A walk with Mr O (57)

Inversion

Mr O, Mr O, I need some help, I have a whole host of practical questions starting with 'How', but I seem unable to get a clear answer to any of them.

Can you give me some examples?

Well, yes. As you know I left home some years ago. But know my parents are beginning to get old. How can I be a really good son to them?

That's helpful. And another example?

There are so man. For instance, how can I get more out of my daily Bible reading? How can I improve my prayer life? How can I be better witness at work? And I could go on and on. As you can see, they are all practical questions about Christian living.

You would get a clear answer to every one of those questions if you practised what I call 'Upside-down thinking', or what some books call 'inversion'.

I'm sorry, Mr O, but I haven't a clue what you are talking about.

'Inversion is when you ask exactly the opposite of what you want to know, and then you do exactly the opposite of the answer you come up with.

And I still haven't a clue what you are talking about!

So, now it's my turn to give some e3xamples. Let's take the first question that you just mentioned: 'How can I be a really good son to my ageing parents? Now, instead of asking that question, ask 'How can I be a really awful son to my ageing parents? Go on, answer it. You'll find it really easy to be clear and definite.

Have nothing to do with them. Never ring them, Never message them. Never visit them. Don't send them birthday cards. Forget their wedding anniversary. Ignore them at Christmas. If I should bump into them, keep my distance from them…

Stop! you've clearly got the idea Now just do the opposite of what you've just said and you will have a clear answer to your first question

That's awesome, Mr O. Thanks so much! So, the answer to that question is: 'Have as much to do with them as possible. Ring them. Message them. Visit them. Always remember their birthdays and their wedding anniversary. spend Christmas with them. Hug them Kiss them…'

It's easy, isn't it? And it works every time. Ask the exact opposite of the 'How' you want answered, and then invert the answer.

Just to make sure that I've really got hold of this, could we do it again, please, with one of the other questions?

Of course. Which one would you like to choose?

Perhaps we could tackle the question on prayer. So, instead of asking 'How can I improve my payer life? I ask the exact opposite. That would be: 'How can I ruin my prayer life?.

Exactly. So, how could you ruin your prayer life?

By never thinking about it. By never having any regular, planed times of prayer. By never attending the prayer meeting and so never hearing others pray. By scrolling on my phone while the pastor prays in the Sunday services. By never reading any books or articles on prayer. By never talking about prayer with my Christian friends. By never saying grace before meals…

When the question is put in the negative, it's not hard to find answers, is it? And by simply inverting those answers you've got a long list of truly helpful things you can do to improve your prayer life

but, Mr O, there's something I don't understand.

Go on, what would that be?

***Why is it so much easier to think in the negative than the positive?*!**

Honestly, I don't know. But that's certainly the way it is. It's probably something to do with the Fall. At creation our soul was constructed in a certain way, So, now it's easier to think about what's wrong, rather than what's right. But, as you have seen, we can turn that to our advantage. by 'Upside-down thinking' we can move easily learn to live to the glory of God.