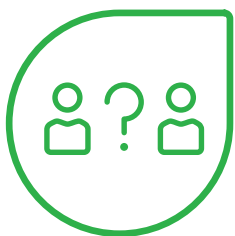




FAITH *Questions*

FORGIVENESS



FAITH *Questions*

SERVING OTHERS



FAITH *Questions*

POWER



FAITH *Questions*

HUMILITY



FAITH *Questions*

INDIVIDUALITY

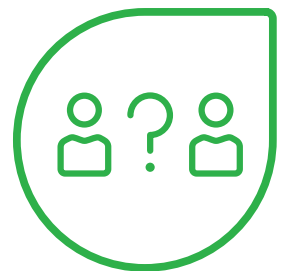
Forgiveness



Today we generally see forgiveness as a good thing, even if it confuses us when we see it lived out. We understand the way that it can bring people together, stop people trying to get back at others, and is an important tool in helping us live in peace with one another.

In the ancient world, forgiveness was seen as something to use to express one persons power over another. Rulers forgave their subjects, masters forgave their slaves. Powerful Romans, like Julius Caesar, used forgiveness as a tool to show how superior they were to their peers, and their peers didn't like it. One tried to kill himself rather than meet Caesar and be forgiven.

Serving others



Serving others and the language of being servants is baked into our way of speaking in our society. Think of Civil Servants, the way we see politicians ideally being servants of their constituents, the way we celebrate organisations and people that try and help others.

In the ancient world, only those who were seen as weaker were suitable for serving others. A persons position in society was seen in the way that others treated them, so to be served was to be strong and powerful. In this world, who would want to be a servant? Who would want to be treated in this way?

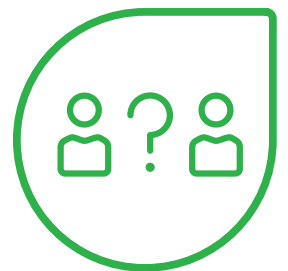
Power



Today we often see power as something to be used for other people. Those who have power are expected to use it to help others. Think of the way we expect Police Officers, Doctors, CEOs, and others to improve the lives of those they come across. Or at least we are very aware of when these expectations are not met, and people in these roles use their power for themselves.

By contrast in the ancient world the fact that someone held power was seen as justification for whatever they decided to do. A master could do what they like to their slave simply because they were the master, there was no expectation of using power well.

Humility



Humility can be a difficult thing to define, so it is helpful to look at the opposite. We often feel uncomfortable around someone when they start to tell us about how brilliant they are, and how well they do things. We don't really like the idea of shouting about our achievements, even though we like people thinking positively about us.

In the ancient world there was no taboo around telling others how good you were. If you didn't, how would they know? In fact, if you didn't share how skilled or clever you were, it would be assumed that you didn't have anything worth sharing.

Individuality



Individuality, and expressing yourself are hugely important in our modern world. The idea of being your own person, doing your own thing, finding what makes you unique, are central to the way we understand ourselves and the way we live our lives. This is so much the case, that we think of our teenage years as primarily being about finding our own identity.

In the ancient world, people's identity was not about them but about the family group they were part of. People lived their lives to bring honour to their family, and if instead they brought shame they were, in extreme cases, rejected. To be an individual in this world meant not working for the collective good, and putting your own needs above those of your family.