Junior High - Sample Questions
Paradise of the Spirit: Selections 1 - Bishop Youanis

(Last Updated on 07/12/2017)

Notes:

- It should be noted that these are sample questions only. In the past, often the questions on the day of the competition were found verbatim in the sample questions offered prior to the competition. This may no longer be the case this year. These questions are meant as a study guide to point you toward areas that you can study, yet there may be questions asked on the day of the competition that are not found or covered in the following sample questions. You should be able and ready to answer questions pulled from anywhere in the book whether they are directly covered in these questions or not.

1. According to the prophet Isaiah, why can the wicked not rest? Provide the biblical verse and reference to support your answer. (P4)

2. Bishop Youanis states, “As long as man is away from God, he is a victim of worry until he returns to Him.” Provide two examples in the Old Testament to support this statement. (P4-5)

3. Explain how worry and loss of peace can result in sin. What does Prophet Isaiah say about peace? (P4)

4. What does the word “Metanoia” mean and what is its origin?

5. Many saints have spoken about repentance saying, “It is a reconciliation with the Lord, a second baptism, a remission of sins, and a returning to God.” Explain (P7)

6. Bishop Youanis meditates on the parable Jesus told of the Prodigal Son to speak about God’s great love, compassion, and abundance of mercy. What does this illustrate about our Lord Jesus Christ and compare this the Prodigal’s son’s Father.

7. Bishop Youanis meditates on the parable Jesus told of the Prodigal Son to speak about God’s great love, compassion, and abundance of mercy. How did the son act towards his father? What is the significance of how the Father reacted? (p 11)

8. Bishop Youanis explains that the first step of repentance is examining oneself. Examining oneself is one of the major factors in building up the spiritual life. Explain what is the purpose of examining oneself. Provide the Biblical verse and reference. (P12)

9. According to Bishop Youanis, when are the best times (lists 5 times) one should examine oneself before repenting? (P13)

10. Bishop Youanis explains that the first step to repentance is examining oneself. How do we end self-examination with a prayer? (P13)

11. According to Bishop Youanis the second step of repentance is to think of consequences of sin. Explain why David, like other saints, used to weep for his sins. (P13)

12. When we think of the consequences of our sins, what do we sometimes do to comfort ourselves and what does St. John Chrysostom say concerning this? (P 13)

13. The third step of repentance is to realize that comfort and salvation are found only in Jesus. How does one succeed in overcoming sin and bad habits? Provide one Biblical verse and reference from the Book of John to support your answer. (P14)

14. The fourth step of repentance is to think how trivial and vain the world is. How should we use the world but not let the world use us? What is the parable to support this concept? (P14)

15. The sixth step of repentance is not to postpone repentance. Bishop Youanis says “never postpone your repentance for there are many in hell now”, give two examples in the Bible where people have delayed their repentance and regretted it. (P15)

16. The sixth step of repentance is not to postpone repentance. Give two reasons why it’s not advised to postpone repentance? (P 15)

17. The seventh step of repentance is beware of despair. Why is it an important principle for us to struggle? What is Mar Issac’s contemplation? What is God’s response to our struggle?

18. The eighth step of repentance to realize is all sins can be forgiven. What is the one sin that is unforgivable and what does this sin mean for our spiritual life? (P16)

19. The ninth step of repentance is beware of carelessness. We know that God is both merciful and kind but if we take advantage of God’s mercy and kindness than we may fall into carelessness. Provide 5 ways of how God appeared in His first coming and compare this to His Second Coming. No biblical verse or reference required. Paraphrasing is ok. (P17)

20. The first stage of repentance is contrition for sin. Explain the second and third stages of repentance. (P18)

21. Life with God is characterized with joy, while that of repentance, by regret and sadness because of sin. Is there contradiction between the two? Explain your answer. No biblical verse or reference needed. (P18-19)

