

Asked of Me

God asks questions. He asked Hagar where she was going, Jacob what his name was, Peter whether he loved Him. He asks because He wants the answer from the man's own mouth. This poem asks you one of them first, Hagar's, and you answer it as your story moves.

The same twenty-two lines as the page, on paper. Each line starts for you; you finish it in your own words. Work through it in order, then copy your finished lines onto the last page.

Write it by hand here if that suits you better. Fill it in over a week at the kitchen table if you like, then type it in at ancientpathcoaching.com/asked-of-me when it is finished, and it saves to your page.

PART I — FOUND

“Where have you come from and where are you going?”

1. Where you came from: the house, the town, the hour of the day that made you.

God found Hagar by a spring in the desert: Sarai's slave, pregnant, running. It is the first time the angel of the LORD appears to anyone in Scripture, and it is to her. He asked her two things. She could answer the first, where she had come from. Start there.

A place and one true thing about it. Something a man could picture.

e.g. I came from a small town and a long silence.

I came from _____

2. The sound of the house you came from: what you heard, or did not.

A house has a sound. The voices in it, or the silence, or the door. Most men can still hear it.

The voices, the silence, the door. Something a man could hear.

e.g. I came from a kitchen table where nobody talked, and a door that slammed at ten.

I came from _____

3. The place you built to be safe in: the hiding place, the habit, the story you told.

Adam hid, and God asked him where he was. Most men build something to hide in instead, work, a habit, a story they tell, and call it safe.

What you built, and what you called it. Something a man could picture.

e.g. I came from a hiding place I built out of overtime and a locked garage, and called it steady.

I came from _____

4. Where you were going, then.

Hagar could answer where she had come from. She could not answer where she was going. Where were you going, then? A direction, a drift, a place, or that you did not know. Say it the way it was.

A direction, a drift, a place, or that you did not know. Yours to say.

e.g. And I was going wherever the night took me.

And I was going _____

5. What it felt like, in one word.

Now say what it was like to be going that way. Not what you thought about it. What you felt. If the word will not come, find where it sat in you, the chest, the gut, the back of the neck, and name what was there. Naming it is how it starts to lose its grip.

One word. Pick one below, or write your own. Not “fine” and not “bad”: the real one.

One word: afraid · ashamed · alone · angry · numb · tired · empty · trapped · unseen · sad

e.g. and I was afraid

and I was _____

PART II — NAMED

“What is your name?”

6. The names you lived under. List them.

At the Jabbok, before He gave Jacob a new name, He asked for the old one, and Jacob had to say it out loud: Jacob, the one who grabs. This line asks for the names you lived under before He asked. What people called you. What you called yourself when nobody was listening. Not your given name; the ones that stuck.

Two or three names, plain. A word each is enough.

e.g. I answered to Fine, to the one who had it handled, to whatever the room needed me to be.

I answered to _____

7. What made you angry. Say the thing, not the mood.

Cain's offering was refused and his face fell. God asked him why he was angry before he ever got to the field. Anger is where most men's story goes next.

A reason a friend could repeat back to you. Something a man could picture.

e.g. I was angry, because the truck left on a Friday and nobody said why.

I was angry, because _____

8. The vow or the deal you made to stay safe, and what it cost. If the vow is already in your poem, this line is what it cost.

Jesus asked what it profits a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul. Most men do not gain the world. They make a deal, a vow, a wall, a way of getting by, and pay the same price.

The deal, then the price. One line. Where you were when you made it helps.

e.g. I made a vow at fourteen, on the back steps, never to need anyone, and it cost me the people who needed me.

I made _____

9. What you slept through. A year, a season, someone who needed you awake.

The night they came for Him, He asked three men to stay awake with Him one hour, and came back to find them sleeping.

The stretch of time, and who was in it. Something a man could picture.

e.g. I slept through two seasons of Little League and the year my wife stopped asking.

I slept through _____

10. Where you were going, by then.

The names, the anger, the vow, the years you slept through. Her question comes back: where were you going by then? Say it the way it was.

A direction, a drift, a place, or that you did not know. Yours to say.

e.g. And I was going down a little more each year.

And I was going _____

11. What it felt like, in one word.

What did going that way feel like? Same rule: not what you thought, what you felt, and where it sat.

One word. Pick one below, or write your own. Not “fine” and not “bad”: the real one.

One word: afraid · ashamed · alone · angry · numb · tired · empty · trapped · unseen · sad

e.g. and I was alone

and I was _____

PART III — WANTING

“What are you seeking?”

12. What you were actually after, under the other wants.

The first thing Jesus says in John's Gospel is a question, to two men walking behind Him. They don't answer it; they ask where He is staying. What a man wants, said plainly, is what he is really asking God for.

