

“Later the leaders sent some Pharisees and supporters of Herod to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. “Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don’t play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” Mark 12:13-14 NLT

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What a waste of brain-time and heart-space! Mark writes of another setup, a trap. It is so frustrating on so many levels. What happens when leaders waste their time on something other than mission? Clearly, these guys had nothing else to do but scheme. All that studying for knowledge, all that power to influence, all those years of reputation - for what? Playing mind games with God and planting traps? Please, what a waste! One thought dominated them-how can we take this guy out? Forget the fact that Jesus is who he says he is and is on the most critical mission for ALL OUR LIVES. Let’s just suppose he was a criminal, a deviant, a heretic or cult leader - they would spend all that time, chasing down every popular person espousing error? Again, distraction, distraction, distraction. If Satan can’t take us out by believing a lie, he’ll distract us with chasing down ghosts of our arrogance of “truth!” Chasing shadows instead of staying on mission. Even in our “crusader” mentality, Jesus is gracious. He didn’t say, “Boys, while you’re trying to trap me with your little Rabbi mind games, I’m trying to save your souls!” Note to leaders: while we’re trying to chase down shadows, Jesus is trying to save us and those we lead! Jesus still answered their question! Probably because others were listening and didn’t want those crummy lies and false premises bouncing around in people’s heads. And, the crowd probably loved that Jesus tricked the trickers with truth. I would have just Liam Neeson’d them with a throat punch. And for all of you shadow chasing crusaders out there, some of us have honest questions for God, so get out of the way.

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Dad,

I am so glad you welcome honest questions from deeply curious hearts and minds. I am thankful for emotionally intelligent and intellectually intelligent prayers - asking you for wisdom. May I always be open to the Nicodemus’ and rich young rulers out there who are earnestly seeking you. Please, please, please keep me FOCUSED on you, focused on mission and not be distracted by lies or chasing down shadows. Help me stay in the light and stay in the dance with the Holy Spirit.

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rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root