22. How did David the Prophet sin? What are the two terrible crimes? How God’s mercy interfere? What characteristics did David portray when he confessed? (P 19)
23. Describe the life of Saint Moses the Strong, including his sin and how he turned his life around. (P 19)
24. What were St. Augustine’s professions? Describe in detail his childhood and early life. At age 33, describe the life he had started. What was his mother’s role throughout his life? What role did he have in church? (P 19-20)
25. St. Baiesa was born in the Fourth Century. Explain her life in detail. Explain how her righteous life turned into a life of sin. Who brought her back from her life of sin? Describe their interaction and how it changed her life. How do we know God accepted her repentance? When do we celebrate her departure? (P 20)
26. Describe in detail the life of St. Mary the Egyptian. What sin did St. Mary the Egyptian commit for seventeen years? Describe the event that caused her to devote the rest of her life to worshipping God. After this event, what did she do for the rest of her life? Who was the only person she met in the last year of her life? (P 20-21)
27. Describe in detail the life of Deacon Habib Farag. How did Deacon Habib Farag start his life? What was his one condition to attend a church meeting? Describe the vision he had after he left the meeting. How did his life change after he woke up? At what age did he depart? (P 21)
28. St. Ephrem the Syrian states that there are those who receive blessings and those who will receive woes. Provide 3 examples of each. (P 22)
29. St. John Saba states “Adam can bear children from Eve, which resemble the physical world”; likewise, what can Jesus do? Explain fully how repentance is the mother of life. (P 23)
30. Bishop Youanis provides us with reasons or advantages of confession. List the four points of view? (P 27-29)
31. Explain the advantages of confession from the Psychological Point of View. (P 27)
32. The second advantage of confession is from the Spiritual Point of View. List and briefly explain the six components from the Spiritual Point of View.
33. The second advantage of confession is from the Spiritual Point of View; one of the concepts mentioned is revealing all your thoughts to a priest as this helps us in getting rid of them (the thoughts). Describe the interaction between St. Macarious the Great and the devil regarding the monks in the desert. (P 28)
34. The third advantage of confession is from the Social Point of View. Explain. (P 28)
35. What are the three elements of confession? (P 30, 31, 33)
36. The first element of Confession is between me and myself. What is the first practical step in repentance? Explain. (P 30)
37. The first element of Confession is between me and myself. How should a confessor prepare themselves for a perfect confession? (P 30)
38. The first element of confession is between me and myself. Why do we sometimes not realize our sins? If this is the case, what should we do? (P 31)
39. The first element of confession is between me and myself. What should you do when you feel the burden of your sins? (P 31)
40. The second element of confession is in front of the priest. One of the main factors that hinder people from confession is being shy of admitting their sins in front of the priest. How can shyness be beneficial for you? Why is that important? (P 31)
41. The second element of confession is in front of the priest. List the twelve steps on how to confess. (P 32-33)
42. The second element of confession is in front of the priest. Describe the illustration which can explain how we should empty our hearts of our sins. (P 32)
43. The third element of confession is the absolution from sin. In the three absolution prayers, the priest does not ask for the repentant only, but also for himself. List and explain the four absolutions the priest asks that God grant the repentant. What are the results of these absolutions? No biblical reference required. (P 35-36)
44. Bishop Youanis gave us general guidelines regarding confession. Explain in detail the three action items a confessor must remember to do after confession (P 36)
45. Bishop Youanis gave us general guidelines regarding confession; step two of the nine is advising us to have only one priest to go to for confession. Provide one reason why someone would like confess to
another priest that would be spiritually unbeneficial? (P 37)

46. Bishop Youanis gave us general guidelines regarding confession. Step four speaks about sin you forget to mention. What happens if you forget to mention a sin to your priest or if you have committed a sin after confession and before communion? (P 37)

47. Bishop Youanis gave us general guidelines regarding confession. Step 5 is selecting a spiritual guide. Who can a spiritual guide be? What is their role and how are they different than a priest? (P 38)