The plain want. Not the church answer. Something a man could picture.

e.g. I wanted the quiet of the garage at night, and one person who would not leave.

I wanted _____

“Where is your faith?”

13. Where your faith had been.

On the lake the wind came down so fast the boat filled, and when He had stilled it He asked the men where their faith was. Not whether they had any. Where it was. Name what yours had actually been in: the people, places and things that hold a life up until they don't.

Two or three real things, no sermon. The line closes itself.

e.g. It had been in the job, the marriage, my own good name.

It had been in _____ , and not in the One who holds a life together.

PART IV — THE TURN

“Do you want to be healed?”

14. Do you want to be healed? Say yes, then say what you had gotten used to.

By the pool at Bethesda a man had lain thirty-eight years waiting for the water to move. Jesus asked him whether he wanted to be well, and the man explained why he couldn't be. Answer the question. Then say what you had gotten used to.

Yes, and the thing you would have to give up.

e.g. Yes, though I had gotten used to the mat.

Yes, though _____

“Do you love me?”

15. Answer Him.

After the resurrection, over a charcoal fire on the beach, the same smell as the courtyard where Peter denied Him, He asked Peter three times. This is the second time, when it has stopped being easy. Answer Him.

Your answer and one true qualifier.

e.g. You know that I do. Even now.

16. Where you were going, after you answered Him.

You answered Him, and the answer turned you somewhere. Her question, one more time: where were you going now?

Toward someone, back to something, out the door. Say it the way it was.

A direction, a place, a person. Yours to say.

e.g. And I was going back to the table I had walked away from.

And I was going _____

17. What it felt like, in one word.

Turning is not the same as being sure. What did it feel like to go that way? Not what you thought, what you felt, and where it sat.

One word. Pick one below, or write your own. Not “fine” and not “bad”: the real one.

One word: afraid · ashamed · alone · angry · numb · tired · empty · trapped · unseen · sad

e.g. and I was scared

and I was _____

PART V — WHO YOU ARE

“But who do you say that I am?”

18. Who He is, from your own life.

Hagar named Him first, by the spring: the God who sees me. Now it is your turn. He asked the twelve what people were saying about Him, then turned it: but who do you say that I am? Peter answered in one line. Up to here the whole poem has been Him asking about you. This is where it turns around. Say who He has been to you, in the story you have just told. Not the creed, not the church answer. Then He answers you, once, by name.

One line. Yours.

e.g. You are the one who kept asking when I had stopped answering.

You are _____

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

PART VI — SENT

“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”

19. The man you are responsible for now. One man, not a crowd.

His mother and brothers were outside asking for Him, and He turned the question on the room: who is my mother, and who are my brothers? Then He answered it Himself — whoever does the will of my Father. He was not trading one family for another; from the cross He gave His mother a son and John a mother. His blood makes the men you walk with now your family, without costing you the one you were born into. Name one of them.

Who he is, and where he is.

e.g. My brother is Dave, two desks down, who is where I was.

My brother is _____

“What is that in your hand?”

20. The one ordinary thing already in your hand.

Moses at the burning bush, forty years a shepherd, arguing he was the wrong man. God asked what he was holding. A stick. This is asking about a thing: the one ordinary thing you already have. A trade, a table, a truck, a story, a Tuesday night. Name it.

Name it plainly. Small is fine; small is the point.

e.g. A story I thought was too small to tell, and a Tuesday night.

21. Where you are going now.

The question the poem opened with. Hagar could not answer it. Now you can. One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much: take what is in your hand to the man you named. "I don't know yet" is an honest line.

A place or a person. Not a crowd. Something a man could picture.

e.g. So this is where I am going: to him, on a Tuesday night, with what is in my hand.

So this is where I am going: _____

22. The word for now, in one word.

Three words carried you here. This one is for now, standing where you are. It does not have to be a big word. It has to be true.

One word. Pick one below, or write your own. Not "fine" and not "bad": the real one.

One word: scared · unsure · hopeful · steady · seen · known · held · free

e.g. And now I am known

And now I am _____

NOW PUT IT IN ORDER

The Shape

Copy your lines from the pages before into the blanks, in order. Read it aloud when you are finished. Keep it, show it to one person, or type it in at ancientpathcoaching.com/asked-of-me — it saves to your page, and your name is optional and removable at any time.

I came from _____

I came from _____

I came from _____

And I was going _____

and I was _____ .

I answered to _____

I was angry, because _____

I made _____

I slept through _____

And I was going _____

and I was _____ .

I wanted _____

It had been in _____ , and not in the One who holds a life together.

Yes, though _____

And I was going _____

and I was _____ .

You are _____

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

My brother is _____

So this is where I am going: _____

And now I am _____