



DRAWING CLOSER TO OTHERS:

EVANGELISTIC CONVERSATIONS THAT COUNT

Going deeper with God means that we will draw closer to him and to others – including those who do not yet know Christ.

INTRODUCTION

- Often, our relationships with our friends who do not know Christ are shallow and superficial.
- Maybe we share a common interest, live near them, work with them or bump into them regularly
- We get to know them professionally or socially, but never meaningfully engage with them or move into their lives
- That means our conversation never really touches on the important spiritual issues – unless we rather clumsily preach to them or just “give them the gospel” without first connecting with them at any meaningful level of depth.

HAVING A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION ABOUT GOD WITH SOMEONE WHO IS NOT YET A BELIEVER IN CHRIST

1. We need to know how to have a meaningful, in depth, spiritual conversation with an unbeliever about God

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2. How to awaken a person's desire to get to know God
3. How to recognise or discerning where the Spirit is at work in a person's heart
4. How to flow with the Holy Spirit – speaking his words with power and precision

OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVERSATION

1. Draw people to Christ
2. Show them how attractive God is
3. Show them that faith in Christ is real
4. Help them see God is relevant to their lives and deepest longings

WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THEM (from God's Word)

1. Created in the image of God, that is, created by God for relationship with him – to know God and to glorify him
2. Fallen nature, sinfulness within
 - a. Falling short of God's glory (Romans 3:23)
 - b. Anti-God virus, infected at conception (Psalm 51:5)
 - c. Developed anti-God and self-sufficient patterns of thinking, feeling and choosing (Ephesians 4:17-18)
3. Forsaken the Fountain of living water and following their own way of satisfying their thirst for spiritual relationship and satisfaction (Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13)
4. Remain deeply unfulfilled, thirsty and longing for fullness but cannot find it and not aware of the existence or true nature of this thirst. (Isaiah 55:1-2)
Augustine: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."
5. Resistant/dead to truth – (Ephesians 2:1-3)
6. Relentlessly committed to
 - a. Self-centred existence – thinking, choosing and living according to what pleases me
 - b. Self-managed existence – making their life work without God: Adam's choice to reject God and manage his life his own way has now become our natural condition.
7. Deeply convinced by an in-built assumption that they have a right to be happy and fulfilled and are life-long pursuit of the good life (Ephesians 4:22)
8. Incurably religious – either obviously committed to using God (or their concept of God) as a means of making life work for them – or in less obviously religious belief systems used for the same ends (Romans 1:18-23; Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:29)
9. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken them, convict them of their sin and self-centredness and bring them to faith in Christ (John 16:8)
10. The Holy Spirit is at work in their lives to draw them to Christ (John 12:32).

WHAT YOU DON'T YET KNOW ABOUT THEM (but are curious to find out)

1. The specific shape/nature of their idolatry
2. How that came about in their life - background, shaping experiences, what they have learned to do/not do in order to avoid pain and find pleasure
3. What religious influences have they been exposed to
4. Where are they now in relation to spiritual matters
 - a. Aware of the existence/presence of God?
 - b. Aware of their hunger/thirst for God?
 - c. Are they seeking him in any way, directly or indirectly?

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5. What obstacles might there be in the way of them coming to Christ right now?
 - a. Culture, background, upbringing
 - b. Past experiences, positive (I don't need God because, I have such and such) or negative (I am against God because I have suffered, been offended etc)
 - c. Prejudices against Christians/Christianity and Christians – why?
 - d. Intellectual problems
 - e. Moral problems
 - f. Spiritual (demonic) issues
 - g. Religious/philosophical issues
6. Works-based view of relating to God (always present)

HOW DO YOU SEE THEM?

1. Creation of God – made in his image, precious and wonderful
2. God has a plan, purpose and destiny for their life
3. Loved by God and you, but missing the whole point of life and living
4. People for whom Christ died
5. Slaves, trapped in sin and condemnation
6. Desperately and urgently needing God

HOW DO YOU APPROACH THEM?

1. Love them, as they are
2. Discover them, get to know them at a deeper-than-surface level
3. Discern what the Spirit is doing in their lives
4. Have a vision of what they could become in Christ
5. Connect with them, deeply
6. Affirm what the Spirit is doing/saying to them (even if it looks strange and they are still far from God)
7. Persevere in prayer for them
8. Be there for them
9. Make God look good – do all for his glory
10. Show them what you have so that they may desire it as they see it in you

WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

1. Peace with God –rooted in right relationship with him through faith in Christ's blood
2. New creation, new identity, new capacity, new heart – you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit
3. New hope – to draw near to God now and forever in the future life
4. Passion to know God as the FIRST THING in your life (having SECOND THINGS is not the mark of your spirituality or of the truthfulness of your idea of God)
5. Relationship with God seen in your relationship with others
6. Unconditional acceptance without religion – not what you have to do for God, but what he's done for you
7. Fruit of the Spirit growing in you

DON'T COMPETE – you have something to share, nothing to prove

1. The competitive and argumentative spirit is spiritual arrogance

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2. Humbly share the reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:9). This means you need to know for sure what that hope is (not for a better life, but the better hope by which you draw near to God) and what you are securely basing that hope on.
3. Be curious, ask questions out of genuine interest to discover what is the story of their soul
4. Be aware of what is going on inside you – are you fearful? Feel threatened? Think you have something to prove? Or to lose?
5. Be real – share your story honestly
6. Make sure your ruling passion is Christ and him alone – this will show in your life
7. Abundant life is not about getting all the good things you want in this life, but it is the Life that comes from knowing God, and this is the source of your true heart satisfaction – is this really true/becoming increasingly true and visible in your life?
8. Be a real spiritual friend – focus on the relational heart of Christianity and do not present it as a religion
9. Be patient, do not get ahead of the Spirit – listen to the Spirit and speak whatever he gives you to say
10. Don't parade your knowledge, you are seeking to win a soul, not win an argument
11. Admit it when you do not know how to answer and what to say
12. Keep your heart pure – cause reflection, not offence

KNOW THE GOSPEL WELL – and how to communicate it simply, clearly, with good stories and illustrations

1. Christ has dealt with the sin barrier between us and a holy God
2. Heaven is a free gift
 - a. It cannot be earned or deserved
 - b. It is received by pure Grace through simple Faith
3. The cross accomplished it all
4. Call for a response (at the right moment) – “Receive the gift”
5. The new believer is called to a life of discipleship, not just to a decision to accept Christ
6. The new believer receives New Life in Christ
7. The new believer receives a New Family (the church)
8. The new believer is saved in order to live for God by serving and glorifying him.