48. List five different kinds of sins. No explanation required. (P 42-43)

49. All God’s works are full of majesty and glory but the Sacrament of Communion is the greatest of them. How is the sacrament of communion an extension of the sacrifice of the cross? St. Macarious the Great says that through this sacrament you are protected against the devil. How? (P 46)

50. Bishop Youanis discusses how we benefit from the sacrament of communion. Some might wonder and ask, why do we not feel all these holy blessings whenever we receive the Holy Communion? List four spiritual practices which help us with the grace of God enjoy the blessings of Holy Communion? (P 48)

51. Bishop Youanis provides us with four spiritual practices to prepare ourselves for communion. The first practice is preparing ourselves for the sacrament. Describe the place where Jesus had prepared for the Eucharist. What does this represent and how can we apply it to our life? (P 48)

52. Bishop Youanis states the objectives of communion. The first point that he makes is that Communion is a Covenant. Explain. With whom was the first covenant made by God and what did the covenant symbolize? No Bible verses needed. (P 53)

53. Bishop Youanis states the objectives of communion. The second point that he makes is that communion means membership in the church. Explain. No biblical reference required. (p. 53)

54. Partaking of the Holy Communion has a great honor, blessing and effect on our lives unequalled by all other spiritual means. Why do many abstain from taking communion? (P 54)

55. There is a tradition in our church for the two fiancés. What is that tradition? What is the recommendation regarding practice the Sacrament of Confession? (P 55)

56. If we wait to become righteous before we proceed for the communion, this means that we want to become righteous by our own efforts. Explain how we should proceed. (P 56)

57. The right preparation for communion is true repentance from the heart over all our past sins and a hearty determination to submit all our life to God, to live with Him in holiness and righteousness, and to get rid of all our weaknesses which hinder our relationship with God. What does it mean to be worthy of communion? (P 56)

58. How does Bishop Youanis answer the question “Is there a relation between the holiness of the priest and the fulfillment of this sacrament? Does the changing of the bread and wine into the holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (or any of the other 7 sacraments) not happen except when a holy priest prays?” (P 57)

59. Recite the prayer before communion. (P 60)

60. Recite the prayer after communion. (P 60)


62. How many books are in the Holy Bible and what is their breakdown between the testaments? How long did it take to write? How many writers wrote the Holy Bible? Name the eight distinct places that Bishop Youanis mentions that the Holy Bible was written. (P 62)

63. In the Holy Bible God appears different from gods in the books of other religions. Who searches for whom in other religions? Who searches for whom in Christianity? (P 63)

64. In spite of the fact that the Bible has been translated into about 850 languages, it did not lose it power, action and effect. Explain. Give an example of someone who has tried to discredit the Bible. Who was it? What did he say and how was he proven wrong? (p 63-64)

65. Mankind has to die as the result of disobedience and transgressions. Meanwhile the Holy Bible brings to us glad tidings of life and freedom. What does it call for? (P 65)

66. Explain how the Holy Bible not only brings us glad tidings, but it is also a great source of strength and hope, and boosting of the moral spirits. (P 65)

67. We read the words of Moses to his people when fear and horror got hold of them "Do not be afraid.
Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord ... The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13, 14). We hear after that about the deeds of the Lord with His people in the bare wilderness in the period of forty years. How did God support Moses’s people? (P 65)

68. The Lord said on the tongue of Jeremiah the prophet "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). Explain this verse in relation to the Word of God. (P 66)

69. Bishop Youanis says there are uncountable blessings in the Word of God. The Lord explained in His Holy Book that the main help in our sojourn and wars against our enemies is the Word of God. This principle is clear in the whole Bible. List the four principles. (P 64)

70. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the second point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is light and guidance. What are the four analogies he provides? Explain the significance of each. (p66)

71. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the second point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is light and guidance. The men of God speak about the Law as a light and a lamp. Provide one verse to support this. To express this fact, what custom does the Eastern Church have in place? (p67)

72. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the third point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is a weapon and a helper. Who can can comprehend the Word of God? Explain how did our Lord Jesus use the Word of God as a weapon. (p67)

73. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the third point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is a weapon and a helper. St. Paul in Hebrews described the Word of God as "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Explain what does this verse mean. (p67)

74. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the third point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is a weapon and a helper. The influence of the Word of God is well realized in our spiritual striving. What are the six ways? (p68)

75. When speaking about the blessings of the Bible, the fourth point Bishop Youanis makes is The Word of God is a measure of perfection and growth. Often a Christian deviates from the proper way, affected by the spirit of the time, tradition and imitation of others. What happens to this person and what should he/she do? How can we measure our growth in grace? The Lord Jesus said to the Jews who came to argue with Him "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore, you do not hear, because you are not of God." Thus, how can we measure our spiritual growth in grace? (p68-69)

76. In Luke 11:27 Jesus says, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Jesus explains to us that the Holy Books are sufficient and able in their work for the salvation of mankind. Explain the parable that supports Jesus’ claim. (p71)

77. There are many books, magazines and pamphlets which contain religious knowledge about the Holy Bible, Divinity, doctrine, Church history and the like which many saints and scholars wrote. Explain what does Bishop Youanis say about this. (p72)

78. Bishop Youanis talks about the place of the Holy Bible among our reading. What is the difference between how people used to read the Bible in the past and how the Bible is read now? The gift of reading is one of the most important gifts for modern man. How does this relate to judgment day? (P 72)

79. Numerous are our gains from studying the Holy Book of God. Bishop Youanis gives three reasons why we study the Bible. The first reason is that it is the book of salvation. How does it explain salvation? (P 74)

80. Numerous are our gains from studying the Holy Book of God. Bishop Youanis gives three reasons why we study the Bible. The first reason is that it is the book of salvation. Compare the Old and New Testament. (P 74)

81. Numerous are our gains from studying the Holy Book of God. Bishop Youanis gives three reasons why we study the Bible. The second reason is that it is nourishment for the spirit. The body is supported by different material foods. What are two spiritual foods for the believer? Explain their significance. (p74-75)

82. A human eye may be able to read the printed words of the Bible and understand its direct and obvious
meanings but few are able to realize the purpose of God from His words, and read what is written behind them. Bishop Youanis provides us with an example from the bible to prove this point. Explain how this concept can be linked to the story of King Arman and his army in the city of Dothan. How can we benefit from this story? No biblical reference required. (p76)

83. Why may some describe the Holy Bible as dry and rigid? There is a big difference between enjoying the bible with the mind and enjoying it with the spirit. Provide one example in the bible to support this concept. (P. 77)

84. Bishop Youanis gives us five ways to study the Word of God. The second way is with reverence. Nehemiah 8:5 states, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved." Provide one example in the Old Testament where a prophet and his people showed respect to the word of God. (p78)

85. Bishop Youanis gives us five ways to study the Word of God. The third way is with humility. When we plan to read this Bible, how should we prepare our minds? What do we acknowledge to Him? Explain why we should not depend on our minds alone. (p79)

86. Bishop Youanis gives us five ways to study the Word of God. The fourth way is by the command of the Holy Spirit. What did the Lord Jesus promise us concerning this? An example of someone who did not rely on his own understanding but that of the Holy Spirit was St. John Chrysostom. Explain how we know this using the story provided in the book. (p79-80)

87. Bishop Youanis gives us five ways to study the Word of God. The fifth way is for personal benefit. How can we gain a personal message from the Bible? What can we say to ourselves as we are reading? (p 80-81)

88. There are various ways for studying the Bible, and individuals and groups like certain ways which they feel comfortable with and which suit their aims and possibilities in their study. List six methods Bishop Youanis mentions. (P 81-83)

89. The prayers of the Holy Eucharist from its beginning to its end constitute different parts from both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible. What are the three teaching readings in every liturgy? (P 83)