

Q7. Sunday's message ended with the suggestion of three open-ended questions for initiating spiritual conversations.

1. *Would you consider yourself a spiritual person?*
2. *Do you believe there's a God?*
3. *If a friend asked you what a Christian is, what would you say?*

Do you think it possible to ask these questions without a conversation needing to become awkward? How? (What role might motive play?)

Q8. Who could you initiate a spiritual conversation with this week?

Pray for those you are reaching out to – and for ideas for connecting with them

A reflection on Romans 10:14

To 'tell' – a bit inappropriate, isn't it?

'How will they know unless someone tells them?'

While communicating the gospel is a responsibility, the attitude with which we engage a conversation can make all the difference. In modern Western culture it is important that words and attitudes are more gentle, respectful and humble than in the past. Instead of saying 'This is true' we say 'to me it seems that...'. Instead of saying, 'It's plain to see...' we say, 'I wonder if...' and then ask, 'What do you think?' And where we used to state an opinion we now ask, 'Do you think I possible that...?'

Where it was once about 'converting' people, we now 'invite them to make their own decision' — for none of us could ever 'get anyone saved' anyway. And so we now recognise in our words what was always believed — but was not always stated: it was they who chose, and only because of God's grace.

You see — the message is the same, but the lingo and the attitude must change. Instead of 'preaching' we now 'communicate'. Instead of 'telling' we now 'converse'. And if we can get this conversational way of thinking into our heads and habits, the conversations will open up again.



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CONVERSATIONAL
EVANGELISM
SERIES 1

Everyday Spiritual conversations

Small Group Study | WEEK 3

Converse, don't confront



Outreaching
CULTURE

A Leadership
Strategy by

all together
Consulting

Discussion 3: Converse, don't confront

(Being a non-threatening person)

LAUNCHING

Opening game: The question game

In pairs, engage conversations in which members are

- only allowed to ask questions (no statements)
- and in which the questions must be a logical continuation of the conversation and there ideally shouldn't be any awkward pauses.
- How long can you keep the conversation going with only question? (See the bottom of the previous discussion guide for an example)

Q1. Did anyone manage to engage a spiritual conversation of any kind with someone this week?

Q2. Tell us about one of your worst experiences with a salesperson, where you felt they were too pushy.

Q2b. What is it about a person that makes them feel warm and trustworthy to talk with – as compared to threatening or awkward? Make a list of thoughts.

GUIDING

Q3. Read Luke 6:43-45. How connected do you think the motives of a person are to the way they come across in a conversation? Can you illustrate?

Q4. Read John 8:1-11 – The woman caught in adultery (who likely found Jesus to be non-threatening, despite his divine holiness, divine authority, and earthly position of power at that moment)

To check our understanding of the text briefly:

- Does the biblical law say that death is the penalty for adultery? (*Yes - Leviticus 20:10*).
- Did Jesus change the law? (*The NT still affirms that the penalty for adultery is death, but in references to hell - 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Jesus extended grace. The Law was given in the context of Israel at a time when they were an independent self-governing nation under God. None of our nations are covenanted to God in their entirety like this*)
- Can you see how the question was a trap? (*To fail to affirm the need for the death penalty for this sin in Israel would be to deny the law of Moses they were under – while to give it would be to disobey the laws or Rome*).
- Can you see an injustice in their bringing of this woman for Jesus' judgement? (*Where was the man caught in adultery*)
- Jesus stooped to draw in the sand twice. Why do you think he did this? Do you think it possible he was pausing because he didn't know what to say and do? (*Consider how the first time might have been to seek God for wisdom while saying nothing – because he knew the question was a trap. It is often suggested that on the second he may have been writing down the names of sins the accusers were also guilty of*).
- Jesus said, 'let the one who is without sin cast the first stone' – and everyone left. Why didn't Jesus leave? (*He was sinless – and could have thrown the first stone!*)
- Jesus instructed this woman to change her ways. If this was her point of salvation – who paid for her sins? (*The poetry here is that Jesus was soon to be on his way to Calvary – which he would have known when releasing her*).

Q5. Should this woman caught in adultery have been scared of Jesus? What about Jesus might have put her at ease? (Consider the idea that our motives toward a person come across in our manner and tone, so might our motives define a lot of how we come across?).

APPLICATION

Q6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how helpful or unhelpful do you feel the below motives and attitudes are for when you are seeking to initiate a non-threatening spiritual conversation, and why?

- A desire to tell them the truth (aka the gospel)
- A desire to preach the gospel
- A desire to communicate the gospel
- A desire to share your own beliefs
- A desire to discover what their spiritual beliefs actually are
- A desire to challenge views that could be demonically connected
- A desire to correct some of their errant beliefs
- A desire to encourage new thoughts about what might or might not be true in the area of religion
- A desire to share your own beliefs – to invite their thoughts on them.