	Correct with Scripture	Temptation in wilderness (Matt 4)
Hypocritical question	Expose motive	Taxes to Caesar (Matt 22)
Moral trap	Elevate God's justice and mercy	Adulterous woman (John 8)
Ignorant question	Teach truth	Sadducees' riddle (Matt 22)
False accusation	Silence	Before Pilate (Matt 27)

Key Takeaway

- Jesus never answered to *win an argument*.
- He answered to reveal truth, expose motive, and honor the Father's will.
- Silence or a counter-question was often His shield against manipulation.
- **John 2:24–25** sums it up best:
 - “*But Jesus did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people... He Himself knew what was in man.*”

Yet More Enablement Anti-Patterns

The Time-Waster

- **Ephesians 5:15–16** – “Be careful how you live... making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”
- **Proverbs 6:9–11** – warns against sloth and wasted opportunity.
- **Example:** The five foolish virgins (**Matthew 25:1–13**) who were unprepared when opportunity came.
 - Your time is sacred; steward it wisely.

The User (those who take advantage of generosity without gratitude or purpose)

- **John 6:26–27** – “You seek Me... because you ate the loaves and were filled.”
- **Proverbs 25:19** – “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth.”
- **Example:** The prodigal son’s companions left him when the money was gone (**Luke 15:14–16**).
 - Users love benefits, not relationship.

Yet More Enablement Anti-Patterns

The Gossip

- **Proverbs 16:28** – “A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.”
- **Romans 1:29–30** – gossip is listed among sins of the depraved mind.
- **Example:** Miriam spoke against Moses and was struck with leprosy (**Numbers 12**).
 - Gossip destroys trust faster than open enemies.

The Negative Thinker (those who spread unbelief and fear)

- **Numbers 13:31–33** – the ten spies discouraged Israel through unbelief.
- **Philippians 4:13** – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- **Example:** Israel’s fear at the Promised Land cost them 40 years in the wilderness.
 - Negativity infects faith faster than doubt alone.

Additional types Scripture warns against

The Scoffer or Mocking Spirit – *Proverbs 9:7–8; Psalm 1:1*. Avoid those who mock correction or holy things.

The False Teacher – *2 Peter 2:1–3; 2 John 10–11*. Don’t welcome or support those spreading false doctrine.

The Proud and Arrogant – *James 4:6; Proverbs 16:18*. Pride resists correction and drains grace from community.