

Becoming Curious: A Spiritual Practice of Asking Questions

May 2017

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paperback

978-0-8308-4627-6

"In Becoming Curious, spiritual formation is approached from an angle I've never seen: curiosity. Each chapter is question based enough to open up suggestions that led me constantly to reflection. . . . You might put Becoming Curious back on your shelf, but don't be fooled: it will come back in odd moments to further reflection."

– **Scot McKnight**, Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary

Humble Curiosity Is the Gateway to Formation

*"In a world that is brimming with redemptive potential, *Becoming Curious* winsomely invites us to receive the fullness of every moment. Humble curiosity is the gateway to formation, to learning and swimming into the deeper streams of faith. Casey masterfully shows through Scripture and story how the art of curiosity can form us more into Christlikeness. Profoundly thankful for this book!"*

– **Steve Carter**, teaching pastor, Willow Creek, author of *This Invitational Life*

*"Questions are rarely allowed to linger in the air for too long before someone feels compelled to answer them. Rather than let our curiosity lead us more deeply into understanding God or one another, we rush to certainties and supposed sure things. In *Becoming Curious*, Casey Tygrett reclaims the transformational power of a curious question for the faithful, encouraging believers to do what may seem counterintuitive in our culture – to ask another question rather than find a quick answer. While reading this book, I had the distinct feeling that Casey crafted these words with great humility in his heart and a smile in his eyes – the kind that only comes from a man who has released his right to know everything and rests well in the presence of Jesus. Casey Tygrett is one of my new favorite authors and *Becoming Curious* is an anthem of hope for believers who have grown tired of well-oiled religion."*

– **Emily P. Freeman**, *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author of *Simply Tuesday*

*"When I started reading *Becoming Curious*, I had intended to finish it over the span of a week. I finished it in one day! My friend Casey Tygrett has given us quite a gift in this book. You will find it a resource that will help you and others grow in faith and love. Be prepared to be encouraged, challenged, and strengthened."*

– **Caleb Kaltenbach**, lead pastor, Discovery Church, author of *Messy Grace*

*"The word that keeps coming to mind as I read *Becoming Curious* is 'humility.' Casey Tygrett invites us onto the path of Christlike humility in such a winsome and humble way. But don't mistake it for simplistic or shallow. There is a profound wisdom on every page that feels hard fought and God given – and these depths can only be received by humble curiosity. This book will change you if you let it."*

– **Aaron Niequist**, worship leader

*"There is no one better than Casey Tygrett to ask the penetrating questions that will bring about the life Jesus truly wants us all to have. In *Becoming Curious*, Casey invites us into to a*

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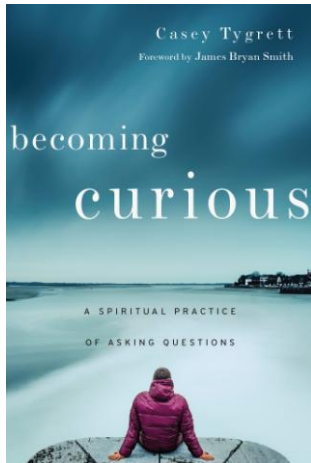
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life that focuses more on asking better questions than finding better answers. Join Casey as he teaches us how to stay curious and transforming in our lives with Christ.”

– **Tim Harlow**, senior pastor, Parkview Christian Church, Orland Park, IL, author of
Life on Mission



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“What if my best answer to someone’s question regarding God or faith is to ask another question, the one just below the surface?”

A Spiritual Practice of Asking Questions

There’s a difficult line to walk between what we need to know and what falls into the realm of mystery. Walking that line often wears on our nerves and causes incredible tension, and so we settle for easy answers. We stop asking questions. We give up. We begin to lose the one thing that fiercely energizes the transformation of our souls – something beautiful, poetic, joyful, and happily disruptive: *curiosity*. Curiosity is essential to movement in our lives.

A little curiosity moves us deeper into the lives of our children and friends.

A little curiosity helps us understand strange emotions and where they are coming from.

A little curiosity helps us find opportunities and graces for life we never knew existed.

A little curiosity, especially when we’re chasing Jesus, will shape and form us into the person he calls us to be. We have to learn to be curious again in our journey with Jesus.

Questions and curiosities, especially those we can’t nail down, are signs of weakness in a debate. God says it, we believe it, and that settles it – no questions asked. I was mentored in this kind of faith: the path of answering people’s questions and being the “wise sage.” Then I started failing at sagehood, and it began to tear away at my soul.

But what if there wasn’t a big fish who swallowed Jonah?

What about all that violence in the Old Testament?

Why is Jesus so different from Paul?

Is there space to believe, even with these questions?

As I began to engage my own curiosity in following Jesus, I encountered questions in myself, my friends, and our community that I could not answer. Instead of rushing to end the suspense, I found instead that the deep yearning of my spirit was actually to leave them unanswered. It felt counterintuitive, counterproductive. There had to be a different way, but to chase it would be to go back on everything I had already learned.

The other gift that came into my life around this time was the gift of *change*. Aging, growing in a bit of wisdom as I tried to cultivate space for the living and radical Jesus in my comings and goings, I say my convictions begin to change. Slowly, I learned that for God to grant new mercies every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23) my soul had to take the shape of an explorer – a daily searcher coming to know old things in a new way.

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It takes discipline to live like that, and a deep trust that Jesus guides and directs even when the wind of change is swirling in our spirits. As I lived, taught others, and engaged in spiritual conversations, I began to think, *What if my best answer to someone's question regarding God or faith is to ask another question, the one just below the surface?*

I now imagine Jesus replying, "Yes, precisely."

Becoming curious then is a process of change, of return—going back to the fundamentals of our own lives and existence. Seth Godin says that becoming curious is "more about a five-, ten- or fifteen-year process where you start finding your voice, and finally you begin to realize that the safest thing you can do feels risky and the riskiest thing you can do is play it safe."

Curiosity is not for the faint-hearted; it is for the God-haunted and restless spirits dying for the water just below the surface of earthly certainty.

Is it possible that if we take this path, pursuing curiosity through Jesus, we may find that instead of walking a straight line this pilgrimage with God is actually a tight and imperceptible spiral that brings us back around to the beginning only to learn new things again?

Curious, isn't it? That is my hope for this book. To ignite our minds with possibilities. What if Jesus actually wanted us to grow and deepen in our curiosity, more than our certainty or our knowledge of facts and data? More than that, what if Jesus himself instigated the chase after questions like some sort of wise and loving prankster, planting little, explosive ideas that when they combusted produced fruit and not fractures? What would it look like for us to create space—practice a spiritual discipline daily or weekly—where we gave ourselves permission to not know and to simply *ask* things of Jesus?

— Adapted from the introduction, "The Gift"

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